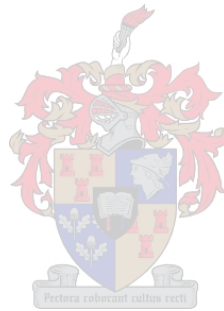# TEACHERS, ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION:
A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

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**Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University**

Promoter: Professor Yusef Waghid
Co-promoter: Professor Sarie Berkhout

December 2009

DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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JA Slamat   Date

ABSTRACT

The core question that is addressed in this dissertation is: "How can we think differently about education in order to transcend the predicament that outcomes-based assessment poses for teachers and the practice of teaching?"

This question is addressed against the background of my own narrative and experience in education in South Africa and in dialogue with the ideas of a number of contemporary philosophers. I assume an internal link between the outcomes-based discourse and its attendant assessment system. I argue that although outcomes-based education is proclaimed to be a progressive pedagogy, an alternative argument can be made that characterises it as an old behaviourist, management theory, overlain by a new policy technology called performativity. Thereafter, I engage critically with outcomes-based *assessment* as a prime example of performativity. In the next step I explore the ways in which outcomes-based assessment poses a predicament to teachers and to the practice of teaching.

I then construct an alternative view of education that, in my opinion, provides a way to transcend the predicament that outcomes-based assessment poses for teachers and the practice of teaching. I also compare my alternative view of education with a new notion of education as therapy and standing in need of therapy, which is also presented as an alternative to instrumental approaches to education. Thereafter I consider the implications of my alternative view of education for teachers and assessment.

I consider potential critiques against my argument at various stages in this dissertation. In the final chapter, I anticipate five more potential critiques against the argument developed in this dissertation and give initial responses to these. At the end of this dissertation I extend an invitation to deliberation in the spirit of my alternative view of education.

OPSOMMING

Die kernvraag wat in hierdie proefskrif aan bod kom, is: "Hoe kan ons anders dink oor onderwys sodat die penarie wat uitkomsgebaseerde assessering vir onderwysers en die onderwyspraktyk meebring, oorkom kan word?

Die vraag word beredeneer teen die agtergrond van my eie narratief en ervaring in onderwys in Suid-Afrika en in dialoog met die idees van 'n aantal kontemporêre filosowe. Ek veronderstel 'n interne skakel tussen die uitkomsgebaseerde diskoers en die verbandhoudende assesseringstelsel. Ek voer aan dat hoewel uitkomsgebaseerde onderwys as 'n progressiewe pedagogie voorgehou word, 'n alternatiewe argument gemaak kan word wat dit as 'n ou, behavioristiese bestuursteorie beskryf, wat oordek is met 'n nuwe beleidstegnologie genaamd performatiwiteit. Daarna gaan ek krities om met uitkomsgebaseerde *assessering* as 'n primêre voorbeeld van performatiwiteit. In die volgende stap verken ek die maniere waarop uitkomsgebaseerde assessering 'n penarie vir onderwysers en die onderwyspraktyk voorhou.

Ek ontwikkel dan 'n alternatiewe beskouing van opvoeding wat, na my mening, 'n manier verskaf om die penarie wat assessering vir onderwysers en die onderwyspraktyk veroorsaak, te oorkom. Ek vergelyk ook my alternatiewe beskouing van onderwys met 'n nuwe konsep van onderwys as terapie en as behoeftig aan terapie, wat ook as 'n alternatief vir instrumentele benaderings tot onderwys aangebied word. Daarna oorweeg ek die implikasies van my alternatiewe beskouing van onderwys vir onderwysers en assessering.

Ek oorweeg op verskillende stadiums in hierdie proefskrif potensiële punte van kritiek teen my argument. In die laaste hoofstuk antisipeer ek vyf bykomende potensiële punte van kritiek teen die argument wat in hierdie proefskrif ontwikkel is en gee aanvanklike reaksies daarop. Teen die einde van hierdie proefskrif rig ek 'n uitnodiging tot beraadslaging in die gees van my alternatiewe beskouing van opvoeding.

DEDICATION

To my late parents and all my teachers, who have made me who I am.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I humbly bring praise to the Almighty God for my life, faith, health and happiness.

I want to acknowledge my wife, Eleanor, and my children, Anastasia and Justin, for their unwavering, unconditional love and support and for their understanding of the force that is driving me in my life-long search for knowledge.

I want to pay tribute to my promoter, Professor Yusef Waghid, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University, for his support and motivation. Thank you for always challenging me and for your commitment to and personification of critical rationality and rigorous deliberation.

I also want to thank my co-promoter, Professor Sarie Berkhout, for planting a seed called "assessment as caring" in my mind while I was still an official in the Western Cape Education Department some years ago. This seed comes to fruition in this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
MY LIFE IN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Section I: Introduction

I am a black (ex-) teacher in South Africa. I want to tell the story of the change that I have seen and experienced in education in South Africa. I have seen the change from apartheid to political democracy; and from Apartheid Education to outcomes-based education (OBE). As a teacher and an education official I have experienced a range of emotions towards the new outcomes-based system that have progressed gradually from euphoria, to confusion, to disappointment, to feelings of betrayal and ultimately to resistance.

One predicament that has occupied my thoughts is the predicament that outcomes-based assessment poses to teachers and to the practice of teaching. In my experience, this is a very widespread and common predicament. I endeavoured to engage in a philosophical treatment of the problem in this dissertation. In my experience, many criticisms of OBE tend to focus on practical and logistical problems, but usually neglect the philosophical sources that give rise to these problems, and therefore never get down to 'the bottom of things'.

I wanted to know whether this predicament (outcomes-based assessment) can be transcended by taking an alternative view of teachers, assessment and education. Therefore, much of my investigation revolved around these three concepts: teachers, assessment and education. Although I focused on assessment, the issues I needed to investigate are broader and wider, e.g. What is OBE and why is this approach to education problematic?; Which metaphors are used to characterise views about education?; What is characteristic of public services in contemporary society and what role does performativity play?; Is teaching a practice?; and What is education and what is it not?

It is like throwing a stone into a pond: Although there is a central point of impact (assessment), ripples are sent out by this impact that disturb and trouble the water in different parts. What is very important to state at the start is that I do not only want to engage critically with OBE and outcomes-based assessment; I also want to create visions of hope for the future.

The dissertation starts off with my own narrative. I know that telling my own story could open me up to a charge of self-indulgence and narcissism. My counter-argument would more or less be in line with the argument of Sparkes (2002). I argue that the charge of self-indulgence and narcissism originates out of orthodoxy. It says more about the person making the charge than of the person who is telling his or her life story. It says the following about the person making the charge: Such a person is uncomfortable with a new way of doing things and is not open to change. It says that such person is held captive by dualisms, e.g. self/other, inner/outer, public/private and individual/society. It says that such person is held captive by a compartmentalised view of knowledge, because what is an acceptable way of academic expression in the arts is not accepted in philosophy of education, or any other area, for that matter. It also says further that such person prefers to be a passive, dispassionate reader, instead of allowing him- or herself the possibility and opportunity to be an active reader who can potentially be touched or even be transformed by the story of the other. Very importantly, it says that such person does not recognise the author's voice or academic contribution. If this is indeed the case, it is strange, since academics are always encouraged to provide a unique, new, fresh, original contribution. The use of the narrative has the potential to make such a contribution.

To allay the fears of my potential critic, I want to state that telling my story is not the *only* method that I have used in this dissertation. The study contains a dialogue between my narrative and the ideas of established philosophers. This should tell the reader that they (the established philosophers) also have been thinking about similar or related things. The narrative is only one of the 'methods' of philosophical enquiry that I have employed in conjunction with four others in this dissertation. I think that telling one's own story can be a powerful tool of liberation from reactionary political discourse. Denzin (2003:258) argues that it is "more than a tool of liberation. It is a way of being moral and political in the world".

This is my story...

Section II: The story of education and I

I will always treasure the memory of my parents – good, decent and diligent working class folk who raised their children by example. They were my first teachers: a domestic worker and a painter. We lived, at first, in a wood and iron shack in Elsies River and later in a two-bedroom brick and mortar house in Matroosfontein, one of the townships created after the

Second World War for 'Coloureds' in the northern part of Cape Town. None of my elder brothers and sisters completed matric (i.e. the end of secondary schooling in South Africa), because they had to leave school to help with the support of the family. The hopes of the whole family were fixed on me, the youngest, to achieve what none of them had the opportunity to do. My elder brothers and sisters, some of whom were old enough to be my parents, acted as additional parents and mentors. They provided me with what I needed to make a success of my studies. Mine was a home that was determined to ensure the academic and career success of at least one of its members.

I also have great regard for the teachers who have taught me at the Matroosfontein Moravian Primary School, Bishop Lavis High School and some of the lecturers at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), an institution created for the higher education of 'Coloureds' by an act of Parliament of the apartheid regime.

My primary school years were years of bliss and innocence. I grew up attending a church school in the area that is today called Clarke's Estate. At that time there were no gray blocks of flats; it was a semi-rural area with a mixture of solid houses and shacks. The school operated a platoon system of three shifts on one day. Sometimes neighbouring churches and halls were used when learner totals were too high, therefore operating like what we would nowadays call a main campus and satellite campuses! The same dedicated teachers taught all the shifts, day after day. They taught me to read, write and do sums. They also taught me about the Bible and religion. Some of my teachers were so considerate that when my father could not work and earn an income in winter, they would collect what was left of the Peninsula Feeding Scheme bread that was supplied to the school and give it to me to take home. Also, my entrepreneurial spirit was awakened early in life, as I sold cupcakes that my mother baked to my peers at school to augment the family income. Though times were tough, my primary school years were magnificent years of innocence. I was comforted everyday by the knowledge that my parents, teachers and Jesus loved me. Much later in my life I would encounter the thoughts of Alasdair MacIntyre; especially his notions of "vulnerability" (MacIntyre, 1999:63-65), "caring" (MacIntyre, 1999:82-84) and "networks of giving and receiving" (MacIntyre, 1999:99-101), as well as Martha Nussbaum's concept of "compassionate imagining" (Nussbaum, 2001:299). When I now look back at my experiences with my parents and teachers, I appreciate the fact that they took very seriously their duty to care for me. I now realise that my teachers were engaged in actions of 'compassionate imagining' where I was concerned, without them being able to articulate it as Nussbaum did. I

revisit the notions of care and compassion in Chapter 5, where I explore an alternative view of education to OBE.

When I think about my high school years, I always remember the school boycotts and the smell of tear gas. The childhood bliss was shattered. My high school career started in that fateful year of 1976, the year of the Soweto student uprisings that spread like a veld fire through the whole country, and it ended in another year of major student uprisings, 1980. Between 1976 and 1980 many of my classmates dropped out of school and joined the army of cheap labourers in the clothing factories around Cape Town or went to work in the building trade. When I was in Standard 9, the penultimate school year in South Africa at that time, I walked the streets of Epping Industrial Area to get a job, because the school boycotts were going on for too long for my liking. I decided it might make sense to follow the route that many of my peers went during those years by dropping out of school. Luckily for me I could not find a job at the time!

In the next year, my final school year (called the matric year in South Africa), I was chosen as Head Prefect by the principal and teaching staff, mainly because I excelled academically and was a member of the school athletics and rugby teams. Then the school boycotts of 1980 started. I saw the boycotts as a threat to completing my school career and was initially opposed to the boycotting of classes. In the end, the prefect body was overthrown and a Students' Representative Council (SRC) was elected, temporarily ousting my fellow prefects and me as student leaders. The first lessons in democracy were learnt in a very hard way.

When I finished high school, my parents did not have the financial means to send me for further studies. I had dreams of becoming a chartered accountant thanks to an inspiring guidance lesson in Standard 8, but gave up on these dreams because of the realities of my life. My mother did not give up so easily. She made an appointment with my school principal, who suggested that I apply for a "Coloured Affairs" bursary, which would enable me to become a teacher. So I registered for a BComm degree at UWC, with the commitment to complete the Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) afterwards in order to become a commerce teacher. That was the nearest I would come to the dream of becoming a chartered accountant, given the circumstances of my life.

My university years were turbulent: more student boycotts, opposition to the apartheid system, years of formal learning, but most notably learning in informal settings. I have great

regard for those peers who added to my personal development and political education, outside of formal education, especially those good friends and comrades in the Moravian Youth Union of South Africa (known at the time to many only by its Afrikaans acronym MJUSA), a national union of young Christians who saw it as their Christian duty to oppose the apartheid system, during the apartheid years. From them I learnt about attitudes, values, principles and an unwavering stance against the apartheid regime, based on religious beliefs. Our youth camps attracted many critical young people, many of whom were not from the Moravian denomination and several of whom hold prominent posts in the public and the private sector today. It was mostly through the informal learning in MJUSA and in the self-study groups at UWC that my capacity for critical thinking was initially developed. During these critical exchanges among my peers I developed the capacity to envision a future for my country that was radically different from the repressive society that we were living in at that time. It was a vision of an egalitarian and caring society, with no discrimination on the basis of race, class or creed and respect for the humanity of each of its members.

I completed the BComm degree and an HDE in the minimum time of four years, because I could not afford to fail, otherwise my "Coloured Affairs" bursary would be stopped. Although I had the financial pressure of the state bursary, I could not resist becoming involved in student politics. It was the era of mass meetings at UWC and the time in which a broad front against apartheid, the United Democratic Front (UDF), was formed. At the same time, I was national chairperson of MJUSA.

Just before completing my studies at UWC, I was arrested at home in the early hours of the morning, together with some of my student comrades, on a charge of public violence. In our minds at the time we had no doubt about the complicity of some of our lecturers. The university administration under Professor Richard van der Ross did their utmost to secure our release. Because of their efforts, we were all released on bail late on the evening of the same day. Our release only happened after a gang that was imprisoned for murder beat us up. The murderers were already in the big cell when we were brought in and placed in the same cell. Initially, no prison warders were on hand to stop the fight that lasted for the most part of the day, during which the murderers accused us of being 'clever' and keeping ourselves 'brave' to stand up against the government. We realised that this was a fight with the proxy of the apartheid regime and fought for our lives against a bunch of murderers, until at last the prison warders intervened and moved us to different cells.

Soon after the detention drama, the final examinations started. I had to study extra hard and put out of my mind that I was out on bail on a charge of public violence, which, if I was found guilty, carried a five-year sentence. My parents were traumatised by everything that had happened and by the subsequent trial. Great was their relief when I was found not guilty of public violence in a trial during which fellow 'comrades' were unmasked as informers for the apartheid state. My parents urged me to stop my involvement in student politics and to concentrate on my new career. As much as I loved my parents and as much as I knew that they only had my best interests in mind, theirs was not a request that I could easily accede to. I was acutely aware of the unjust oppression that we as black people were experiencing. Whereas earlier I only knew instinctively or intuitively that it was wrong, some progressive lecturers at UWC were providing us as students with intellectual tools to analyse, describe and articulate the nature of our oppression and also to articulate our vision of emancipation. Central to our academic armoury was Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas, especially his assertion that human interests are more fundamental than knowledge and that all knowledge is constructed in terms of interests. This allowed us a different way of viewing knowledge; away from the view of knowledge itself as 'innocent'. It was as if our protest against our oppression and our visions of emancipation found theoretical justification or affirmation; in this we found further confidence and empowerment. I revisit the notions of emancipation and hope in Chapter 5, where I explore an alternative view of education to OBE.

I completed my studies at UWC at the end of 1984, and started teaching at a relatively new high school in Elsies River called Range High School in January of 1985. It was not my chosen career; it was a compromise: accounting teacher instead of chartered accountant.

Yet, when I think about what I am today, none of the thoughts of 'compromise' remain. I think of myself as a teacher, because I was trained as a teacher and spent most of my working life in teaching. Being a teacher gave sense and direction to my life. My sense of being a teacher was influenced positively by all the caring role-models I had as teachers, formally and informally. After a teaching career of almost twenty years, I regard the title of 'teacher' with tremendous respect and awe – one that has to be earned and one that involves a commitment to society. It involves a tremendous honour: to be entrusted with the youth of society.

I have spent most of my teaching career at Range High School, situated in the working class area where I myself grew up. As stated earlier, I started at Range in 1985, a year in which

student uprisings again swept the Western Cape. As a young teacher and an activist, fresh from UWC, I immediately sided with the learners and secretly advised them on tactics as well as on ideas for the regular awareness programmes that were held in the school quad. The children were voicing a disdain with the apartheid system, a system that kept them and their parents trapped in gray blocks of flats and underpaid jobs, if they were fortunate enough to be employed. They engaged the physical representatives of the despised system in an unequal battle, confronting Casspirs (armoured army vehicles) and guns with stones. And I, being familiar with their condition, felt it my duty to support them. I was also determined that they should not remain as naïve as I was throughout my school career.

I was class teacher of Standard 8D at Range High School in 1985. The class monitor of my class, a lively young girl called Francis Lambert, was shot in her upper leg with buckshot while sitting on a wall at Saint Nicholas Anglican Church in Halt Road, where a mass meeting of learners was to be held. The lively and happy child was crippled in one moment by the vicious system. From that moment on it was crystal clear to me: It was us against them! Right through my memories of Range runs the thread of siding with the learners during student uprisings, the idea of being in service of the community, a strong sense of mission; and strong relationships with the learners and their parents developed during house visits. But also associated with this time was opposition from elements in the school leadership, who were afraid of open confrontation of the apartheid system, at times even collaborating with the system to give information on teachers and learners.

I had great success teaching commercial subjects to matriculants over many years. Many of my students achieved A symbols, in spite of the conditions they came from. I made after-school classes, Saturday classes and extra classes during school holidays the norm for matric commerce learners at Range High School. I used various kinds of motivation to encourage my learners to achieve, including praise, frequent pep talks, house visits and even monetary rewards. Most of all I wanted them to visualise a life different from the miserable one that most of them have been living. I also taught for one year (1990) at Bishop Lavis High School, my alma mater, a school in similar social conditions, but thereafter returned to Range High School.

Besides the commercial subjects, another passion of mine as a teacher was athletics. Schools on the Cape Flats formed part of the Western Province Senior Schools Sports Union (WPSSSU) and the South African Council on Sport (SACOS). The SACOS slogan was "No

normal sport in an abnormal society". The first term of each year was almost entirely devoted to athletics, from inter-house meetings (internally at schools), triangular meetings (athletics meetings involving three schools) to the bigger and much more organised inter-schools and "Champion of Champions" meetings. Over many years a culture developed whereby thousands of school children from the Cape Flats and Boland areas were bussed to Athlone Stadium during the first school term to compete in the athletics meetings organised by the WPSSSU. These meetings were organised into sections during the first three months of the year. I was a WPSSSU accredited starter and participated in WPSSSU activities on a regular basis. Through my involvement in athletics, I developed very good and deep relationships with the learners I taught. They sensed that I was willing to sacrifice my private time to assist them and to go the extra mile. I did it because those people who were examples of teachers in my life were prepared to do it for me. They modelled to me what it meant to be a teacher. The extra-mural cooperation between the learners and myself made it much easier for me to achieve success with them in the classroom.

It was also in the arena of sport that I met some dedicated teachers, many of them affiliated to the Teacher's League of South Africa (TLSA) and the New Unity Movement (NUM). The motto of the TLSA is "Let us live for our children". As a young teacher, this motto as well as the dedication and concern of the mostly older TLSA teachers impressed me tremendously. I took up membership of the Elsies River branch of the TLSA and with that came a different political education, seen from the angle of the TLSA and the NUM. The TLSA had close links with sports and civic organisations. The mother body of the TLSA, the NUM, opposed the politics of the African National Congress (ANC) and its affiliates, on the grounds that they (the ANC) collaborated with the apartheid regime and that a negotiated settlement would amount to a sell-out of working class interests. Their position was one of opposition to a negotiated settlement in South Africa. Only the total destruction of the apartheid state and the institution of majority rule would suffice.

In 1989 I registered for part-time study at UWC as a critical teacher, boasting the hard-line political approach of the NUM. I was ready to tackle the white, conservative lecturers who victimised me during my undergraduate and HDE years. But, instead, I found a significantly transformed Education Faculty at UWC. Most of the conservatives had left and a new cohort of lecturers was teaching critical and exciting courses. The BEd course helped me to reflect on my practice as a teacher in Elsies River and in reality provided a mechanism for me to keep my sanity and to think rationally about what it was I was involved with everyday. Even

though I was tired after a full day of teaching, I looked forward to the afternoon classes with anticipation.

I completed the course successfully and three years later registered for a structured MEd under the theme "Education and Democracy". Outstanding teachers and rigorous discussion were hallmarks of this course. Under the leadership of Professors Wally Morrow, Nelleke Bak and Tony Holiday a whole cohort of practicing teachers began visualising a new education dispensation for South Africa, while still subject to the last throes of the Apartheid Education machinery. The course work consisted of modules in Social Theory, Democratic Theory, History of South African Education and Philosophy of Education. I had the privilege of doing some of the course work on a full-time basis, together with six fellow students, when I took six months' study leave in 1992. I revelled in the rigorous discussion, research and camaraderie of this academically most productive and enjoyable period of my life thus far. In addition to the course work, I wrote a critical mini-thesis on the work of one of the most recent proponents (Professor Phil Higgs) of fundamental pedagogics, the discipline that paraded as a science of education, while being seemingly oblivious to the atrocities of Apartheid Education. The title of my mini-thesis was *Can the view of persons and society that is presupposed by Higgs's account of Fundamental Pedagogics be compatible with a concept of democratic education?* My answer to this question was a qualified "yes". I examined Carol Gould's thesis (Gould, 1998:91) that every social and political theory presupposes, explicitly or tacitly, a social ontology. I critically reinterpreted the conceptual tool 'social ontology' as 'a presupposed view of persons and society'. I then provided an analytical summary and critical discussion of three most recent articles by Professor Higgs on the nature and task of fundamental pedagogics (FP). I then applied the conceptual tool of 'a presupposed view of persons and society' to Higgs's account of FP. In the following steps of my argument I developed an account of democratic education that is linked to agency, authority, reciprocity and participation; and the interpretation of the view of persons and society (VOPS) that underpins it. In the concluding chapter of my mini-thesis I measured Higgs's account of FP, together with its constitutive VOPS, against eight criteria provided by my account of democratic education and its matching VOPS. My conclusion was that the VOPS that is presupposed by Higgs's account of FP can be charitably said to be compatible with the concept of democratic education, given some adjustments, clarifications and elucidations. Finally, I considered some objections that Higgs might raise against the argument of my mini-thesis, and briefly responded to it.

My mini-thesis was a mechanism for stimulating debate between proponents of philosophy of education and proponents of FP in South Africa at the time. The relationship between the two groups was such that they were generally dismissive of each other. I tried to put forward a convincing argument to the most recently published proponent of FP as to why he needs to adjust some of his views. In the process I gave credit to some of his convictions and treated his work in a charitable rather than a dismissive way. In the end, Professor Higgs was invited to become one of the external examiners of my mini-thesis and his appreciation of my argument was expressed by him agreeing with the other two examiners in the awarding of a *cum laude* evaluation for my mini-thesis. I would like to believe that that my critique of his work had an impact on Professor Higgs as a scholar of education in South Africa.

Besides completing the coursework and producing the mini-thesis, it was during this period that a deeper commitment to critical rationality and deliberation was cultivated in me. For this I must acknowledge the role of Professor Wally Morrow, Dean of Education and lead thinker in philosophy of education at UWC at the time. The joint seminars that took place after hours on a bi-weekly basis and that involved academic staff, master's and doctoral students, as well as invited academics, were one of the absolute highlights of my part-time study. Here ideas were advanced, refuted, criticised and refined in a community that was committed to critical rationality and deliberation. Often individual master's or doctoral proposals were the subject of scrutiny. The owners of such proposals could guarantee that they will emerge from those joint seminars with much stronger and academically sound positions to advance. A central influence on me in terms of critical rationality and deliberation at the time, besides Professor Morrow, was the author Amy Gutmann, with her notions of "non-discrimination", "non-repression" and "democratic deliberation" (1990:7). I revisit the notions of critical rationality and deliberation in Chapter 5, where I explore an alternative view of education to OBE.

This period of part-time study helped me to have a broader view than simply the immediate situation in which I was living and teaching. It provided me with the conceptual tools to make sense of my reality. It linked to a long-held desire for an equitable educational dispensation for all, away from the inequalities of what paraded as education under apartheid. It appealed to my sense of mission and served as a vision to strive towards.

In 1993, while adding the finishing touches to my MEd thesis, I was told that the board of my church, the Moravian Church, has selected me to serve as an exchange teacher in Germany. I applied to the education department for unpaid leave for a period of three years and left for

Germany with my family. The three years we spent there was an education in its own right. My family and I spent the first four months living in a hostel in Schwäbisch Hall, a small town 70 km from Stuttgart. There my wife and I had to learn the German language at the local Goethe Institute. After four months of language training, we moved to Karlsruhe in the south-western corner of Germany, near to the borders to Switzerland and France. For the rest of our stay in Germany, I taught Religion and Ethics in various public schools (primary, middle and high schools) in the Karlsruhe district as well as a confirmation class in the Trinitatis congregation in Durlach-Aue. It was amazing to see a real democracy at work. It was wonderful, as a teacher, not to worry about facilities and materials. Everything was available on request. I only had to request what I needed and the school and church authorities provided it. For example, every year a new, updated catalogue of videos and other audio-visual aids was made available to teachers in the Karlsruhe district. These teaching aids could be ordered and were delivered to the school very promptly. A projection room was available for films and videos at the school where I taught.

In addition to the availability of quality resources and teaching aids, the learners themselves were highly critical and did not believe what the teachers were teaching them without questioning. There were many discussions in class and the learners engaged me in some very stimulating debates. They generally had a good command of language and were able to express themselves eloquently (in German, of course). This was very different to my classroom experience in South Africa. At the same time, I had to get accustomed to a kind of discipline that was very different to the South African situation. Learners had much more rights and parents were very involved in the school careers of their children. Corporal punishment, which was still the primary means of maintaining discipline in South Africa at that time, was not allowed at all in Germany. I spent almost 10 minutes at the beginning of each lesson just to establish order in the classroom as learners took their time to settle down. The trade-off was the excellent participation of learners in the lessons.

I was also involved in Adult Education via trade union structures and held many lectures on South Africa during my time in Germany. There was a very lively interest in the political process unfolding in South Africa at the time. This was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on South Africa from the outside. I even did radio and television interviews about South Africa! Using picture slides to visually enhance my lectures and presentations (this was in the time before PowerPoint presentations), I took my audiences on countless journeys into my world. In contact with the 'other' I had to explain and re-examine many things about my world that

previously seemed so normal or obvious to me. In the process, I also gained entry into their world: a whole new culture and life world of another nation. I have learnt a new language that opened the door to the souls of the speakers of that language. For them I was the 'other' that attempted to make sense of their world.

I had made many good friends, most of whom had a strong rejection of the apartheid system in South Africa, based on their experiences during the Third Reich and in Communist Eastern Germany. Many of my German friends were members of anti-apartheid or international solidarity organisations like Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Soon I became very involved in international solidarity work. I regularly attended meetings of Bread for the World, Amnesty International, the Karlsruhe Encounter and Counselling Centre (a meeting place for refugees and German citizens) and the Africa Solidarity Group Karlsruhe. I was a stranger in a strange country, where there were strong sentiments against foreigners in some parts at the time, especially in the eastern part of Germany. My family had an extremely frightening experience in 1995 when we were surrounded and threatened by a group of skinheads at the Dresden main railway station. Luckily we could escape without being hurt. A friend of mine from Ghana, Reverend Akoto, was not so lucky; he had to be hospitalised after he was severely beaten up by a group of right-wingers while travelling on a train. These experiences, together with my experience of racial discrimination in South Africa, motivated me to increase my involvement in work with foreigners in Germany. Later in my life I would encounter the work of Seyla Benhabib and her notions of "cosmopolitan justice" (Benhabib, 2006:15) and "hospitality as a right of all people" (Benhabib, 2006:22). I realised that her ideas must have been influenced by her experiences as a 'person of difference' in Germany. Benhabib articulated many of the ideas I had regarding hospitality and strangeness at the time in a very lucid, academic way. I revisit her notion of cosmopolitan justice in Chapter 5, where I explore an alternative view of education to OBE.

Besides my involvement in international solidarity organisations, I also was involved in fundraising for projects in poor rural communities in South Africa. Managing the partnership relations between German and South African congregations, and the resultant projects, soon became one of my main tasks. My background in management and accounting came in handy in this respect.

The period I spent in Germany will always feature as an absolute highlight of my life. There I finally realised, in very practical terms, that I am not only a teacher of 'Coloured' children as

the apartheid regime wanted to convince me. I am a teacher of all children. Not only am I a teacher of all children, but also of adults – all adults. I am a teacher of all people, who at the same time is a learner of all people. I have proved it to others and myself during my German experience. Though the apartheid system tried to convince me that I was somehow inferior as a 'Coloured', I actually worked and lived alongside others in Germany on an equal basis and had the opportunity to discover for myself that the inequality based on race is a fabrication of the minds of the apartheid social engineers.

Having experienced education in a practicing democracy made my return to South Africa and to Range High School very problematic. On my return to Range in April 1996, not everybody was impressed by my questioning nature. The parochial staff room discussions bored me endlessly, and I realised that I did not have a desire to be there anymore. Also, the continuous violence in the community and the endless serious problems that learners encountered sapped my energy to the point of depression. The hold-up of my principal at gunpoint in the office by local gangsters demanding protection money, the stabbing of another colleague by the brother of a learner and the case of a 14-year-old Standard 6 girl who was repeatedly sexually assaulted by her stepfather before we could have him arrested, were some of the last incidents that convinced me to leave. Although I still remained committed to the community, I realised that I could not cope emotionally with these kinds of problems on a continuous daily basis anymore. Also, my own safety, and the safety of other teachers, could not be guaranteed by the education department. I went to school each day, not knowing whether I shall return safely to my home and family in the afternoon.

In March 1999 I was offered the possibility to enter the Subject Advisory Service of the newly formed Western Cape Education Department (WCED) on a secondment basis. This invitation was based on the good results my matriculants were achieving in Economics and Business Economics. I accepted the offer to become an adviser for commerce teachers in the then Bellville Region, an area covering the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town, Khayelitsha, Stellenbosch, Somerset-West, Paarl and the West Coast up to Vredendal and Lutzville. This position involved a lot of travel and brought me into contact with hundreds of teachers in high schools and primary schools from all the different ex-departments. New worlds opened to me as I travelled from school to school and met hundreds of teachers.

This contact also resulted in many different kinds of experiences. Often I would experience the full spectrum of the South African society on one single day, from schools housed in

containers and without proper ablution facilities to schools with every luxury imaginable. The white teachers were generally aloof, often evaluating me directly or indirectly. Some even asked openly about my experience and qualifications. Some were very supportive, others were patronising, while still others were openly hostile. Having to deal with a self-confident, competent black subject adviser was a new experience for them. The black teachers were more welcoming and accepting, glad to have one of their own after a series of white advisers. What also helped was the fact that, prior to my appointment, I had been quite involved in local and regional subject study groups. My old colleagues were comfortable with one from their own ranks. I swore to myself never to forget where I have come from and to serve the teachers as best I could. In the end, through my honest interaction with the teachers, I became an adviser to all teachers, irrespective of race. I very consciously opted for a developmental, rather than a judgemental approach, inspired by some of the progressive new colleagues who joined the advisory service. At that point I was a member of the largest progressive teachers union, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU).

In the past, many of our (mostly white) subject advisers were not easily accessible to the teachers. You generally saw them once a year when they did the moderation of year marks. The type of comments they made about the work of teachers was mostly of a judgemental nature. I advised 'my' teachers on the teaching of commercial subjects in the high school, with special attention paid to the instruction of matric learners. We studied trends in recent papers to prepare our learners and ourselves. But it was more important for me to raise the standard of teaching of the subject. I set up regional groups that met regularly in the afternoons and during the day I visited troubled schools individually. During this time, my emphasis was not only on raising matric pass rates, but also on the professional development of the teachers. Every year there were new commerce teachers and some who were teaching matrics for the first time. Even the more experienced teachers needed regular up-skilling. I had to be at the cutting edge of new developments in the subject area. This I did by reading widely in my subject area and sharing some of the key learnings with the teachers.

The job also entailed a certain pastoral role towards teachers. Others often only see the duty of teachers to care for the children that are entrusted to them. I realised from many of my conversations with the teachers that they were also vulnerable and in need of care. This is in line with the thinking of MacIntyre (1999) that persons are vulnerable, not only during childhood and old age, but at various points of their lives. I could put myself in their shoes through what Nussbaum (2001:299) calls "compassionate imagining", exactly because I have

myself experienced the kinds of pressures that they were experiencing during my own teaching career. Typically a large part of a school visit would be taken up by listening to the concerns of teachers and offering advice, motivation and reassurance. I felt it was my duty to provide an ear in a situation where no one seemed to care about the concerns of teachers and where praise and recognition of their efforts were largely absent. During this period, many enduring friendships and professional relationships were forged. I respected the teachers and they respected me. Very soon I was confident that the situation in 'my' region was under control and that my life was structured and organised. I have devised a daily schedule that entailed the following: two hours in the office in the morning where I could be reached by teachers with questions; school visits to two or three schools during the day, and the writing of reports and workshops in the afternoons. Everything seemed to be working well.

And then came OBE and Curriculum 2005 …

The early days (1999–2000) were marked by numerous workshops where subject advisers were prepared in order to train teachers to implement the new Curriculum 2005 (C2005). All the subject advisers of the WCED would normally assemble at the Parow Teachers' Centre for these provincial meetings. Provincial officials, who have been trained at national level during a previous round, would typically conduct the training. These sessions normally elicited lively discussions as subject advisers struggled to come to grips with this new system. I remember how scared and unsettled I felt right at the beginning about having to train teachers for a system that I did not understand myself. Three concerns were prevalent among the WCED subject advisers at the time: Firstly, many of those present, like myself, have never taught in the primary school, but were expected to train thousands of primary school teachers as part of the OBE roll-out. Secondly, we had experience of teaching children; the majority of us were not trained to teach adults. Yet we were expected to train thousands of teachers in the next couple of years. Thirdly, we came from the old system; most of us had no experience of teaching in an OBE classroom. Yet we were expected to train teachers to implement OBE in their classrooms. These concerns led to a lot of uncertainty among and pressure on subject advisers.

In spite of our uncertainties, most of the subject advisers (most of whom were black, i.e. previously classified as African, Indian and Coloured) who were based at regional offices passionately embraced OBE as an alternative to Apartheid Education. We wanted to see in OBE everything that was better than Apartheid Education. Most of us exhibited an almost

scriptural loyalty to the basic tenets of OBE. Already in December 1999, Professor Wally Morrow, my academic mentor and the promoter of my master's thesis, had the courage to say the following in a brilliant and sarcastic way in the presence of departmental officials:

> If we are opposed to Apartheid Education then we must be in favour of OBE. We might be a bit unsure about what OBE is, but we must find ways to 'make it work' because it is the path we have chosen to 'transform' education in South Africa, it is our New Scripture.

> As the cracks begin to be revealed we need to redouble our efforts, we need to understand that such a fundamental transformation, like a conversion to a new faith, is something that will take patience and persistent collective effort to accomplish. Our discourse must serve to reinforce the purity of our faith, and we cannot afford to have skeptical voices in our midst. If our spirits begin to flag we need, at whatever cost, to import evangelists and foreign missionaries to re-inspire us, to reveal the true faith. Those of us who do not have the charisma to be evangelists, or the inclination to be missionaries, need to adopt the humbler role of advocates. (Morrow, 1999:1)

This sarcastic, religious metaphor described the attitude of the black subject advisers with exact precision. Desperate for change after years of abuse under Apartheid Education, we clutched the straw of OBE to lead us to the better educational dispensation that we have envisioned for years. To complicate matters further, the OBE discourse was infused with the rhetoric of People's Education, a radical discourse in education that was prevalent in the 1980s, a discourse with which many of the black subject advisers identified. For many of the black subject advisers it was a dream come true: the radical discourse replacing the dominant, repressive Apartheid Education to become the official discourse. I expand further on this in Chapter 2.

The curriculum staff at the WCED head office level (who was under exclusively white leadership) was less optimistic about the new approach to education and was forever looking for ways to dress up traditional approaches in an OBE fashion to suit their political superiors, in particular Helen Zille, who was the Member of the Executive Committee for Education in the Western Cape at that time. Zille openly and defiantly rejected OBE and the new C2005 and was advocating a 'back to basics' approach. The Western Cape at that stage was governed by the Democratic Alliance, and was one of only two provinces that were not governed by the

ANC, who was holding political power at national level. There was a tendency at head office level in the WCED to go it alone as a province against the national Department of Education (DoE) in curriculum matters. This was a well-known fact nationally at the time. Many subject advisers interpreted this as resistance to political change in general and to the transformation of education in particular. In a racially polarised debate about education, some rather uncharitably interpreted it as an effort by the last bastion of apartheid to preserve Apartheid Education.

The arrival of a new national Minister of Education in the person of Kader Asmal seemed to give the anti-C2005 lobby new vigour. Asmal appointed a committee to review C2005 under the leadership of Professor Linda Chisholm, an academic at Natal University at the time. It was important for Asmal that the process was driven by academics, given his own academic background, his plans for merging tertiary institutions and his intention to locate teacher training in the universities in future. Also, academics played a less prominent role in the original process. It was to be a review of a curriculum that was already implemented in some grades in the General Education and Training (GET) Band and this handpicked group of academics had to pronounce a verdict after a process of consultation and review.

The announcement of the review process came as a heavy blow to us as subject advisers in the regions of the WCED. A tremendous sense of loss pervaded the Parow Teachers' Centre when the news about the curriculum review process broke. Although the process still had to take its course, C2005 was already judged and convicted in the media and by the public as a poor curriculum that did not serve the needs of the learners and teachers of the country. We, the subject advisers, felt that teachers perceived us as the advocates of C2005 and were unsure of how they might receive us when we came back to them with a different message or system, whatever the outcome of the review process would be. Already talk was made about a curriculum for the 21st century, called C21, that would be better than C2005 could ever hope to be. The academics under Chisholm would deliver the tablets from the mountain to us. The newspaper the *Sunday Times* tabulated the differences between C2005 and C21 in the same way as the advocates of C2005 tabulated the differences between Apartheid Education and C2005 previously. Zille wrote full spreads in the newspapers extolling the virtues of C21. The faith of the subject advisers was reduced to a lie and C21 appeared as the new faith of the enlightened.

In the end there was no C21. No completely new curriculum was delivered to the masses of South Africa, despite all the bravado and triumphalism. When the report of the review committee appeared, it suggested a "strengthening and streamlining of C2005". The triumphalism of the C21 proponents disappeared, together with the use of the term C21 from the educational vocabulary of South Africa.

The main findings of the review committee can be summarised as follows:

- Strong support for the principles of OBE was voiced
- The structure and design of Curriculum 2005 was found to be skewed
- There was a lack of alignment between Curriculum and Assessment policy
- The training was found to be inadequate
- Learning support materials were variable in quality and often unavailable
- Follow-up support was insufficient
- The level of understandings were variable
- There was limited transfer of learning into classroom practice
- The time-frames were found to be unmanageable and unrealistic (Department of Education, 2000:18–21)

The subject advisers had to agree with most of the findings. It was convincingly argued and supported. We could not keep ourselves blind to the obvious defects that were embedded in C2005. As reasonable people, we had to accept our own fallibilism (Burbules, 2005), i.e. the fact that we have made a commitment to C2005, and that because of this commitment we have run the possibility of error. We had to admit our error and reflect on it in the light of the sound findings of the committee.

The academics have delivered not a new curriculum, but suggestions on how to strengthen and streamline C2005. The recommendations of the review committee focused on the following:

- Structure and design of the curriculum
- Teacher Orientation, Training and Support
- Learning Support Materials
- National, Provincial and District-level Support
- Critical factors necessary for strengthened implementation

- Pace and scope of implementation: Grades 4 and 8 (Department of Education, 2000:21–24)

I welcomed most of the suggestions, but was incensed by the suggestion of the committee to axe two learning areas, Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) and Technology from the curriculum. I have always felt that financial literacy and entrepreneurship were very important for children at all levels in the school. So, after the announcement of the recommendations of the review committee, I became part of a campaign with others to retain the two learning areas as part of the new curriculum. Our campaign was successful in the end. In retrospect I think that we were too focused on our immediate area of interest and failed to fully appreciate the bigger picture of curriculum overload.

As a result of the above recommendations, a Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was developed for each of the eight learning areas. The RNCS had only three design features, a great improvement on the eight of C2005. It was a streamlined and strengthened version of C2005. The RNCS was gazetted in 2002. The implementation timetable was given as follows:

Foundation Phase (grades R–3)   2004 (with training in 2003)
Intermediate Phase (grades 4–6)   2005 (with training in 2004)
Grade 7   2006 (with training in 2005)
Grade 8   2007 (with training in 2006)
Grade 9   2008 (with training in 2007)

In practice this meant that some grades in the GET Band would be implementing the RNCS, while others would still continue with C2005. There was a temptation among some teachers in the higher grades of the GET Band to start using the streamlined and strengthened RNCS. Some principals also thought it better to have their entire schools on the same system. Many requests were directed at the WCED for permission to implement the RNCS throughout the primary school. The reason why the Department refused such requests was that the teachers in the higher grades of the GET Band were not trained to implement the RNCS. In addition, a national assessment at the end of Grade 9 in the form of the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) was implemented from 2002 onwards. This national assessment was based on the original C2005.

The training for the implementation of the original C2005 was conducted according to a 'cascade model'. The cascade model worked as follows: The national DoE would train

selected provincial officials, they would in turn train the district officials, who in turn trained a number of teachers per school. These teachers were then responsible to train their other colleagues at school. In the process, the message changed quite significantly from the top to the bottom. What was implemented in schools was in many cases some crude variant of the vision of the original planners at national level.

I embarked on a lot of self-study on OBE. Plucked from my comfort zone as matric specialist in the commercial subjects, I was suddenly responsible for a new learning area called Economic and Management Sciences that was to be compulsory from Grade R to 9. I welcomed the idea that primary school children would be exposed to basic financial literacy and entrepreneurship. I have long held the opinion that such exposure could play an important role in the later lives of these children and could only be of benefit to society as a whole. Many training sessions for teachers followed in the space of a couple of years as C2005 was introduced and implemented: firstly workshops for Grade 7 teachers in 1999, then grades 4 and 6 in 2000, then grades 5 and 9 in 2001. I travelled extensively in the Western Cape to conduct workshops, normally as a team with a colleague who was a white Afrikaner and former school principal, and who has become a close friend of mine during these years. In the EMS group, I was the scriptwriter for the provincial EMS programmes. The duration of these training programmes was normally five full school days, covering all eight learning areas. Teachers would be withdrawn from schools for the training courses. The content usually contained some background to OBE and an introduction to each of the eight learning areas. I always thought it wise to include examples of learning programmes for teachers in the EMS training session. My idea was that if teachers at least had examples of what is to be done, they would be able to design their own original examples in due course.

The method of the workshops was modelled on an outcomes-based approach and was designed to be interactive. The idea was to make the most of the time available to us and to give the best possible service to the teachers given the less than ideal conditions. At these workshops, teachers usually vented their frustrations about the limitations of the training course and their unpreparedness to implement OBE. I treated them with respect and usually allowed time for such sessions, because in my heart I identified with their plight. I always made a point to report the concerns of teachers to my superiors at the WCED head office. In retrospect, it is very clear to me that the project of training teachers to implement a vastly different approach to education through a five-day workshop, with a two-hour follow-up session in the next year, was hopelessly too ambitious and borders on the insane.

The national and provincial training processes were significantly improved during the RNCS training. A National Core Training Team (NCTT) was assembled from different role-players in education in the country. The NCTT conceptualised a training model and developed the training materials for the training of Provincial Core Training Teams (PCTT). The NCTT trained provincial officials locally, in their provinces. Only members of the PCTT who were trained by the NCTT were allowed to train teachers. By doing this, the negative effects of the cascade model were avoided to a large extent. The NCTT modelled an OBE approach in their training. I was a member of the Western Cape PCTT for the training of the Foundation Phase in 2003 and can bear witness to the improvement of the process to train teachers and principals to implement the RNCS.

During the final restructuring of the WCED in 2001, I was appointed as Senior Curriculum Planner: GET Assessment based at the head office in Cape Town. This was based on the work I have been doing in the EMS group concerning assessment. It was a newly created generic (i.e. not coupled to any learning area) post. The responsibilities of this post included the following:

- The development of provincial assessment policy
- Participation in national forums concerning GET processes
- Leadership of the assessment group consisting of the assessment coordinators of the seven districts of the WCED
- Chairing the Provincial Assessment Committee and participation in the Provincial Examinations Board and Curriculum Board meetings
- Management of provincial GET continuous assessment (CASS) and CTA processes

I was part of a number of new appointments in the Directorate: Curriculum Development, which previously consisted mostly of white people. The new wave of appointments plus the relocation of the Specialist Sub-Directorate from Bellville to the head office in Cape Town changed the racial profile of the Directorate: Curriculum Development at the head office considerably. There were many black faces now, but still the superiors were all white.

My new post afforded me many possibilities: I became part of the National Assessment Group. I accompanied the Director: Curriculum Development on various occasions to meetings of the Curriculum Management Council (CMC) at national level. I was part of the development of EMS assessments at national level. The son of a painter and a domestic

servant, the commerce teacher from Range High School and the subject adviser from the Bellville region was now a national player. I could now play a role in effecting the changes that needed to be made to the system, or so I thought. At provincial level I was chairperson of the Provincial Assessment Committee and participated in the Provincial Examinations Board and Curriculum Board meetings. I led the Assessment Coordinators' Group and also a task group comprising head office and regional assessment and special education staff. I was intensely involved in assessment and practically drove the conversation about assessment in the province. I convened a major provincial assessment conference, the suggestions of which resulted in the WCED provincial GET Assessment Guidelines, which were published in November 2003.

In May 2004 I resigned from my position as Senior Curriculum Planner: GET Assessment in the WCED after 19 years and five months in school education, even though I loved the job that I was doing. This decision was mainly the result of my unhappiness about the working conditions I experienced at the WCED and the realisation that I could not bring about the change that I dreamt about for such a long time. The dream was one of a caring education department, one that does not discriminate on the basis of race, class or creed and that treats its teachers, parents, learners and employees with respect, in short, an education department in service of the public. Yet, I had to work daily with supervisors whose actions and dealings with their subordinates seemed to indicate that they had underdeveloped human relationship skills. The Education Policy and Planning Branch of the WCED up to the time that I resigned in 2004 was still under exclusive white leadership and their subordinates were mostly black. I experienced the corporate ethos as still largely untransformed, despite lip service to transformation. The managers I worked with seemed far removed from the realities of schools and seemed to be more focused on the indicators on their performance contracts. They seemed to me to be moving too near to the political level. To my mind, many decisions that were made were not made on the basis of what is educationally sound and rational, but on the basis of what is acceptable to current political office bearers, irrespective of the party they belonged to. This I believed to be dangerous to education in the long run. It was always my naïve conviction that the education specialists should advise the political office bearers on what is to be done and not vice versa. These circumstances made it impossible for me to continue the job that I understood as being a public education official. The crucial error that I had made is to naively assume that the education department was a democratic deliberative space. My failure to take into account the powerful interests and structural inequalities that Iris Marion

Young (1997) identifies as major impediments to communicative democracy, proved to be detrimental in the end.

On 1 June 2004 I took up the position of Coordinator: International Fundraising at Stellenbosch University. This position combined my business qualifications, fundraising experience in Germany, my fluency in the German language and my long-held respect for the university as a social institution. I re-entered the world of international philanthropic fundraising, now in service of higher education. It was a pleasure to start working in a smaller unit after years in a huge bureaucracy. This was the university that gave birth to the conceptual framework of apartheid, the 'maternity ward of apartheid', as some sectors of the local previously disadvantaged community called it. Now it was transforming to become a national asset, welcoming all sections of the South African and global society. What was also refreshing was that under the leadership of Professor Chris Brink, rector and vice-chancellor at that time, race issues were put on the table in a transparent manner and transformation was driven consciously. Various policies were put in place to spell out the direction and vision for the University.

Although I was now working in an administrative department at the University, my direct involvement in teaching and education still continued. Colleagues in the Faculty of Education at the University heard about my move to the University and invited me to observe lessons of National Teaching Diploma students specialising in the teaching of EMS once a week. My task was then to provide advice and feedback to the students that could improve their teaching practice. This was a task that I enjoyed tremendously. It gave me the opportunity to share my wealth of experience with young people, poised to enter the teaching profession. I was also still chairing a financial literacy project for the large insurance firm, Santam, until my decision to step down from that position at the end of 2004 to concentrate closer on my new job. Closer to home, I took a keen interest in the education of both my own school-going children, and I was a confirmation class teacher in my local congregation, the Matroosfontein Moravian congregation in Clarke's Estate. Soon a trend developed in my job as Coordinator: International Fundraising: I tended to focus more on raising funds for community engagement projects and was more successful in obtaining funds for those kinds of projects, as opposed to research and teaching projects. The largest proportion of these community engagement projects had to do with developmental work in the schooling sector. It seemed natural for me to submit the kind of projects for which I had a passion. Because I had to understand the projects that I submitted for funding, I made an effort to visit projects and to get to know the

academic staff members responsible for them. Soon I had a good oversight of what happened in terms of community engagement at the University and who was involved.

Because of an increased focus on community engagement at higher education institutions in post-apartheid South Africa, the management of Stellenbosch University deemed it fit to advertise the post of Director: Community Interaction; the incumbent would subsequently have to establish and lead a Division for Community Interaction to coordinate this third core function at the University. The University was looking for a person with a background in development and with a good oversight of community engagement projects at the University. A junior colleague brought the advertisement to my attention and said that he thinks that I would be a good candidate for such a position. After careful thought I decided to apply for the position. Great was my delight when I got the news that I was the successful candidate.

On 1 April 2006 I took up the position of Director: Community Interaction, tasked with putting in place the mechanisms to coordinate the important core function of community interaction at the University. I harnessed all the strength, networks, intellectual ability and diplomacy at my disposal to establish this new core function. I was extremely happy to have strong support from the University management. As part of the restructuring of the University management by the new rector and vice-chancellor, Professor Russel Botman, the Council of the University decided to upgrade my position to that of Senior Director: Community Interaction towards the end of 2007. To me this development was a confirmation of the importance of community interaction for the new University management structures. In my current position I am responsible, among other things, for the schools partnership programme of the University.

I am trained as a teacher and will think of myself as one until the day I die. My contribution to education in South Africa is not yet complete. This dissertation is proof of it. Like Maxine Greene (1998) I say: I am … not yet.

Section III: Doing philosophy

As can be seen from the working title of this dissertation, it was conducted as a philosophical inquiry.

Burbules and Warnick (2003:20) "foreground philosophy as an area of inquiry: a method of generating *knowledge* (though not knowledge of an empirical sort) and *perspective*

(commitments of value and belief that provide answers to the "why" questions underlying any complex area of human practice)".

It is important to note that the kind of knowledge that is generated by philosophical inquiry is not empirical knowledge. It should therefore not be expected of this dissertation, as a philosophical inquiry, to produce such kind of knowledge. However, it could reasonably be expected of this dissertation to generate a perspective that provides answers to the "why" questions in terms of the human practice of education and teaching.

Burbules and Warnick take a simple question as a point of departure: "What do philosophers *do* when they are doing philosophy of education?" (2003:20). They realise that different philosophers come from a multitude of different theoretical orientations, yet they are of the opinion that when philosophers *do* philosophy, they do similar things that can be clustered together because of the resemblances between some of those things. They prefer to call these clusters *methods*, but are careful to add that this does not constitute a mechanical orientation and that what they present should not be seen as an exhaustive list. The methods of philosophical inquiry are also not separate or distinct approaches; different approaches could be used in conjunction with each other and hybrid forms are possible.

The following are the methods of philosophical inquiry that they identify:

1. *Analyzing a term or concept, showing its multiple uses and meanings, for the primary purpose of clarification.*
2. *An ideological or a deconstructive critique of a term or concept, identifying internal contradictions or ambiguities in uses of the term and/or a disclosure of partisan effects the term has in popular discourses.*
3. *Exploring the hidden assumptions underlying a particular view or broader school of thought.*
4. *Sympathetically or critically reviewing a specific argument offered elsewhere.*
5. *Questioning a particular educational practice or policy.*
6. *Proposing the ends or purposes education should achieve – either in terms of benefits to the person or to the society, or both.*
7. *Speculating about alternative systems or practices of education, whether utopian or programmatic, which contrast with and challenge conventional educational understandings and practices.*

8. *A 'thought experiment', a method that takes an imaginary situation, analyzes it, then gradually modifies one or another element of the situation to determine which features are relevant to changing its pertinent character.*

9. *Exegetical work: a close reading of a philosophical or literary text with an eye more toward explication and understanding of its complex meanings than analysis or critique.*

10. *Synthesizing disparate research from philosophy itself or other fields (e.g., political theory, cognitive psychology, sociology, etc.) to find meanings and implications for educational theory and practice. (Burbules & Warnick, 2003:21, italics in the original)*

This dissertation will be using methods numbered 3, 5, 6 and 7 above. I now briefly explain how I have used each of these methods.

Exploring the hidden assumptions underlying a particular view or broader school of thought. In this dissertation I explore the assumptions of the outcomes-based discourse and its corresponding assessment practices. I explore the philosophical underpinnings of OBE and outcomes-based assessment and its implications for teachers and the practice of teaching. Much of contemporary criticism of OBE operates at the level of practical and logistical problems. Many of these problems are rooted in the philosophy that underpins the outcomes-based discourse. I hope that my exploration of the philosophical assumptions and commitments of OBE will help to add to understanding of and help to finding ways to transcend the predicament that OBE assessment poses to teachers.

Questioning a particular educational practice or policy. I question the current OBE and outcomes-based assessment approach that is implemented in South African schools in this dissertation. I question it from a position of critical pedagogy. I use my own experience and insights and that of prominent philosophers of education to critically engage with OBE and outcomes-based assessment.

Proposing the ends or purposes education should achieve – either in terms of benefits to the person or to society, or both. I have developed an alternative view of education to OBE in this dissertation. In constructing this alternative view, I reflect anew on the question: "What is education?" I identify seven constitutive meanings of education, i.e. those meanings that in my opinion make education what it is and without which education cannot be. In this way I

am proposing (in my alternative view of education) the ends or purposes that education should achieve. Implicit in this account are the benefits that these constitutive meanings of education are thought to have for individuals and society.

Speculating about alternative systems or practices of education, whether utopian or programmatic, which contrast with and challenge conventional educational understandings and practices. In this dissertation, I have constructed an alternative view of education that is different from the outcomes-based pedagogy that is embodied in the current education policy in South Africa. It is offered as a way to think differently about the practice of education in South Africa. I have measured OBE against the constitutive meanings of my alternative view of education to determine to which extent it is commensurate with these constitutive meanings.

In addition to the four methods above, my *narrative* plays a crucial and central role in this dissertation. This dissertation is an important academic highlight of my career (the biggest thus far), therefore I need to argue a case that is authentic. I need to be present in these pages, arguing passionately for and against positions, informed by the whole body of knowledge called philosophy of education and especially by my own experience of education in this country. I need to make a distinct contribution with this dissertation; become a voice in the academic debate about education and assessment in this country and in the world. In this process it would not suffice to merely summarise experts, who may have written in other contexts, and to pretend that their positions are universally applicable, valid and acceptable. In the field of education in South Africa we have had too many examples of uncritical importation and transplantation of ideas and systems in recent years. I have to speak from a contemporary South African context, as a black voice, from the periphery of society, outside of the mainstream academe that is still dominated by white voices because of historical imbalances. I need to speak as a black male, a teacher, an education administrator, a Capetonian from the Cape Flats, a parent, etc. I need to add my voice to the continuous debate on education and assessment in this country and the world. The use of my narrative will assist me greatly to achieve that.

The approach to the narrative that I have used is called narrativism. Brian Fay asks a most interesting question: "[W]hat is the nature of the stories we tell about our own and others' lives?" and more specifically: "[A]re the stories of our lives lived or merely told?"

(1996:178). In reflection on these questions, he distinguishes between three approaches to the narrative: narrative realism, narrative constructivism and narrativism.

Fay defines narrative realism in the following way:

> *Narrative realism* claims that narrative structures exist *in* the human world itself and not just in the stories people tell *about* this world. Human lives are already formed into stories before historians or biographers – or indeed, the persons living these lives – attempt to tell these stories. Because narrative inhere in particular lives the job of historians is to mirror this already existing structure. True stories are found, not constructed. (Fay, 1996:179)

Fay uses the analogy of the DNA molecule to explain this approach to narrative. It seems to have a particular structure independent of whoever is trying to understand it. It becomes the task of the molecular biologist to discover the already existing pattern, not to create a pattern that can be imposed on a material that is formless itself. (Fay, 1996:179)

Narrative constructivism is exactly the opposite. Fay claims that

> … historians impose narrative structures on a formless flow of events. Narratives are constructed, not discovered, are creations after the fact when one can assign – from one's own perspective – particular roles in particular stories to the various events and relationships of persons' lives. (Fay, 1996:190)

Both these approaches seem somewhat flawed to me. Narrative realism could veer towards determinism, while narrative constructivism could degenerate into made-up or contrived stories. According to Fay,

> ... [a] proper view of the relation of narrative and life needs to capture what is correct about realism (that narrative form is not accidental, nor a mere representational device; and that our identities as agents embody narratives) without including what is erroneous about it (that each person's life just is a single enacted narrative of which the agent is the partial author and the biographer is the mere reporter). Moreover, it needs to do justice to the insights of narrative constructivism (that the narrative account of any life is continually and indefinitely revisable) without making its mistakes (that narratives and the form of narrative are merely creations imposed on material which is non-narritival). Narrativism tries to be such a view, one that steers

a middle course between narrative realism and narrative constructivism, hoping to capture what is worthwhile in both. (Fay, 1996:194)

Fay summarises his answer to his original question in the following way:

Are stories lived or merely told? The best response to this question is to attack the false dichotomy it presumes: either lived or told. Stories are lived because human activity is inherently narratival in character and form: in acting we 'knit the past and the future together'. But stories are also told in that with hindsight we can appreciate narrative patterns which we could not appreciate at the time of acting. We tell stories in acting and we continue to tell stories afterwards about the actions we have performed. To coin new words to express this complex view, we might say that our lives are enstoried and our stories are enlived. (Fay, 1996:196)

It is the approach of narrativism that best describes the route I want to take in this dissertation. The narrative form of my life is not an accident. There are certain patterns that can be discerned in my narrative that have had a great impact on my life – past, present and future. I would describe those patterns as stable, but not predetermined. At the same time I want to again claim like Maxine Greene (1998) that "I am … not yet", neither when looking at the past nor the future: My narrative is always up for revision, always in a state of becoming. This is the story that I tell in hindsight of my experience with education and assessment thus far. I describe events that I have lived through. The very act of writing this dissertation also becomes a conscious act within a broader narrative, which is not finished as yet.

I believe that what I present in this dissertation is an innovative approach to *doing* philosophy: Philosophy of education provides me with the tools for questioning. I use four methods of philosophy of education to identify a particular problem with the education system (the predicament that assessment poses to teachers) and integrate those methods with narrativism to reflect on this major philosophical problem. Throughout this dissertation I have explored the implications of my reflection and the alternative view that I offer for education and policy.

Section IV: This dissertation as a highlight of my academic career

There is no doubt that this dissertation is an absolute highlight of my academic career. I took longer to come to this point in my academic life, not because of lack of ability but because of lack of opportunity. In the end I created most of this opportunity for myself. This dissertation

is an important part of my becoming. I have come a long way, but I am still not yet. In the next paragraphs I discuss how I have gone about writing this dissertation.

What is the problem?

OBE in the form of C2005 has been introduced in South African public schools in 1997. The experience from 1997 to the present is that the implementation process was (and still is) accompanied by great difficulty for teachers and presents a predicament to them. They are trying to come to terms with a whole new vocabulary that seemingly seeks to completely redefine the practice of teaching. Teachers experience a feeling of not completely understanding the new curriculum and its system of assessment.

In my numerous conversations with teachers and in two formal studies that I know of (Brombacher et al, 2004; HSRC, 2005), teachers have identified the single most problematic area of OBE implementation as being the implementation of *assessment policies and guidelines*. The expectations and prescriptions in terms of recording and reporting that are required of teachers seem unrealistic to them. Recording against each of the detailed assessment standards and 'aggregating' the different recordings of codes to come to a final judgement seems to be what the officials require. The required learning programme phase planning (three-year plan), work schedules (one-year plan), lesson plans, detailed mark sheets, educator portfolios, learner portfolios, comments about each individual learner, personal profiles, records of interventions, progression and promotion schedules and report cards place an unfair administrative burden on teachers. In the end, the feeling among teachers is that they are spending a disproportionate amount of time on administration as opposed to teaching. This seems to benefit the education department officials, who act as an external audit regime, more than it benefits the children.

There therefore exists a high level of frustration, confusion and a sense of overload among teachers. But to stay on the safe side, most teachers do their best to comply with the requirements without really comprehending the new system.

What is the main question?

The core question that I address in this dissertation is: "How can we think differently about education in order to transcend the predicament that outcomes-based assessment poses for teachers and the practice of teaching?"

To answer this question, I

- trace the rise and dominance of an outcomes-based discourse in South Africa;
- critically discuss outcomes-based assessment;
- describe the predicament that assessment poses to teachers and to the practice of teaching;
- construct a different view of education that might provide a way to transcend the predicament; and
- consider the implications of my alternative view of education for teachers and assessment.

The working title of this dissertation is *Teachers, assessment and outcomes-based education: A philosophical enquiry*. This title suggests that concepts such as *teachers*, *assessment* and *OBE* itself will become the subject of this philosophical enquiry.

What do I want to achieve?

My objectives with this dissertation are the following:

- To locate myself in the debate on teachers, OBE and outcomes-based assessment
- To reflect on the rise and dominance of an outcomes-based discourse in South Africa
- To critically discuss outcomes-based assessment
- To describe the predicament that assessment poses to teachers and to the practice of teaching
- To propose a different way of thinking about education, teaching and assessment that will transcend the predicament that assessment poses to teachers and to the practice of teaching

Why am I doing this research?

I have chosen to concentrate on teachers in the Western Cape since I am very familiar with the WCED, having served in that department as a teacher for fourteen years, as subject adviser for EMS in the Bellville region for three years and as Senior Curriculum Planner: GET Assessment at the WCED head office for almost three years; i.e. in total about twenty years of my working life. I was also chairperson of the WCED Provincial Assessment Committee until my resignation from the Department at the end of May 2004. I am therefore intimately knowledgeable of the system in different capacities.

My knowledge of teachers' perceptions about assessment and OBE comes from the numerous school visits, training sessions and workshops involving teachers and principals, formal discussions in the WCED Provincial Assessment Committee, Exams Board and Curriculum Board involving principals' and teachers' representatives; from informal contact with relatives and friends who are teachers; and from my role as parent of two children, one of whom has schooled, and another who is currently schooling, in a public school in the Western Cape.

I was also the organiser of the first Consultative Workshop on Assessment of the WCED on 19 to 20 March 2003 at Greenfields Primary School, involving a cross-section in education including teachers, principals, circuit managers, special education staff, curriculum advisers, head office management and special education and curriculum personnel.

I also initiated a research project entitled *Evaluation of the 2003 GETC developmental process of the WCED*, which was undertaken by Brombacher and Associates and was submitted to the top management of the WCED in February 2004.

My regular meetings with the assessment coordinators of the seven Education Management and Development Centres (EMDCs) informed me of the views of teachers and principals at grassroots level, because these officials interacted with schools on a daily basis. They brought their experiences to our monthly meetings, which were a forum for exchange and professional development. Many queries could be addressed at this forum.

All of the above involvements of mine confirmed a recurring theme: Outcomes-based assessment is a predicament for teachers. Ultimately the rationale for my study was to find an alternative view of education that will make it possible to transcend this predicament.

How did I go about writing this dissertation?

I have already stated my main positions in terms of research methods in the introductory part of this chapter. I have chosen to engage in a philosophical inquiry in this dissertation, because I deem it an appropriate methodology for the research problem at hand. It is my belief that the root of the problem with OBE and outcomes-based assessment lies at a conceptual level and that this has grave implications for classroom practice. The methods of philosophical inquiry that I employ in this dissertation are the four that I have identified in Section III of this chapter, following Burbules and Warnick (2003).

In addition to the four methods, my narrative plays a central role in this dissertation. The approach to the narrative that I prefer is what Fay (1996) calls narrativism. I make extensive use of narrativism in this dissertation and in the process invert the normal process of philosophical enquiry by using philosophy of education as an activity to identify a major philosophical problem and then to integrate narrativism with the methods of philosophical inquiry to reflect on the problem. From such reflection implications for education and policy have followed.

What are the boundaries?

In terms of the type of study, I have chosen to undertake a philosophical study, because much of the existing critique of OBE in my experience has to do with practical and logistical problems. It was not my intention to address these types of problems primarily in this dissertation.

In terms of geographical area, I have concentrated in this study on my experience in the Western Cape. Although I have worked on national committees, I cannot generalise the particular circumstances in the Western Cape with other provinces.

In terms of the level of the education system, I have concentrated on the GET Band, i.e. grades R to 9, because it is in this area that I have gained most experience in OBE implementation. Although I have vast experience in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band, i.e. grades 10 to 12, it was not gained under an outcomes-based regime. The new FET process is still unfolding and might be a good subject for a different study at a later stage.

Further, this dissertation will concentrate on outcomes-based assessment, a component of OBE. Although this was my main focus, the centrality of assessment within the OBE system and the internal, conceptual link between OBE and its assessment system forced me to also deal with more general aspects of OBE.

In terms of location, the arguments I advance view OBE assessment from the vantage point of a black teacher. I argue in this dissertation that it is the previously disadvantaged schools that are disadvantaged in a new way by the implementation of OBE. It may well be that education officials and others have particular views to state on the subject, but that is material for other contributions to the debate on OBE and outcomes-based assessment in South Africa. In this study, the case was argued from a previously disadvantaged teacher's point of view.

Through which lenses am I looking?

I have conducted this dissertation from a critical theory perspective. I prefer a particular variant of critical theory, closely associated with the position of Jürgen Habermas, emphasising the empowerment of teachers, when they think about and engage in the practice of teaching. It is an approach that consists both of ideology critique and the formulation of visions of emancipation and hope for the future.

I did not choose positivist theory, because the presupposed logical independence of theory and practice in positivism creates a view of reality that is not satisfactory to me. I needed a more honest approach, allowing me to state a political commitment and bias. I did not choose the route of interpretive theory since I wanted to go beyond description and interpretation to emancipation. I also deliberately avoided mechanistic versions of critical theory since they have a tendency towards technical rationality and can become as mechanistic and law-like as positivism.

The chapters in brief

In Chapter 1 I have made introductory remarks about the problem that interests me and have prepared the reader for a narratival approach that rejects the charge of self-indulgence and narcissism. In the second section of the chapter, I briefly sketched the story of education and I: from my working class childhood through primary, secondary and higher education, my life as a teacher and education official, my teaching experience in Germany up to my current position at Stellenbosch University. Next, I prepared the reader for the way that I have 'done' philosophy in this dissertation. In the next part of the chapter I plotted the scope of this dissertation, the highlight of my academic career, including setting the stage (problem), formulating the research question, objectives, rationale for the research, research methods, limitations of the dissertation, a description of the theoretical perspective that I have taken and a chapter summary. Before concluding the chapter, I anticipate potential critiques of my methodology and briefly respond to these. The chapter ends with a short statement situating me as both an insider and a stranger.

In Chapter 2 I argue that although OBE is proclaimed to be a progressive pedagogy, an argument can be made that characterises it as an old behaviourist, management theory, overlain by a new policy technology called performativity. To develop this argument I firstly give an overview of Kraak's account of three different education discourses that have shaped

the debate on alternatives to Apartheid Education since the middle of the 1980s (Kraak, 1999). These discourses are a radical discourse, a systemic discourse and an outcomes-based discourse. I infuse my own narrative in the discussion of each of these discourses that Kraak identifies. Secondly, I offer an explanation of how it came about that, of the three discourses that Kraak identified, the outcomes-based discourse emerged as the dominant discourse in education in post-apartheid South Africa. I thirdly give my explanation of three metaphors that Eisner (2005) uses to characterise dominant views about education. These metaphors are industrial, behaviouristic and biological. Fourthly, I locate the outcomes-based discourse within the behaviouristic and industrial metaphors described by Eisner, with its attendant implications for the practice of education. Thereafter I discuss the policy technology of performativity that overlays the location of OBE within the behaviouristic and industrial metaphors. I then engage critically with OBE in South Africa by advancing reasons why I think it can be interpreted as an old behaviouristic, management theory (overlain by performativity) that masquerades as a progressive pedagogy.

Building on the characterisation of OBE as an approach to education that masquerades as a progressive pedagogy, but that can also be interpreted as a conservative, behaviourist management theory, which is overlain by a new policy technology called performativity, I argue in Chapter 3 that outcomes-based assessment can be seen as a prime instance of performativity. To develop the argument I start with an account of educational assessment in South Africa before the introduction of OBE, following Vandeyar and Killen (2003), but illuminated by my own experiences in education in South Africa in that period. Thereafter, I give my description of OBE assessment in South Africa. I then refer to the "assessment revolution" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:19) that is taking place in contemporary society in general. My interpretation of their term 'assessment revolution' is that they use this term to describe a development that is roughly synonymous to performativity. I then investigate how this assessment revolution impacts on the sphere of education. Following that, I interpret the argument of Delandshere (2001), which describes much of contemporary assessment as a technology that purports to be innocent and consider assessment in South Africa in the light of her argument. Linking to the critique raised against OBE in the previous chapter, I conclude the argument by raising concerns about outcomes-based assessment as a prime instance of performativity.

In Chapter 4 I argue that outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to teaching conceived of as a practice. I start by briefly giving a profile of the 'new teacher'

required in post-apartheid South Africa. After that I engage with the term 'predicament', drawing on the work of Burbules and Hansen (1997). I then briefly explore different understandings that teachers might have of teaching, engaging with the work of Hogan (2004) and Noddings (2004). I explain what I mean by 'practice' and indicate my preference for the understanding of teaching as a practice. Thereafter I explain in which ways outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to the practice of teaching. I end the chapter with a short conclusion.

In Chapter 5 I develop an alternative view of education which, I argue, could provide a way to transcend the predicament caused by OBE and outcomes-based assessment. I begin by briefly discussing Charles Taylor's concept of "constitutive" meanings (Taylor, 1985:34). I then proceed to draw the outlines of my alternative way of viewing education by identifying and discussing what I regard as some 'constitutive meanings' of education. I strived to present a view of these constitutive meanings as connected and interrelated, i.e. as mutually supporting and reinforcing. These meanings did not developed *ex nihilo*; they grew out of a dialogue between moments in my own narrative (Chapter 1) and the thoughts of contemporary philosophers with whose work I have engaged. An evaluation of OBE forms part of the discussion of what I regard as constitutive meanings of education. I argue that OBE is in most part incommensurate with the constitutive meanings of my alternative view of education at a conceptual level. I must, however, remind the reader that OBE emerged from a critical reading of education in South Africa, even though some of its conceptual roots can easily be traced to industrial capitalism. Instead of painting a caricature of OBE as the handmaiden of capitalism, I argue, for the sake of intellectual charity, that it is possible that OBE provides us with a minimalist view of critical pedagogy. I critique this minimalist view in favour of a maximalist view of critical pedagogy, which I claim the constitutive meanings of my alternative view of education represent. I have decided, after careful deliberation, to give a name to my alternative way of viewing education. It is a name that I hope will accommodate all the interrelated constitutive meanings that I identify in this study. I defend my decision to characterise my alternative view as a pedagogy against a charge that it could constitute a new grand narrative or a new alienating language.

In Chapter 6 I consider the implications of my alternative view of education, which I have decided to call *a pedagogy of compassionate rationality*, for teachers and for assessment. The implications identified in this chapter are each linked back, where apparent and applicable, to the account of the pedagogy of compassionate rationality that was given in the previous

chapter. I argue that my alternative view of education imagines teachers that themselves *embody* and *exemplify* the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, i.e. critical rationality, deliberation, caring and compassion, imagination, emancipation and hope, cosmopolitan justice and non-instrumentalism. Likewise, I accept in general that assessment practices, strategies and policies should *support, strengthen and reinforce* the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality. In the next section (Section II) I consider the implications of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality for teachers and for assessment. Section III is a conclusion that points to the promise of viewing education in this alternative way, which I have called a pedagogy of compassionate rationality.

In the last chapter, Chapter 7, I anticipate some critiques that may be levelled at this dissertation and briefly respond to them. In addition to potential critiques discussed during the main argument in this dissertation, I discuss in this chapter other potential critiques against my argument in this dissertation. I then extend an invitation to deliberation, in line with the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality.

Section V: Potential critique of my methodology

Firstly, some critical interlocutors might want to take issue with the methodology that I have employed, especially the type of research that I have employed in this dissertation, i.e. philosophical inquiry. They might want to point to the fact that I have much to say about teachers and assessment, but that I have not interviewed a single teacher during the writing of this dissertation. They might say that I have not done any reliable scientific study of which I could report the findings in an impartial way. Secondly and closely related to the first point, might be a criticism of my choice to make extensive use of the narrative, since the narrative might seem to some to be too 'subjective'. (I have already responded to a potential criticism of the narrative as self-indulgent and narcissistic earlier in this chapter.) Thirdly, some might find strange the fact that I have inverted the process of philosophical inquiry by starting with my narratival experiences and then progressing to philosophical thinking about educational practices and spelling out implications for teaching and policy.

In my response to the first point, which is the classical conceptual versus empirical research dichotomy, I will defend my use of philosophical inquiry instead of trying to offer a criticism of empirical research. In this dissertation, I engaged in a philosophical problem. Philosophical inquiry is *better suited* to this type of enquiry, while empirical research might be better suited

to other types of enquiry. The four generally accepted methods of philosophical inquiry, as described by Burbules and Warnick (2003), that I have employed in this dissertation were described earlier in this chapter. It should also be remembered that I write from a *critical pedagogy perspective*. Considerations of theory, practice and objectivity look differently from this perspective than from the one that is associated with empirical research.

Therefore, the kind of grammar that is associated with empirical research cannot be used to criticise my argument as subjective and unscientific. The dominant view of objectivity is that the objects of theory are independent of theory. From my perspective "all practice is theory-laden and theory is a critical reflection on practices, with a view to possibly improve them" (University of the Western Cape, 2001:50). Critical pedagogy is an approach to education that has an explicit agenda of emancipation; therefore it can never be neutral as implied (rather hypocritically, I would argue) by the dominant view of *objectivity as neutrality*. Critical pedagogy does not pretend to be politically neutral as some other approaches to education do; it is politically committed. As it is openly politically committed, it is openly opposed to any kind of ideology, i.e. physical or mental structures that serve to sustain relations of domination. This is the transparent approach I take in this dissertation; choosing not to hide behind notions such as objectivity, neutrality and scientific detachment.

The description of critical pedagogy above will also apply to criticisms that my choice of the use of narrative is too subjective. Similarly as above, language associated with empirical research is inappropriate to criticise my perspective and choice of method. The narrative is an acceptable methodology within a critical pedagogical approach. My narrative is not something that is only accessible to me; I have come to certain understandings through deliberation with others over the course of many years. This academic contribution itself is also part of a deliberation on a subject that I know, through deliberation with teachers, to be a very real predicament for teaching. The UWC Metatheory BEd (Hons) Coursebook (University of the Western Cape, 2001) states that research in a critical pedagogical framework is historically specific. It develops theories (not a theory) to help people situated in particular historical situations to change an unsatisfactory situation. Good critical theory is theory that "enables a deeper understanding by participants of the practices that they engage in and the ways in which they might be changed" (University of the Western Cape, 2001:50–51).

This is the sense in which I have employed my narrative; as a person acting within a very specific historical setting using a tool that could help people to understand the troubled practices of teaching and education in South Africa at the current juncture and suggesting ways in which these practices might be changed.

With regard to the inversion of the process of the philosophical process: I have started with a serious predicament to teaching (outcomes-based assessment) of which I have extensive experience in my life and career. It is not only me who have experienced outcomes-based assessment as a predicament, but hundreds of teachers with whom I have interacted during school visits, workshops and personal conversations over six years as an education official. My opinion is therefore not an idiosyncratic one, it is an informed opinion, forged in dialogue and deliberation with hundreds of teachers to whom I have had access because of my work in the education department, but also through friendship and family ties. I have reflected on this predicament, engaged with relevant ideas of prominent, contemporary philosophers, considered the implications for teaching and policy and came up with what I think is a reasonable alternative to transcend this predicament. It seems to me a reasonable and sensible way of dealing with a predicament.

I respect the body of knowledge that is called philosophy of education and its accepted research methods. I just do not view it as canonised. I see this body of knowledge and its associated research methodologies as ever-evolving. Such a view allows me to see myself and others as serious participants engaging in conversation and debate with established philosophers of education and to see us as having the ability to add to the body of knowledge and its research methodologies. I reject any sense that there is one correct, prescribed way of doing philosophy.

Section VI: Conclusion

In this dissertation I reflect from the perspective of an insider, as teacher, subject adviser and later as head of the GET Assessment Portfolio in the WCED, who now finds himself in the position of outsider; resigned from the WCED and currently attached to a tertiary institution. At the same time, I am a stranger (Greene, 1995): a black voice in the academia, from a working class background, located in the support services of a university as opposed to an academic department, a part-time student and a black student at Stellenbosch University.

In the pages that follow I dwell within this tension of being both an insider and a stranger. Notwithstanding the way I am seen or see myself, I have a voice to add to the conversation about education in South Africa and especially to the issues at stake.

CHAPTER 2

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION: A CONSERVATIVE BEHAVIOURIST MANAGEMENT THEORY MASQUERADING AS A PROGRESSIVE PEDAGOGY?

Section I: Introduction

In this chapter, I want to argue that although OBE is proclaimed to be a progressive pedagogy, an argument can be made that presents it as an old behaviourist, management theory, overlain by a new policy technology called performativity. To develop this argument I firstly give an overview of Kraak's account of three different education discourses that have shaped the debate about alternatives to Apartheid Education since the middle of the 1980s (Kraak, 1999). These discourses are a radical discourse, a systemic discourse and an outcomes-based discourse. I infuse my own narrative in the discussion of each of these discourses that Kraak identifies. Secondly, I offer an explanation of how it came about that, of the three discourses that Kraak identified, the outcomes-based discourse emerged as the dominant discourse in education in post-apartheid South Africa. I thirdly give my explanation of three metaphors that Eisner (2005) uses to characterise dominant views about education. These metaphors are industrial, behaviouristic and biological. Fourthly, I locate the outcomes-based discourse within the behaviouristic and industrial metaphors described by Eisner, with its attendant implications for the practice of education. Thereafter I discuss the policy technology of performativity that overlays the location of OBE within the behaviouristic and industrial metaphors. I then engage critically with OBE in South Africa by summarising reasons why I think it can be interpreted as an old behaviouristic, management theory (overlain by performativity) that masquerades as a progressive pedagogy.

Section II: Three different education discourses that have shaped the debate about alternatives to Apartheid Education

I start with a discussion of the different competing education discourses that have shaped the debate about alternatives to Apartheid Education and then move on to the rise and dominance of the outcomes-based discourse.

André Kraak was one of my lecturers during my part-time studies at UWC in the mid-80s. At that stage he was a young academic, who impressed me with his sharp intellect and tremendous publication rate. In an important, pioneering collection of articles on OBE, *Changing curriculum: Studies in outcomes-based education in South Africa*, Kraak (1999) provides what I regard as a unique analysis of the different, competing discourses on education in the transition to democracy in South Africa. He identifies three distinct policy discourses that have shaped the debate on alternatives to Apartheid Education, namely the radical discourse of People's Education of the 1980s, the systemic discourse (late 1980s to April 1994) and the outcomes-based discourse, which later displaced the systemic discourse. I now shortly engage with each of these discourses, linking it to my own experience.

Radical discourse

Among the progressive elements of the oppressed in South Africa there was always a yearning for an alternative political and economic system, especially after the proclamation of apartheid legislation in the 1950s and 1960s, which created separate education acts for different racial groups, removed black people from the voters' roll and ensured job reservation and labour preference areas. The global capitalist system was despised and local capitalists were loathed because they exploited the black majority, while they (the capitalists) were enjoying the benefits that the apartheid regime made possible. The yearning was for an egalitarian economic dispensation that placed emphasis on community and caring as opposed to atomism and self-interest. The alternative political system was one of one person, one vote or political democracy. There was some disagreement among liberation movements on exactly how these dual aims, i.e. economic and political liberation, were to be achieved. Some believed in a two-stage theory, which envisaged a first phase of national liberation, followed by a second stage of economic liberation. Others rejected this analysis and held that both political and economic emancipation should be pursued simultaneously. Despite their differences, the yearning for freedom and fair distribution of resources was so strong that most of the liberation organisations were working together in a loose alliance. Associated with these alternative political and economic arrangements, an education system that was free from the distortions of apartheid and its associated political economy was envisaged.

As I was teaching Economics in Standard 8 in the mid-1980s, I knew from my own experience that something was wrong with the education system, and especially with the curriculum. It was usually written by proponents of apartheid and other co-opted individuals

among the oppressed. Books that portrayed the South African and the international economy from the vantage point of the apartheid regime were the prescribed texts. As a teacher, I was obliged to teach the formal syllabus, but my older comrades in the TLSA always encouraged me to teach 'more than the syllabus'. It was always a struggle to obtain appropriate sources and resources to teach this 'more than the syllabus', because most of these were banned and there was always the danger of parents and the school leadership asking about what I was teaching. Inspired by the discussions at Teacher's League branch meetings, the writings of Freire and other alternative educational literature and also the lively class discussions during my period of part-time study at UWC (1989–1990 and again in 1992–1993), I had the feeling that I should break free of the rote learning and uncritical transmission of loaded facts that seemed to be the norm. I had visions of classrooms that were vibrant; where learners would learn not only for an examination but where they would seek knowledge that could "emancipate their minds from mental slavery", as Bob Marley sang in the reggae song "Redemption Songs". Group work, cooperative learning and "each one, teach one" were part and parcel of this new vision. Learners would, under the guidance and facilitation of their teachers, become critical thinkers.

We, as progressive teachers of the children of the oppressed, had a vision that was completely different from that of the apartheid social engineers. This alternative became known by many names among different groups of the oppressed: Universal Education, Democratic Education, People's Education, Education for Liberation, etc. It was a loose idea. The nearest it came to being formalised was in the rise of People's Education in the mid-1980s. People's Education was a project that was driven by an ANC-aligned organisation called the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) that was based at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Kraak (1999:23) tabulates the main differences between Apartheid Education and People's Education in the following way:

	APARTHEID EDUCATION	PEOPLE'S EDUCATION
POLITICAL PROJECT	Key instrument in the imposition of separate development policies.	An egalitarian project of social transformation.
	It resulted in racially differentiated access to education.	A central demand was the equal access of all to education.
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK	A conservative curriculum based on rigidly defined school subjects whose purpose was the unquestioned transmission of apartheid-determined syllabus content through rote learning.	A radical curriculum opposed to rote learning and based on critical thinking, independent work and integrated studies, aimed at equipping students to question and reveal the underlying causes of social inequality.
ROLE OF LEARNER	Learner acted upon; has little control of the learning process; learners were selected, assessed, graded and (often) excluded from future learning processes.	The pedagogy was learner centred; student-paced learning; continuous assessment.
ROLE OF TEACHER	The teacher was subservient to the dictates of the state; tasks prescribed by an imposed syllabus.	Teacher professionalism encouraged. Teachers played a key role in curriculum development.
	Content-centred learning.	Process-led learning; the emphasis was on group work, participatory pedagogy; independent thinking, and student inputs into the learning process.
ROLE OF COMMUNITY	Community had little power in determination of school policy.	Community involvement in school management and curriculum was strongly emphasised in Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs)

People's Education sought to become

> … an educational pedagogy encompassing the development of critical thinking, interdisciplinary curriculum content, learner-centredness, participatory teaching

methods, community involvement and concern to link the focus of formal education with the world of work. (Kraak, 1999:22)

These were the broad areas of convergence that held true for most progressive teachers. It was the kind of alternative pedagogy that we have yearned for after years of exposure to Apartheid Education both as learners and later as teachers. However, People's Education never became a clear, solid construct. Kraak admits the following:

> Many of the ideas of People's Education were only tentatively developed by the late 1980s, primarily because of the heavy state repression of NECC structures during this period but also because the very concept of People's Education was imprecise and open to multiple interpretation and manipulation. (Kraak, 1999:23)

With the advent of the negotiations era in South Africa in the early 1990s, further development of the ideas of People's Education did not take place (Kraak, 1999). Also, I want to add, the concept of People's Education became conceptually damaged because of violent acts that were associated with it or that were committed in its name. The slogan "Liberation before education" that was prevalent during the heyday of People's Education seemed to imply that education as an aim for that generation of learners was in competition with the aim of liberation. Kraak holds that in the years that followed, a widespread abandonment of the egalitarian language of People's Education took place. It was substituted by an expert-led, multi-stakeholder policy-making process that prioritised other discourses – especially the economic and the systemic discourses. It is very important to note the shift from a grassroots movement (People's Education) to a representative process. Although the discourse lost in currency, it would be a mistake to conclude that the ideals and the yearnings of People's Education were forgotten in the minds of the oppressed.

Systemic discourse

After the advent of democracy in 1994, action was taken to cleanse the syllabi of all racist content. According to Chisholm (2005:193), "[i]n the immediate aftermath of the (1994) election, syllabi were 'cleansed' of their most offensive racist language and purged of their most controversial and outdated content".

When I returned to South Africa from Germany in 1996, for me as a teacher, this was the first immediate sign that the 'system' has changed. Before that even, a discussion about education

was under way that I completely missed out on because I was overseas. The grassroots movement was largely substituted by a representative process.

Just before and during the negotiation process leading up to the 1994 election, the focus of the negotiating parties shifted to a type of discourse that Kraak describes as "systemic" (1999:24). The discourse of the time took on a different form to the radical discourse. Although the proponents of the radical discourse were present during the negotiations process, it was the season of compromise. The discourse took on more of a systemic and economic nature. The emphasis was on creating an education system for the new democratic country that could address the "divided education and training (ET) system" and an "unequal society" (Kraak, 1999:25). The new system had to bring order to a situation in which there were too many education providers (at one stage 19 different education departments) and qualification bodies, mostly based on race, and where it was near to impossible to compare the vast number of different education and training offerings. Also, it had to realise the long-held dream of integrating education and training. On these issues there was at least in principle agreement among the negotiating partners.

This discourse took forward some of the ideas of People's Education, but differed from the radical discourse in some substantial ways. One of the main ways in which this discourse differed from the radical discourse was that People's Education was a grassroots movement, while during the negotiation process, the interests of various groupings were represented by experts drawn from these groupings. There could therefore be no guarantee that most of the propositions of People's Education would be incorporated into the systemic discourse.

According to Kraak, the systemic discourse

- focuses on the structural characteristics of the 'system';
- is interested in social relations;
- has a political predilection towards the creation of a united ET system; and
- argues that each ET system is held together by a distinctive regulatory framework.
  (Kraak, 1999, 24-25)

According to Kraak (1999:25), the two factors that led to the evolution of a systemic discourse were *globalisation* (in the sense that a South African ET system had to be in line with global developments and the individuals it produces have to be competitive in an increasingly global labour market) and *massification* (in the sense of compulsory education in

the lower grades and better access at the higher levels). The move was towards an open, unified ET system.

Kraak (1999:29-38) describes five key policy moments that led to the development of a distinctive systematic vocabulary. These were the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI), the National Training Board's (NTB) National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI), the ANC's early systematic reform proposals, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and the Green Paper on Further Education and Training. Some key concepts in the vocabulary that developed out of these policy moments are coordination, integration, articulation, progression, portability, relevance, responsiveness and flexibility.

The centrepiece of the integrated ET model was the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). An NQF is a system covering all levels and facets of education and training in a country; showing the commensurateness of different qualifications and the level at which they are to be recognised officially in a country. An NQF similar to that in countries such as Australia was designed and adopted in South Africa.

The objectives of the NQF are to

- create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- facilitate access to and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- enhance the quality of education and training;
- accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and thereby
- contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large. (South African Qualifications Authority, 2001)

The systemic discourse wanted to move ET in South Africa out of its apartheid backwardness into the sphere of democracy and international best practice.

Young describes the benefits of the NQF as follows:

- The NQF is an inclusive system that provides ladders for everyone to move along. It replaces an exclusive system based on the idea that only a limited proportion of any cohort has the ability to become 'qualified'.

- The NQF is not limited to accrediting learning in specifically educational institutions such as schools and colleges. Nor is the NQF only focused on learning in the preparatory phase of a person's life. It is designed to accredit learning wherever it occurs and at any stage of a person's life.
- The NQF abolishes distinct academic and vocational tracks and replaces them with an integrated system in which learners are not differentiated by the track they are on but by the combination of modules at each level they achieve.
- The NQF is designed to be as appropriate for adults at any stage as it is for young people.
- The NQF is designed not only as a basis for selection but as a way of recognising, encouraging and promoting learning in its widest sense. (Young, 1996:24)

The following diagram depicts the bands of the South African NQF:

		NQF LEVELS		PROVIDERS
Higher Education & Training Band		8.	Doctorates	Universities Technikons Colleges Professional bodies
		7	Higher degrees and professional qualifications	
		6.	First degrees and higher diplomas	
		5.	Diplomas and certificates	
Further Education & Training Band	Grade 12	4.	Further Education	Senior secondary schools, technical and community colleges, private providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), training in industry training centres; labour market schemes
		3.	and Training	
		2.	certificates	
	Grade 9	1.	General Education and Training Certificate	
General Education & Training Band	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4		Schools, private providers and NGOs, employer training, community colleges, labour market schemes
	Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 3		
	Foundation Phase	ABET Level 2		
	Pre-School (ECD)	ABET Level 1		

(**NB**: **ABET** = Adult Basic Education and Training; **ECD** = Early Childhood Development)

Further, 12 organising fields of learning forming the basis of all ET in the country, whether in formal or informal ET, were identified by stakeholders. They are the following:

- Agriculture and Nature Conservation
- Culture and Arts
- Business, Commerce and Management Studies
- Communication Studies and Language
- Education, Training and Development
- Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
- Human and Social Studies
- Law, Military Science and Security
- Health Sciences and Social Services
- Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
- Services
- Physical Planning and Construction

The South African national DoE had the responsibility to bring its provision of ET in schools in line with the demands of the NQF. What was offered in schools had to correspond more or less with the 12 fields mentioned above. Of course, certain fields such as Law, Military Science and Security are not offered at school level. The national DoE adopted eight compulsory learning areas for the schooling sector in the GET Band, covering grades R to 9. This band was to be the first area of implementation of the new ET system and would lay the basis for changes to the FET and Higher Education bands. The eight learning areas in the GET Band are the following:

- Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC)
- Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Sciences (MMLMS)
- Natural Science (NS)
- Human and Social Sciences (HSS)
- Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)
- Technology (TECH)
- Life Orientation (LO)
- Arts and Culture (A&C) (Department of Education, 1997)

The eight learning areas were supposed to capture most of the previous subjects and knowledge areas. The eight learning areas were not meant to be taught in isolation, as completely different subjects, separate from each other. A high premium was placed on integration between these eight learning areas.

Parallel to spelling out a rationale for the NQF, providing a structure that plotted the different qualifications and levels, and identifying the learning fields, 12 critical cross-field outcomes were identified. These outcomes, taken together, gave a composite picture of the profile of the type of learner that would exit the ET system of the new South Africa. The critical outcomes, as they are also called, were taken over by the schooling sector. These outcomes are the following:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions, using critical and creative thinking, have been made.
- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community.
- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of written and/or oral presentation.
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner, and social and economic development at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of

- reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- participating as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities;
- being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- exploring education and career opportunities; and
- developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

During the period of the ascendancy of the systemic discourse answers were given to the question of what an alternative to Apartheid Education would look like; how the whole ET system would be transformed from an elite, divisive system to an open, unified system that could be in line with international best practice with a premium on quality. Thereby a huge contribution was made towards the eradication of unjust past practices in education. But, important as the systemic discourse was, it was overtaken by another discourse, by default and on the sly, i.e. the outcomes-based discourse.

Outcomes-based discourse

Kraak discusses the outcomes-based discourse, which emerged as the dominant discourse in education in South Africa in the post-apartheid South Africa. I want to discuss this discourse especially with reference to the schooling sector.

The policy documents for the schooling sector were completed in 1997 and experimentation started in 1998 in Grade 1 in public schools, despite warnings by the likes of Professor Jonathan Jansen, then of the University of Durban-Westville. By 2000, the National Minister appointed a review committee because problems were already starting to show.

Shortly after I was seconded to the Subject Advisory Service in 1999, I came face to face with C2005, the South African version of OBE. Earlier, as a matric teacher, I could ignore the OBE discourse as lying in the distant future, but now, as a subject adviser, I was suddenly not only responsible for Economics and Business Economics in the Senior Secondary Phase of schooling; I had to provide guidance to primary school teachers in one of the new learning areas, Economic and Management Sciences. Most of the primary school teachers had little or no background in the commercial subjects. Although I had a good grounding in the commercial subjects, I knew very little about teaching in the primary school and very little about the new OBE approach.

In this regard, the help of my two colleagues, who were the principal subject advisers for Accounting and Business Economics of the WCED, proved invaluable. They were part of a provincial team that was trained at national level and had the obligation to train the other officials in the province. At an initial generic training workshop for WCED subject advisers in April 1999 at the Cape Teachers' College, I was at first totally confused by all the new jargon and methodologies. I was an experienced commerce teacher at senior secondary level teaching a content-based syllabus, not prepared for this new set of conditions! My principal

subject advisers took their time within the EMS group to explain the new approach to me and the rest of the group. Some of the arguments they presented to us was that C2005/OBE was a worthy alternative to the evil of Apartheid Education, that the current syllabi were outdated and inappropriate, that South African schools as they were did not prepare learners well enough for the workplace, that we needed a system that could produce what the international labour market wanted, that specifying outcomes would help us to focus clearer on what is to be done in class, etc. Integration of learning areas was stressed very heavily. Other pressures towards egalitarianism in terms of race, economic class, integration of learning areas, integration of ET, and mainstream and special schools (disability and the policy of inclusion) also featured in the explanations my principal subject advisers offered in support of the preference of an outcomes-based model.

Still, I often had to confront the question: "What are outcomes and OBE?" Ever since I first heard about OBE, the name of William (Bill) Spady was mentioned at each conceivable turn. Spady is an American author on school reform who is regarded as a leading advocate of OBE and who came to visit South Africa on numerous 'evangelistic crusades' to strengthen the faith of the new converts, to use the religious metaphor of Morrow. Spady defines outcomes as "[h]igh quality, culminating performances of something that really matters in the long run" (1994:1).

OBE is therefore an approach to education that is based on these performances. It assumes that there is agreement on what exactly these performances are, because the outcomes have to be spelt out in advance, before the teaching and learning process. Spady (1994:1) defines OBE as a "comprehensive approach to organizing and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each student".

Spady distinguishes between different types or phases of OBE. OBE situations that confine demonstrated learner performance to the context of the classroom, and not beyond, are called *traditional OBE*. *Transitional OBE* focuses on learners attaining 'higher order' exit outcomes that emphasise broad attitudinal, affective, motivational and relational competences, as well as the acquisition of critical thinking, effective communication, technological applications and complex problem-solving skills. *Transformational OBE* aims to equip learners with knowledge, competence and orientations for success after they leave school (Spady and

Marshall, 1993, cited in Waghid, 2003:246). According to the Senior Phase Policy Document (Department of Education, 1997), South Africa has embarked on *transformational OBE*.

I had the privilege to meet Bill Spady in person at a private social function in 2003 and invited him to present a talk to the group of seven assessment coordinators of the WCED. He struck me as a very enthusiastic and charismatic personality. The irony of the matter is that during that meeting with the assessment coordinators, Spady told us that he believes that what we are busy with in South Africa is not OBE as he understands it. He experienced it as a horrible mutation of what was still for him a worthy cause to believe in. It could have been a case of hindsight being the most exact science; yet it was difficult to forget that this particular consultant, with his charismatic zeal, was paid lots of money by the South African government to initiate the disaster that we are saddled with now.

Another question I was asked often by teachers was: "What are the principles of this new OBE approach?" These I listed to them as (a) designing down, i.e. start planning a learning experience from the outcomes; (b) clarity of focus, i.e. focus on the outcomes that are stated in advance; (c) high expectations for all learners, i.e. the expectation that each learner can succeed showing depth of understanding and academic rigour; and (d) expanded learning opportunities for all learners because each learner learns at his or her own pace. Especially the last two principles appealed directly to the radical discourse of the past and found a lot of sympathy with teachers. Equity, equality and non-discrimination are some of the principles involved here. The same teachers who found the last two OBE principles so attractive reported difficulties in putting them into practice, especially when it was expected of them to provide multiple opportunities for learners to complete a task successfully.

Some teachers just wanted to know: "How does OBE work?" They were interested in ways that could help them make OBE work in their classrooms. According to the Senior Phase Policy Document (Department of Education, 1997:18), an OBE approach involves "[c]urriculum development which starts with the formulation of the purposes of learning and teaching and uses these as criteria for further curriculum development and assessment".

The following is a summarised explanation that I offered to teachers of how an outcomes-based process works:

Outcomes are formulated in advance: The South African version of OBE (C2005) had two types of outcomes: critical outcomes and specific outcomes. Twelve broad cross-field or

critical outcomes were agreed upon and afterwards various specific outcomes were identified for each of the learning areas. The specific outcomes would later be called learning outcomes under the RNCS and were fewer than the original 66 specific outcomes. The critical outcomes corresponded more to Spady's broad definition of outcomes (see above). He would later also refer to 'life roles' to describe his notion of outcomes. The critical and specific outcomes would contain descriptions of the desirable behaviour of learners.

Teachers should facilitate learning towards outcomes: Teachers should start by planning from the outcomes that are found in the policy documents. They should then select or design learning experiences to address these outcomes, using learning support material at their disposal. In the design of learning experiences different learning and teaching methodologies, e.g. group work and cooperative learning, had to be considered to cater for different learning styles of learners. Because of the emphasis on learner-centredness, there was a corresponding emphasis on facilitation on the part of the teacher.

Learners must demonstrate competence: Descriptions of competence were included in the assessment criteria, range statements and performance indicators. Teachers have to measure the learners' observable behaviour during and after the learning experience against these descriptions.

Teachers should assess learners using criterion-referenced assessment methods: This is the type of assessment that is logically linked to OBE. According to the National Assessment Policy, criterion referencing refers to "[t]he practice of assessing a learner's performance against an agreed set of criteria. In the case of OBE the learner is assessed against agreed criteria derived from the specific outcomes" (Department of Education, 1998:19).

Qualifications are aligned to the NQF: Ultimately, the qualifications that will be awarded to learners are aligned to the NQF. The rules and assessment for qualifications are spelt out in advance.

Kraak describes demonstrating competence, a criterion-referenced assessment system and alignment with the NQF as the "essential building blocks of an outcomes-based approach" (1999:39).

Even when I felt that I understood more or less what the OBE approach entailed and could explain it to others, I was still scared to death by the prospect of having to train primary school teachers in EMS. I had to spend many hours in primary school classrooms to come to an understanding of the conditions that were prevalent there and had to make sense for myself of how best the new outcomes-based approach to education could be implemented. I took time to familiarise myself with the C2005 policy documents. I read through all the policy documents I could lay my hands on. The bulky policy documents were written per phase in the GET Band; there was one for the Foundation Phase (grades 1–3), one for the Intermediate Phase (grades 4–6) and one for the Senior Phase (grades 7–9). The bulk of the C2005 Senior Phase Policy Document comprised a curriculum framework for the eight learning areas. I painstakingly examined the other learning areas for possible areas of integration with EMS, because of the high premium that was placed on integration.

Teachers, like myself, who were until now used to specified learning content for each school year, were now provided with a curriculum that spelt out outcomes, assessment criteria, range statements and performance indicators per phase, not per year. In my experience as a subject adviser during the time, I came across many situations where the same learning experiences were repeated for Grade 7, 8 and 9. Teachers felt a lack of conceptual progression in the curriculum. It was left up to them to decide at which level their learners were. This was a new, unfamiliar and uncomfortable situation for them. Also, the idea of each child learning at his or her own pace was not understood in an environment where learners were still promoted or failed in a grade group.

In the process of planning learning experiences, schools were, in addition to all the other design elements mentioned above, encouraged to identify 'themes' they could derive from their own unique situations, called programme organisers. I remember distinctly my feeling of extreme discomfort with the romantic idea of linking all learning in all learning areas to local circumstances to ensure 'authenticity' of learning via the programme organisers. In my experience as a subject adviser during that time, it was normally the Mathematics teachers who first got fed-up with this theme-based approach with the plea to just be allowed to simply 'teach Maths'.

Teachers were expected to play the role of curriculum developers, using a range of design features including all the design elements, some of which I mentioned before: learning areas, critical outcomes, specific outcomes, assessment criteria, range statements, performance

indicators, programme organisers and phase organisers. This constituted a whole new vocabulary for teachers, the majority of whom were trained for a completely different approach to education. The review committee described much of this new vocabulary as 'jargon'. One could disagree with the committee and argue that it could also be interpreted as the renaming of processes by the new bureaucracy, to clearly set it aside from Apartheid Education. But unfortunately, it had the negative effect of alienating existing teachers, even those who have suffered under Apartheid Education. The insistence to provide grand new names for simple things that were entrenched in teachers' vocabulary made many teachers sceptical of the new discourse.

The appointment of the review committee by Minister Asmal in 2000 was an important development. I have referred to the main findings and recommendations of the review committee in Chapter 1. The result of the review committee was a considerable streamlining and strengthening of the national curriculum. The design features were considerably reduced and the language was simplified. The problems experienced with C2005 were supposed to be addressed in the RNCS. Although the RNCS represents a major improvement on the original C2005, it still remains firmly situated within the dominant outcomes-based discourse.

Section III: The dominance of the outcomes-based discourse

Kraak argues that an important shift took place when the outcomes-based discourse displaced the systemic discourse as the dominant discourse in South Africa.

> There has been an important shift in educational perspective away from macro-level concerns about a divided ET system and unequal society to a micro-level obsession with unit standards and the minutia of an overly prescriptive assessment model. The ET reform process has lost sight of its original purpose in seeking to create a unified and integrated system which would consciously address social inequalities which arise out of the ET system. (Kraak, 1999:53)

According to Kraak (1999), the rise of the outcomes-based discourse in South Africa had three antecedents:

- The ascendancy of competency-based modular ET in the South African industry after 1985

- The adoption of Australian and British 'outcomes' models in the policy development work undertaken by the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) since the early 1990s
- The resurrection of the radical rhetoric of People's Education

The interplay between these three different antecedents gave rise to a peculiar hybrid that was a "learning methodology that is simultaneously radical in discursive practice but behaviouralist in assessment technology" (Kraak, 1999:38).

Kraak argues that

> ... [t]he rapid ascendancy and popularity of outcomes-based ET in South Africa and other countries may be ascribed to its skilful packaging in the radical language of other educational discourses – liberal progressive ideals about comprehensive schooling in the Australian case, and People's Education in the South African context. (Kraak, 1999:42)

Kraak is of the opinion that the radical rhetoric of People's Education provides an essential legitimacy for what Sedunary (1996) views as a highly technicist and ultimately conservative assessment technology (referring to OBE).

In South Africa, the OBE ideas such as learner-centredness, credit accumulation and transfer schemes, critical thinking and democratic nationhood, participatory governance and seamless learning found a fertile ground, prepared by the radical discourse of People's Education. Those OBE ideas thrived in the context of a people who was hungry for an alternative to Apartheid Education and who has found and was attracted to a discourse that was using language that was reminiscent of the radical visions they had for education in a free South Africa. The fact that many known advocates of People's Education were taken up in the administration of education in the new South Africa and were advancing the outcomes-based discourse provided additional legitimacy to this new discourse that went largely unquestioned.

In the next section I locate the dominant outcomes-based discourse within a framework provided by the work of Elliot Eisner.

Section IV: Metaphors to characterise dominant views about education

In this section I engage with metaphors to characterise dominant views about education as identified and discussed by Elliot Eisner. I have chosen to engage with Eisner's work in this chapter for three reasons: Firstly, he has a keen interest and consistent publication record on curriculum, educational objectives, educational evaluation and educational reform over almost four decades; secondly, as an artist, he brings a refreshing view to discussions of curriculum, assessment and educational reform; and thirdly, because I share his resistance to the idea of a 'science of teaching' based on the model of the natural sciences, and expressed in the grammar of industry. I believe that the metaphors that he identifies have supported my argument in the critical engagement I seeked with OBE in this chapter.

Eisner (2005) identifies three metaphors that are used to characterise dominant views of education, namely the industrial, behaviouristic and biological metaphors.

Eisner's reason for explaining the three metaphors that can be used to characterise views about education is that he believes that they are still with us, despite advances that were made in the field of education. I position OBE as a contemporary view of education within these metaphors later in this chapter.

I give my interpretation of each of Eisner's metaphors by indicating with which persons or movements it is associated and by providing a short description of the metaphor, Eisner's comment, the consequences for education and my own initial response to it.

Industrial metaphor

This metaphor is associated with the efficiency movement and was most influential during the first and second decades of the 1900s. It was derived from the scientific management movement that was led by Frederick Winslow Taylor, an engineer by profession who, through the application of the principles of scientific management that he formulated, achieved magnificent gains in the field of steel production.

Taylor formulated the purpose of his seminal book, *The principles of scientific management*, in the following way:

> *First.* To point out, through a series of simple illustrations, the great loss which the whole country is suffering through inefficiency in almost all our daily acts.

Second. To try to convince the reader that the remedy for this inefficiency lies in systematic management, rather than in searching for some unusual or extraordinary man.

Third. To prove that the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation. *And further to show that the fundamental principles of scientific management are applicable to all kinds of human activities, from our simplest individual acts to the work of our great corporations, which call for the most elaborate cooperation. And, briefly, through a series of illustrations, to convince the reader that whenever these principles are correctly applied, results must follow which are truly astounding.* (Taylor, 1917:7, my emphasis)

The idea of educationists, who were convinced by Taylor's argument and whose work employed the industrial metaphor, was that if they adopted the principles of scientific management in the steel industry and adapted it to the practice of education, similar gains in efficiency would be achieved in education. It became the standard for under-achieving schools and the mantra of school managers who had it as their mission to improve the efficiency of their schools.

To effect the desired changes to schools within the paradigm of the industrial metaphor, certain tasks had to be accomplished. Eisner summarised these tasks in the following way:

First and foremost, quantitative and qualitative standards had to be formulated for judging the educational product. Second, time and motion studies had to be made to identify the most efficient means. Third, nothing that could be routinised and prescribed was to be left to the judgment of the worker since his decisions might lead to inefficiency and error. Fourth, the quality of the product was to be judged not by the workers in the school but by the consumers of the product – in this case, society. Fifth, the tasks were to be divided into manageable units so that they could be taught and evaluated at every step along the production line. (Eisner, 2005:26)

The consequence for education is that a set of metaphors emerged through which education was to be viewed. This set of metaphors, as well as the means, had an industrial character.

The school was seen as a *plant*. The *superintendent* directed the operation of the plant. The teachers were involved in a job of *engineering*, and the pupils were the *raw material* to be processed in the plant according to the demands of the *consumers*. Furthermore, the product was to be judged at regular intervals along the production line using *quality control standards* which were to be quantified to reduce the likelihood of error. *Product specifications* were to be prescribed before the raw material was processed. In this way efficiency, measured with respect to cost primarily, could be determined. (Eisner, 2005:26, italics in the original)

When educational processes are described as in the passage above, I start to feel uncomfortable about this metaphor. I think that any person who views him- or herself primarily as an educator will feel uncomfortable with such language to describe an educational enterprise. There is a hint of impropriety and categorical displacement, since the language associated with industry is used to describe education. The language itself is not innocent; it brings with it work rules and work relationships that are ill at ease in the practice of education.

Behaviouristic metaphor

This metaphor arose from the efforts to construct a science of education and psychology. At about the same time that school managers were attempting to make schools more efficient by adopting and applying the principles of scientific management, i.e. during the first quarter of the twentieth century, people like Thorndike, Watson, Judd and Bobbitt attempted to develop and use scientific methods that could be useful in the study and practice of education.

What they felt they had to do was to do away with those areas of psychology that did not lend itself to verification, i.e. a cleansing of psychology (at that time) of all 'metaphysical elements' and the espousal of a method of explanation that is similar to the one used in the natural sciences. Eisner puts it this way:

By defining psychology as "That division of natural science which takes human activity and conduct as its subject matter" ..., Watson was able to attend to the observable event in order to accomplish two scientific goals: "To predict human activity with reasonable certainty" and to formulate "laws and principles whereby men's actions can be controlled by organized society" ... (Eisner, 2005:27)

The implication for education of the behaviouristic metaphor was that education could be seen as being about effecting changes in human behaviour, i.e. towards desired behaviours. To be precise and 'scientific': According to this metaphor, education does not need general statements about educational objectives, but educational objectives that are stated in specific behavioural terms and that are measurable and quantifiable.

The reference to prediction and control in this metaphor sounds dangerous to me. I fear that such an approach, if not used carefully, could lead us into the sphere of behaviour modification, brainwashing and indoctrination, especially if there is a clear division between those who know best what is needed for the education of a society (and who also formulate the educational objectives) and those who have to implement their presumably error-free procedures. I am also not sure of the possibility of the project to spell out educational objectives stated in specific behavioural terms in detail and in advance. Besides that, I think that the attempt to model the human sciences on the natural sciences is pretentious and dishonest.

Biological metaphor

According to Eisner (2005:28), this metaphor is associated with the work of the child study movement (starting in the 1880s), the development of egalitarian liberalism, Darwin and especially Dewey.

This approach was child-centred; the child was not only to be moulded, but is viewed as an individual with needs, potentialities and experiences. These needs, potentialities and experiences the child uses to engage with the world. According to this view of education, teachers are needed who are receptive and sympathetic to the child's needs. Educational experiences have to be constructed that take into account the needs, potentialities and experiences of the child. According to the biological metaphor it was important that idiosyncrasy had to be encouraged and cultivated.

Eisner argues that

> ... [t]he concept of education implied by the biological metaphor is one concerned neither with molding behavior through extrinsic rewards, nor with formulating uniform, quantifiable and objective standards through which to appraise achievement. Those who viewed (and view) education through the biological

metaphor were (and are) much more concerned with the attainment of lofty goals, with helping children realize their unique potential, with the development of a sense of self-respect and intellectual and emotional autonomy which can be used throughout their lives. Educational practice in this view is an artful, emerging affair, one that requires teachers who are sensitive students of children and who follow as well as lead the children in the development of intelligence. (Eisner, 2005:45–46)

I instinctively identify with this metaphor, but I am always careful to guarantee the teacher the agency and the competence to make decisions for the child on those things in which the child has not yet developed the capacity to decide. Otherwise, this metaphor, more than the other two, is very appealing to me because of its view of children, its open-endedness and the space that it allows for imagination.

Section V: Location of outcomes-based education within Eisner's metaphors

When one reads Kraak's description of the outcomes-based discourse and my narration in Section II, it seems as though it contains elements of all three metaphors that Eisner identified and that were discussed in Section IV of this chapter.

In terms of the industrial metaphor, the general OBE claim of efficiency is of interest. More specifically, the formulation of quantitative and qualitative standards against which the educational product (the learner) can be measured, the limitation of the scope of judgement of teachers where actions can be routinised and prescribed, the quality assurance mechanisms and the division of tasks into manageable units so that they could be taught and evaluated at every step along the production line show the affinity of the outcomes-based discourse with the industrial metaphor. Not only is there an affinity between the outcomes-based discourse and the industrial metaphor, OBE positions itself explicitly as being in service of economic ends, i.e. it represents an instrumentalist view of education.

Further, outcomes can be interpreted as desired behaviours stated in advance in specific behavioural terms. They are seen to apply to all learners and are 'objectively stated'. The elimination of metaphysical elements, i.e. those things that are difficult to capture and to measure objectively, shows the affinity of the outcomes-based discourse with the behaviouristic metaphor. Product specifications, quality control standards and the

identification of terminal behaviours after interventions are elements that locate the outcomes-based discourse within the behaviouristic metaphor.

The outcomes-based discourse also claims to be child-centred. In this it purports to be taking forward the rhetoric of People's Education, namely each learner can succeed and each learner learns at his or her own pace. This can be interpreted as an appeal to Eisner's biological metaphor. But there seems to be a serious tension in a discourse that simultaneously wants to do this and that wants to spell out outcomes in specific behavioural terms in advance for all learners. What OBE strives towards is uniformity, not idiosyncrasy or uniqueness. At best one could attribute this tension to the confusion of the mixing together of elements of different discourses. At worst, it is deliberate deception on the part of the proponents of the outcomes-based discourse. A discourse that insists on outcomes that are the same, objectively stated and spelt out in advance for all children cannot make claims that are in line with Eisner's biological metaphor.

Based on the above I want to argue that the outcomes-based discourse can be interpreted as being mainly informed by the behaviouristic and the industrial metaphors on a philosophical level and that it is logical that it will reflect this fact in its means as well. Lip service is paid to learner-centredness, but I have argued above that this is problematic. This discourse can be understood as in essence prescriptive; it is not focused on the learner as an individual with particular needs, potentialities and experiences. If the learner is not interested in experiences that are designed to achieve a certain outcome, it is not the job of the teacher, under OBE, to find out what he or she is interested in; rather the teacher has to motivate him or her to become involved in the designed experience.

The outcomes-based discourse, described in the way I have done in this section, can be seen as an old conservative, behaviourist management theory masquerading as a progressive pedagogy, firmly rooted within the industrial and behaviouristic metaphors. The dual commitment of OBE to these metaphors is overlain by a new policy technology of performativity, which I discuss in the next section of this chapter.

Section VI: Performativity

Since the rise of the scientific management movement at the beginning of the previous century (discussed earlier in this chapter), which started with Frederick Winslow Taylor's magnificent gains in the production of steel using the principles of scientific management, the

industrial metaphor has been put to use and embraced (often uncritically) in various other contexts in society. By doing this, practitioners in different types of practices hoped to emulate the efficiency and successes that were recorded in industry. In the field of education one of the earliest attempts to construct a science of curriculum was Franklin Bobbitt's *How to make a curriculum*, published in 1924.

What Lyotard (1984:46) calls the criterion of *performativity*, i.e. 'the best possible input/output equation' (economists call this equation the 'economic principle'), seems to have a huge impact not only on how people understand what they are doing in their occupations, but also on their lives in general. In its simplicity and commonsense appearance, performativity, as defined by Lyotard, has become a predominant basis for human action in the postmodern, industrialised world, and it is being imposed upon the rest of the world seemingly without question. One of the consequences is that debates in all the institutions in different parts of the world sound the same.

Hogan argues that

> … it can be scarcely doubted that, as a secular and mercenary credo, performativity constitutes a new uniformity on the rise. It redefines questions of quality as questions of indexed quantity. It pervades the arenas of public debate – in business, in politics and not least in education – with ever more elaborated 'performance indicators' and operationally defined 'competencies', to the neglect of more adequate and discerning appraisals of pertinent achievements. It extends its domain by its coercive power to harness moral energies to goals of pragmatic effectiveness, as distinct from summoning those energies to accomplishments of a qualitatively richer kind. It tends to deprive accountability of its more healthy purposes and to re-establish it as a legalistic and increasingly an adversarial matter. In these and other ways it progressively colonises the cultures of work, and of human effort more generally. (Hogan, 2004:26)

Ball (2003:3) provides a more expanded, complex view of *performativity* that in my view does not only include Lyotard's emphasis on *efficiency*, but also notions of *surveillance, control, self-regulation and governmentality*. These notions draw on the lectures and writings of French philosopher, historian, intellectual, critic and sociologist Michel Foucault (1926–1984).

Foucault's work is multi-faceted and wide-ranging. For the purposes of this dissertation I refer to two seminal ideas associated with him, namely panopticism and governmentality.

The Panopticon – surveillance, control, self-regulation: Foucault (1977:200) refers to one of the most prominent British prison reformers of the eighteenth century, Jeremy Bentham, who called his blueprint for a model prison the "Panopticon". It is a building with a tower in the centre. The tower has wide windows that look out onto an outer ring that consists of individual cells where prisoners are kept. The cells on the periphery of the building have two windows, one on the inside and one on the outside. This provides for a view from the tower with a backlighting effect. The prisoners in their individual cells are rendered constantly visible, while they never know when they are being observed because they cannot see the inside of the tower. The prisoners, because they are constantly under surveillance (or because they think so) and individualised (i.e. no contact with other prisoners), tend later to self-regulate their actions in the Panoptic system; no external force is required to keep them to behave in a desired way.

Bentham thought that the Panopticon could be generalised for use in any other kind of institution. This polyvalence in application was a central feature for Foucault. But, to think that Foucault was primarily interested in the design of the physical prison, or in giving a precise history of the development of prisons, or that his argument only applies to physically incarcerated people, or to deduce that he only refers to the actions of governments, would be mistaken. He was primarily interested in the internal arrangements, processes and the disciplinary techniques that is associated with the Panopticon. This to him provides us with a way to grasp how power operates, not only in a prison context, but in society at large.

According to Cousins and Hussain, the Panopticon is a cleverly designed mechanism that achieves a variety of aims:

> First, to inculcate among prisoners the feeling that they were being watched constantly, regardless of whether that was so in fact – the sentiment of 'invisible omnipresence', as Bentham puts it. … Second, the Panopticon forsook *force* in favour of *observation and surveillance* to *control* the prison population. (Cousins & Hussain, 1984:190)

These are the main features: forsaking force in favour of observation and surveillance and the sentiment of 'invisible omnipresence' that governments tend to prefer over brute force.

Foucault's main interest was not in what 'power' is, but with how power is exercised, not only in the prison, clinic or asylum, but in the whole of society; not only by government, but also an array of institutions. The disciplinary techniques are similar.

It can be argued that OBE provides the framework for a system of continuous checking, routines, auditing and regulation of the work of teachers; not the use of brute force to coerce teachers to behave and understand themselves in a certain way, but a seemingly harmless routine to induce desired behaviours. The regular instances of auditing, in the form of visits by the education officials, augment the continuous surveillance, which in some cases turn into self-surveillance and self-regulation.

Governmentality: Since the publication of Foucault's seminal lecture entitled "Governmentality" in which he engages with the art of government, various scholars have elaborated on the notion of governmentality with reference to a wide range of themes. One of the themes in this governmentality literature that is of interest to this dissertation is what Inda (2005:9) calls the "technics or technologies of government". According to Inda, it refers to

> ... how government takes on a technological and pragmatic form. The technological is that domain of practical mechanisms, devices, calculations, procedures, apparatuses, and documents "through which authorities of various sorts have thought to shape, normalize and instrumentalize the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives they consider desirable" ... It is that complex of techniques, instruments measures and programs that endeavors to translate thought into practice and thus actualize political reasons. (Inda, 2005:9)

According to Inda (2005:9–10), the technics or technologies of government include both "the attention paid to specific technical instruments" (including methods of examination and evaluation, techniques of notation and routines for the timing and spacing of activities in specific locations, e.g. schools) and "a focus on the programmatic character of government – that is, on how government tends to be conceptualized into existence in programmatic form".

Outcomes-based assessment can be interpreted as introducing 'specific technical instruments', e.g. the required learning programme phase planning (three-year plan), work schedules (one-year plan), lesson plans, detailed mark sheets, educator portfolios, learner portfolios, comments about each individual learner, personal profiles, records of interventions, revised progression and promotion schedules and revised report cards as a form of government of

teachers. Also, the effort on the part of the South African government to reform the educational sphere through the introduction of the OBE system can be interpreted as a 'focus on the programmatic character of government' whereby this government wants to bring into existence the arrangements to govern the sphere of education.

As stated earlier, Ball (2003) includes the Foucauldian notions of surveillance, exclusion, control, self-regulation and governmentality in his account of performativity, in addition to the notion of efficiency. Ball notes important shifts in the role of the (post-welfare) state from the maximisation of national welfare to the promotion of enterprise, innovation and profitability in both private and public sectors; from the state as provider to the state as regulator and the state as auditor (Ball, 2003:2). The state is emerging as a commodifying agent, i.e. it portrays core public services as commodities in a way that is consistent with economistic rationality, and the line that divides the public sector and the private sector is slowly but surely being eroded (Ball, 2003:3). One of the forces that are bringing about this change is *performativity*.

Ball defines performativity as

> … a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. (Ball, 1999:7)

It can be argued that OBE, as an approach to education (sanctioned and adopted as government policy in South Africa), and especially outcomes-based *assessment*, are prime examples of Ball's definition of performativity. With its insistence on the breaking down of learning areas, outcomes and tasks into ever smaller and detailed units, development of ever more sophisticated, detailed checklists and other instruments to ensure 'efficiency', and its focus on the measurement of performance, it (a) makes of qualitative questions in education matters of "indexed quantity" (Hogan, 2004:26) and (b) seeks to define how teachers should understand what it is they do and, importantly, how it is they should understand themselves.

Ball argues as follows: "Central then to the functioning of performativity is the translation of complex social processes and events into simple figures or categories of judgement" (2003:7).

Because the technology of performativity generally enters people's lives in an unexamined way and on the sly, covered up as it is by the appearance of common sense, OBE might be accepted without question, and those who are converted to the new way of doing things might not seem to understand why others would have problems with something that seems so obvious, logical and, especially, practical. They may dismiss any appeal for a richer and more differentiated account of education as wishful thinking, idealistic, unrealistically romantic, backward and without any relevance to what is actual and practical. Some education officials and teachers think they have to uncritically accept the pre-established outcomes, but may in the process open themselves up to regulation and control, even self-regulation.

Section VII: Critical engagement with South African outcomes-based education

Based on the arguments in the preceding sections of this chapter, I am now in a position to provide a brief critique that focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of OBE. In this section I engage critically with OBE in South Africa by summarising reasons why I think it can be interpreted as an old behaviouristic, management theory (overlain by performativity) that masquerades as a progressive pedagogy. The following are my reasons:

Efficiency

I hold that the rule of efficiency over education, as presupposed by OBE in its association with the industrial metaphor, as well as new work roles and work relationships, is an improper imposition on education and that it, without proper legitimation, takes over questions of how the occupation of teachers is to be practiced. Its hold over education should at least be subjected to thorough intellectual scrutiny and not be assumed as given and unproblematic.

In an argument related to efficiency, Bill Readings (1996) discusses the notion of 'excellence' in terms of universities. From Readings I have learnt how meaningless and empty such a concept can become when it is "dereferentialized", i.e. when it "no longer refer(s) to a specific set of things or ideas" (Readings, 1996:17). 'Efficiency' also runs the risk of becoming dereferentialised: everything nowadays has to be efficient and in the process efficiency can cease to mean anything as such.

Behaviourism

I have referred to the affinity between OBE and the behaviouristic metaphor earlier in this chapter. Kraak sees OBE's too heavy reliance on behaviourist principles as perhaps the most fundamental criticism of OBE. According to him,

> [b]ehavioural psychology assumes a unanimity of behaviour: under the same circumstances, we all behave in the same predictable way. This predictability is assured by our conditioning process and is invariant. As such, the display of 'competency' can be mastered and measured with precision. The danger here is that there is no place in such a schema for imagination, creativity and innovation – qualities which cannot be measured in discrete quantifiable units, but which are the key priorities of a good general education. (Kraak, 1999:46)

There is a problem with seeing 'competence' as a complex entity consisting of simpler items of ability. For example, when I taught my son to ride a bicycle, I (being of logical mind!) tried to do it in small, isolated methodical steps, but soon realised that the whole action of riding a bicycle is not a set of smaller actions that exist separately and independently from the rest but rather a complex, simultaneous interplay between an array of interrelated actions.

According to Kraak, "[c]ompetence models attempt to describe competence in precise, transparent and observable terms, to predict the specific outcome of effective action" (1999:47)

As the example of teaching my son to ride a bicycle illustrates, it is impossible to categorise human action with such precision.

In addition and as stated earlier, product specifications, quality control standards and the identification of terminal behaviours after interventions are elements that locate the outcomes-based discourse firmly within the behaviouristic metaphor. A discourse that insists on outcomes that are the same, objectively stated in behavioural terms and spelt out in advance for all children cannot claim to be in the interest of all children.

Kraak makes the further point that even the construction of competency standards themselves and the assessment process, which is portrayed as learner-centred and transparent, are processes that are highly subjective, even though they claim objective status.

Instrumentalism and the collapse of boundaries

Morrow (1999), on the basis of a conceptual analysis at the level of the English language only, is of the opinion that the boundaries between the concepts 'education' and 'training' are collapsed in the South African OBE system. He posits that training is always *for* or *as* something, e.g. training *for* the athletics meeting or training *as* a plumber. The justification for training can only be understood in an instrumentalist way. Training is always a means towards an extrinsic end that is clearly spelt out. Morrow states that "[t]here is a strong conceptual link between training and outcomes. The only way to design a training programme is to specify its outcomes clearly and in advance, and then to construct the learning programme so as to achieve those outcomes" (1999:29).

> *Education cannot be understood in the same instrumentalist way as training is. The justification for education, according to Morrow and other scholars (Peters, 1967; Waghid, 2003), lies inside itself and is not extrinsic to education. What is attempted with South African OBE is to "force education into an ill-fitting conceptual harness. Without thinking about it we embrace an instrumental outlook, and then think that unless schooling is a means to some pre-specified outcomes it must be useless"* (Morrow, 1999:33).

In this process we concentrate solely on the question "What is education for?" instead of asking "What is education?"

Morrow feels that what has taken place in South African OBE is a wholesale collapse of the concepts 'education' and 'training', and that the much-claimed 'integration' of education and training can actually be understood as the reduction of education to training. It is important to note that Morrow is not advocating for a preference of mental labour over manual labour. He finds it useful to keep the concepts of education and training distinct from each other as each describing a different type of practice. His is an argument to keep the integrity of the two concepts and not a judgement valuing mental labour over manual labour.

Technicism and an impoverished view of education

One of the sad things about preparing teachers for the implementation of OBE was that many would say: "Leave the philosophy and conceptual background. Just tell me how to do it". My experience is that teachers, in their desire to get a grip on this new system, preferred to ignore

the philosophy of OBE and to just jump into the "how" of things. To many it became a purely technicist process, involving the right steps, instruments and procedures. The emphasis is on technique; the transformation impulse, that was so typical of the radical discourse, was lost.

A lot of other elements were lost because much of what had to be done was spelt out in advance. Solway argues that the outcomes-based philosophy "militates against chance, serendipity, and the emergence of unforeseen ideas, that is, it divests both teacher and student of intellectual freedom in any meaningful sense of the phrase" (1999:58).

Other elements that Solway sees as lost and falling victim to the outcomes-based philosophy are possibility, surprise, emergence, intuition, interpretation, imagination, epistemic flexibility and "the spirit of play which is essential to the creative delight and exhilaration of genuine learning" (1999:60).

Waghid argues that "rational reflection and imagination are constitutive meanings intrinsic to or in terms of which education should be justified" (2003:248). He sees the outcomes-based discourse as an insufficient instrumental justification for education that is not necessarily accommodating of rational reflection and imagination.

The above reflections lead me to view OBE as an impoverished account of education. I want to argue that it can be seen as a technicist and instrumentalist stance that counters and constrains the type of constitutive meanings intrinsic to education that Solway and Waghid identify above. It is logically associated with a view of teachers as unthinking underlings and functionaries that only ask the "how" but not the "why" question and who are stripped of any sense of judgement as practitioners.

Diminution of teaching, learning and the curriculum / Elevation of assessment

It is regrettable that the architects of OBE chose not to initiate a wide-ranging national conversation to seek consensus on the construction of a solid national curriculum that spells out content. Kraak (1999:49) argues that such a framework would have been able to link curriculum content, pedagogic processes and regulatory mechanisms to societal goals. Instead, no content was spelt out and the choice of which content to include was left up to individual teachers and schools. Among other things, this seems to work contrary to nation-building and the radical discourse of the past. The potential role that the curriculum could have played was therefore lessened.

Kraak further says the following about outcomes-based assessment and teachers:

> Assessment of performance is seen as an exact science which can be specified through explicit assessment criteria. This approach undervalues the role of teachers in exercising professional judgment in what in reality is a very subjective and difficult process. Overspecification of assessment criteria does not reduce the subjective elements. Rather, it merely diminishes the role that teachers play. (Kraak, 1999:50)

There seems to be a dangerous, repetitive cycle that OBE could become captive to: The more it wants to be transparent by spelling out more and more assessment criteria, the more it will become prescriptive and undermine the judgement of teachers and counter rational reflection and imagination on their part. It is in this context that talk of 'teacher-proof curricula' and the current emphasis on 'a learning society' that operates mainly through e-learning gains purchase.

Meanwhile, the belief in and view of outcomes-based assessment as an exact science elevate the role that assessment plays in OBE. Solway (1999:61) argues that measurement or assessment "has become something of a pedagogical fetish" and that the outcomes-based philosophy "places measurement before real learning" (and teaching, one could add). I have already heard one of my erstwhile superiors at the WCED saying: "What cannot be measured is not worth teaching and learning". Such an utterance clearly illustrates the elevation of assessment and the diminution of teaching (teachers), learning (learners) and the curriculum in OBE.

The construction of governable subjects

The last critical remark I make of OBE is extremely serious. It is linked to the account of performativity given in the previous section of this chapter.

Solway argues that

> ... [o]utcomes education serves as a prime instantiation of what Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* has called "the disciplinary society", which maintains itself by constructing individuals according to regimes such as "compulsory work, the timetable, and examination", whose central purpose is not enlightenment or

liberation from the shackles of ignorance or from the tight constraints of obedience networks but precisely surveillance and repression. (Solway, 1999:63)

The desired result seems to be the construction of governable persons; people who do as they are told, without questioning. In their respective fields of work they only know what they need to know, which often involves instruments of control by which output and performance can be measured. Although this might be the desire of those in power, there is no guarantee that those that they desire it of will comply in all cases. When citizens openly refuse to become governable, they might be excluded from rewards and benefits and in extreme cases might be disciplined. But, if those who are in power are successful in their attempt to construct governable subjects, no external force is needed to discipline citizens under the culture of performativity; they practice surveillance and self-monitoring through "appraisal systems, target-setting, output comparisons" (Ball, 2003:9).

Graham and Neu argue as follows:

> No longer limited to the clumsy instruments of sovereign power, such as military force and imprisonment, governments of today achieve their goals through techniques that create cooperative and self-disciplining citizens. The tools of government act continuously and invisibly, says Foucault, rather than overtly. Administrative rather than coercive, they are, at least superficially benign. (Graham & Neu, 2004:295)

I argue that OBE, described by Solway (1999:59–60) as "a pre-established curricular regime" characterised by "rote, plan, routine, perpetual assessment, mechanical didactics, and a devastating monotony" among other things has the potential to function as a form of governmental control aiming to construct cooperative and self-disciplining citizens, i.e. governable subjects.

Waghid warns, like others before him: "[F]or the reason that outcomes seem to be heavily attuned to control and manipulation, it makes the instrumental justification of the approach … somewhat of a predictable educational tragedy" (2003:263).

The influence of these initial criticisms of OBE will be important for arguments in later chapters, especially Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Section VIII: Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that the political project of South African OBE as spelt out by the principles of both C2005 and the RNCS draws on the legacy of People's Education. It is this historical emotional attachment to the egalitarian language of People's Education that made it possible for the South African authorities to opt for OBE. This, together with the entrance (by the back door of international competitiveness) of the logic of efficiency and performativity as well as the earnest desire to break with the Apartheid Education past, constitute the reasons why the South African authorities opted for the outcomes-based approach, despite warnings and criticisms from some academic quarters.

My conclusion is that the post-apartheid South African government, made up largely of formerly oppressed people, opted for OBE because of the progressive, egalitarian rhetoric that was associated with it as well as its commonsense appeal to performativity and efficiency. In its honest desire to equalise society and to comply with international practice, the new South African government opted for something that masquerades as a progressive, new pedagogy, but that, as I have argued in this chapter, can also be seen as an old, discredited, behaviourist management theory dressed up in the trimmings of a radical discourse, overlain by a new form of surveillance and self-monitoring (performativity).

Outcomes-based assessment, as a prime instance of performativity, will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT: A PRIME INSTANCE OF PERFORMATIVITY

… when the educational history of recent decades comes to be written, prominent in the account will be the rise and rise of educational assessment. Activities that were once largely the preserve of teachers and a small number of professional specialists have grown into one of the defining features of contemporary life. Not only students in schools and colleges, but public servants of all kinds, industrial workers, private carers and even self-employed people, all find themselves increasingly entangled in the penetrating tentacles of assessment. (Broadfoot, 2002:285)

Section I: Introduction

Building on the characterisation of OBE as an approach to education that masquerades as a progressive pedagogy, but that can also be interpreted as a conservative, behaviourist management theory, which is overlain by a new policy technology called performativity, I argue in this chapter that outcomes-based *assessment* can be seen as a prime instance of performativity. To develop the argument I start with an account of educational assessment in South Africa before the introduction of OBE, following Vandeyar and Killen (2003), but illuminated by my own experiences in education in South Africa in that period. Thereafter, I give my description of OBE assessment in South Africa. I then refer to the "assessment revolution" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:19) that is taking place in contemporary society in general. My interpretation of their term 'assessment revolution' is that they use this term to describe a development that is roughly synonymous to performativity. I then investigate how this assessment revolution impacts on the sphere of education. Following that, I interpret the argument of Delandshere (2001) that describes much of contemporary assessment as a technology that purports to be innocent and consider assessment in South Africa in the light of her argument. Linking to the critique raised against OBE in the previous chapter, I conclude the argument by raising concerns about outcomes-based assessment as a prime instance of performativity.

Section II: Assessment in South Africa before the introduction of outcomes-based education

In this section I give my view of assessment in South Africa before the introduction of OBE. I later discuss outcomes-based assessment and its claim that it represents a clear break with past assessment practices in South Africa. The description of assessment in South Africa before the introduction of OBE will be given on the basis of excerpts from an article by Vandeyar and Killen (2003).

Assessment prior to the introduction of OBE in South Africa (called evaluation, examination or testing at the time) was characterised by the following:

"A strong emphasis on the accumulation of isolated facts and skills" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

In my opinion, the authorities, without proper consultation of teachers or their representatives, made the selection of the desirable facts and skills. Facts and skills were not thought of in an integrated way. Different subjects existed, sometimes with similar and overlapping content. One example from my own experience of such overlap was between the subjects of Economics and Geography in Grade 12. Each subject was seen as a discrete unit of facts that had to be recalled, existing in seeming isolation from other subjects.

"Assessment was separated from instruction and largely took the form of assessing discrete, isolated or fragmented knowledge and skills" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

In my experience, assessment in most cases equalled written tests and exams. My experience as a teacher was that content was organised into chapters or modules in prescribed textbooks. After the completion of a chapter or module it was customary to write a test, i.e. testing came after instruction and examinations came after a term of instruction.

"Pen and paper tests that emphasized academic exercises and the recall of textbook-based knowledge" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

My experience is that assessment in most subjects consisted solely of written tests and examinations, except for the languages and arts education, which also had an element of performance assessment, e.g. oral examinations and musical performances. The written tests and examinations relied heavily on the ability of the learners to recall facts that were listed in

textbooks that were approved by the government of the day. Many teachers followed the content of the textbooks slavishly and in that way ensured the delivery of what the Apartheid Education planners envisaged. Progressive teachers had to be very innovative to ensure that learners passed their examinations as well as receive an education that exposed the lies of apartheid.

"Individual assessment with much secrecy surrounding the tests" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

My experience is that the tests that were written were invariably individual activities; before OBE, group assessment was not common. Learners were not briefed in advance about what would be expected of them. It was regarded as good practice that tests were shrouded in secrecy. From staff room discussions I know that some teachers even enjoyed 'catching out' learners with trick questions, i.e. not the ability to recall certain facts were tested, but the ability of the learner to decode the question of the teacher. Any suggestion of group assessment was viewed with suspicion and perceived as being inaccurate, undesirable and less rigid.

"Largely driven by the need to produce marks that could be recorded and reported to prove to the relevant authorities that assessment had taken place, rather than being an integral part of the learning process" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

In my experience it was common for teachers to have a record book that had to be available for inspection by subject heads, heads of department, principals, inspectors and subject advisers at any time. The act of testing learners seemed to have less to do with checking the progress of learners than with pleasing the authorities. Teachers were among other things promoted on the basis of their ability to keep their record books up to date. This approach opened the possibility for a lot of pretence.

"Teachers generally did not consider assessment until after teaching had occurred" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

As said earlier, testing took place after each module or chapter was taught. Testing was a routine action after the completion of a module or chapter. Its purpose was to record marks, which had to be moderated by education department officials before it was communicated to parents. On the basis of these marks, learners were passed or failed.

"Largely summative, norm-referenced and judgmental in nature" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

The assessments that were done were mainly for summative purposes, i.e. assessment at the end of a module or period to determine whether the learner is competent or not yet competent. Use was made of norm-referenced assessment, i.e. assessment that expressed the achievement of learners in relation to the achievement of other learners. Assessment was used to form a judgement about the progress of a learner. Assessment tasks emphasised content and factual recall, and "often entailed learning in parrot-fashion" (Cockburn, 1997:5). The 'best learner' was the one who could most accurately reproduce the teacher's marking memorandum. Very little emphasis was placed on critical thinking skills or on valuing the personal inputs of learners.

"The format of assessment was dictated by rigid bureaucratic structures that stipulated when and how assessment should be conducted" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

In my experience, at least three weeks per school term was set aside for examinations from Standard 2 upwards. The format of examination papers was given in the subject syllabi. Control tests in the high school took place at specified times during the year. The normal school timetable would usually be adapted to accommodate control tests.

"Little emphasis on performance-based 'authentic' assessment" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122)

Performances, i.e. instances where learners had to prepare a culminating presentation based on work done in the classroom and that could take different forms (role play, multimedia presentation, etc.), seemed to lie outside of the curriculum. It was regarded as an add-on. Performances were not regarded as serious work. It could not compete against written examinations where one had a graded answer sheet as proof of assessment. As mentioned earlier, languages and the arts were important exceptions in this regard. Few teachers at that time showed the initiative to produce proof of performances, e.g. by putting it onto video or audiotapes.

"Strong emphasis on competition between learners" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:123)

I mentioned earlier that norm referencing was dominant prior to the introduction of OBE. This led to constant comparison between learners, fanned by teachers and parents. With this

comparison came the resultant labelling. Performance of individual learners relative to the class average was more important than the extent of learning each learner was engaged in. In my experience, prize-giving ceremonies and/or top ten lists were an institution at most schools. Most schools also included non-academic honours, e.g. sports awards. Some schools in the area where I was teaching tried to include categories that would encourage weaker learners, e.g. most improved learner. These awards were generally seen as lower in status than the top academic achievers awards. They were the equivalent of a "Miss Personality" title at a beauty pageant.

"Promotion and retention were key elements in pre-OBE times" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:123)

Promotion decisions were based on high-stakes examinations. Learners had to memorise and recall volumes of facts in an examination at the end of the year. Their performance in that examination determined whether they would progress to the next standard. Generally stress levels were high during examination times and suicides among learners who failed were recorded from time to time in the media. The assumption was that the repeat of a full academic year would act as a remedy for the shortcomings a learner might display. In most cases, another year of the same treatment was administered, without establishing the specific kind of support the individual learner might need.

Section III: Assessment in South Africa within the outcomes-based education paradigm

OBE assessment was explained to me by my superiors in the education department as representing a clear break with the past assessment practices in education in South Africa.

Four documents are of importance in terms of assessment in the OBE era in South Africa:

- Senior Phase C2005 Policy document. (Department of Education, 1997). This document contains the first few official statements on assessment.
- Government Gazette No. 19640, 23 December 1998: Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band, Grades R to 9 and ABET (Department of Education, 1998). This is the National Assessment Policy for the GET Band and ABET and is still valid.

- The chapter on "Learner Assessment" in the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R–9 (Schools), 2002 (Department of Education, 2002). This chapter adds to the National Assessment Policy and focuses on the administration and management of assessment in schools.

- National Protocol on Assessment for Schools in the General and Further Education and Training Band (Grades R to 12), 21 October 2005 (Department of Education, 2005). This is the latest government statement on assessment. It particularly addresses the issue of teacher overload and seeks to set out minimum requirements for each learning area and field.

I refer to these documents in my analysis of assessment in the South African OBE paradigm.

Definition of assessment in the outcomes-based education system

As a South African teacher, freshly plucked from the classroom in 1999 to act as subject adviser for others in the early days of the implementation of OBE, I asked: "What is outcomes-based assessment and how is it different from what we experienced in the past?" I was referred by those who were better informed to the National Assessment Policy of 1998, which states that

> ... [a]ssessment is the process of identifying, gathering, and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase of learning. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement, evaluating this evidence against the outcomes, recording the findings of this evaluation and using this information to assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching. (Department of Education, 1998:8-9)

I made sense of this definition for myself in the following way:

The first step in the second part of the definition (generating and collecting evidence of achievement) would involve the processes of developing tests, assignments, performance tasks and other assessment instruments that address the pre-specified outcomes contained in the curriculum documents, administering these items and generating some kind of evidence in the form of answer sheets (in most cases), written pieces, performances, videos, audiotapes, etc. Collecting evidence could also mean observing learners and noting their progress.

The second step (evaluating this evidence against the outcomes) involves a value judgement, i.e. pronouncing on the quality of the evidence, not by whim or on any vague basis, but by measuring it against the nationally agreed outcomes. Precision is assumed, because outcomes are supposed to be clear and transparent. Fairness is assumed, because outcomes are the same nationally. It is important to note that this assumed precision and fairness is disputed by some (e.g. Kraak, 1999).

The third step involves record keeping (recording the findings of this evaluation). A critical question that was asked by many teachers I encountered was: "How much recording is enough?" Some were of the opinion that it would suffice to record only summative judgements (i.e. global judgements that are made after a longer process) against outcomes. Others felt that they needed to record all judgements, including formative judgements, and that they needed to do this against assessment standards, i.e. units smaller than outcomes. The proponents of more detailed recording usually assume that such recording gives a more accurate picture, is more thorough and more precise. The National Protocol on Assessment (Department of Education, 2005), the latest government statement on assessment, gives *minimum requirements* on recording and reporting, which in a sense is an answer to the question about how much assessment is enough.

The fourth step, namely using information to assist the learner's development and improve the process of teaching and learning, is usually non-existent in South African classrooms. Because of a history of performing assessments to please the bureaucracy and not to improve learner performance, this step is often neglected. And yet it is this formative part of the assessment process that has the potential to be the most powerful. If the emphasis was rather on improving learner performance instead of pleasing the bureaucracy, generations of learners would have been better off; the current generation, as well as future ones.

If compared to pre-OBE assessment, this definition of assessment is broader and much more comprehensive.

Link between outcomes and assessment

Assessment assumes a prominent place in the outcomes-based discourse because of the intimate link between outcomes and assessment. It is the strength of this link that proponents of the outcomes-based discourse emphasise when they spell out the difference between the education objectives movement and OBE. Outcomes and its subsets spell out exactly what the

desired behaviours should be after the learners were put through a learning experience or a series of learning experiences. Outcomes are written in a way that provides a checklist to the teacher against which he or she can assess whether they were attained or not. Outcomes without assessment are unthinkable. According to the Senior Phase Policy document, "[t]he focus of outcomes-based education and training is the link between the intentions and results of learning, rather than the traditional approach of listing content to be covered within a learning programme" (Department of Education, 1997:21).

The relationship between outcomes and assessment can be described as internal, i.e. that one cannot think of the concept of outcomes without implying thereby that assessment of outcomes needs to take place.

As stated earlier, assessment assumes an important and crucial place in the system: If there is no way of gathering evidence and measuring learner performance, there is no way of determining the efficiency gains or whether the best input-output ratio has been achieved or what kind of interventions need to be taken to improve efficiency. Assessment becomes the 'science of measurement' that will determine and control whether the desired outcomes have been realised in the education system. Therefore, all kinds of 'scientific assessment instruments' are developed and much time is spent on gathering information and measuring learner performance. This is an indication of the internal link between assessment and outcomes and the priority that OBE gives to assessment.

In comparing the OBE with pre-OBE dispensation, proponents of OBE would probably argue that the transparent statement of outcomes in advance and the effective assessment of outcomes under OBE represent a vast improvement on the general and specific objectives of subjects in the pre-OBE era, which were not characterised by such clear formulation and intentional, 'effective' measurement. Further they would argue for a dichotomy between content-based and outcomes-based curricula, and state their preference for an outcomes-based curriculum.

Criterion-referenced versus norm-referenced assessment

The kind of assessment that is favoured by the outcomes-based discourse is criterion-referenced assessment. According to the National Assessment Policy, criterion referencing refers to "[t]he practice of assessing a learner's performance against an agreed set of criteria.

In the case of OBE the learner is assessed against agreed criteria derived from the specific outcomes" (Department of Education, 1998:19).

In the debate on assessment in the outcomes-based discourse, criterion-referenced assessment is set up as being in opposition to norm-referenced assessment, which is usually associated with the previous education dispensation. According to the National Assessment Policy, norm referencing "[c]ompares a learner's performance with that of other learners in a given group" (Department of Education, 1998:20).

The differences between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment are tabulated in a document by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in the following way:

CRITERION-REFERENCED ASSESSMENT	NORM-REFERENCED ASSESSMENT
• Makes judgements about learners by measuring learners' work against set criteria.	• Makes judgements about learners by measuring them against each other.
• An individual is assessed.	• A group of learners are assessed.
• The criteria are pre-determined and are part of the standard.	• Assessments are curriculum-based.
• The criteria are objective and attempt to be as clear as possible in terms of the nature of the assessment.	• Associated with averaging of scores or grading of learners.
• Where grading is used, learners are graded against the criteria for assessment	• Associated with adjustment of scores to fit the profile of the learner group.

(South African Qualifications Authority, 2001:25)

In its commitment to fairness and non-discrimination, OBE is closely associated with criterion referencing, since in this kind of assessment learners are assessed against 'objective criteria' and not against their peers. These criteria are derived from the learning outcomes. This is seen as being fairer and more objective than norm referencing.

Criterion referencing implies that teachers must design and use 'unbiased' assessment tools incorporating the 'objective criteria' derived from the outcomes. In my experience, teachers have difficulty designing and applying these tools. It is an entirely new experience for them. They were not trained that way. They were trained to use tests and examinations as

assessment techniques, with memoranda as the matching assessment instrument. So they are very reliant on the examples of criterion-referenced assessment tools and techniques that they get from curriculum advisers and from textbooks. It is time consuming to design such instruments, even though they may be perceived as holding the promise of fairness and non-discrimination.

Continuous assessment versus once-off examinations

Further, the outcomes-based discourse favours continuous assessment over once-off, high-stakes assessments such as examinations, which are associated with the previous education dispensation. CASS is defined in the 1998 National Assessment Policy as "[a]n ongoing process that measures a learner's achievement during the course of a grade or level, providing information that is used to support a learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process" (Department of Education, 1998:19).

The RNCS Assessment Chapter states that continuous assessment ensures that assessment

- takes place over a period of time and is ongoing;
- supports the growth and development of learners;
- provides feedback from learning and teaching;
- allows for integrated assessment;
- uses strategies that cater for a variety of learner needs; and
- allows for summative assessment. (Department of Education, 2002:97)

Though CASS should not be confused with the year mark system that was in place in the previous education system in South Africa, my experience is that teachers often see it as the same thing. The year mark was derived by adding different prescribed assessments during the year and summarising and aggregating it as a mark to be added to the final examination mark. CASS seeks to provide the learner with ample opportunities to demonstrate his or her competence. Those assessments that best represent the competence of learners are taken into account with CASS. All the assessments during the year are not taken into account, regardless of the purpose of the assessment, and merely aggregated, as was the case with the year mark system. There is an appeal to the principle of fairness. The assessment of a learner should not merely hinge on a once-off, high-stakes event such as an examination.

There is, however, still a difficulty in the present system in the fact that the Senior Certificate (Grade 12) examination is still a high-stakes examination. The proportion of CASS: Final Examination mark in most Grade 12 subjects is 25 : 75, meaning that the Senior Certificate examination accounts for 75% of the final mark in most subjects. It is exactly the other way round in Grade 9.

The emphasis on CASS implies a reliance on school-based assessments designed by teachers, as opposed to the external assessments provided by the education department. It might be that the authorities at this point in time do not trust the quality of school-based assessment to the extent that they would allow the major proportion of the school-leaving certificate to be made up of it.

However, the deliberate shift in the direction of continuous assessment points to a desire to move away from the complete reliance on the once-off, high-stakes examinations of the past.

Formative and summative assessment

In the RNCS formative assessment is described under "Purposes of Assessment" in the following way: "Formative assessment monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching, and is used to inform learners and teachers about learners' progress so as to improve learning. Constructive feedback is given to enable learners to grow" (Department of Education, 2002:96).

This use of assessment has a developmental nature that fits very well with the learner-centredness that is claimed by OBE and the project of democratising education in South Africa. It also fits very well with the practice of CASS discussed above, i.e. that the learner gets ample opportunity to demonstrate competence as opposed to once-off, high-stakes assessment.

Another use or purpose of assessment that is often associated with once-off, high-stakes assessment is summative assessment. It is described in the RNCS document in the following way: "Summative assessment gives an overall picture of learners' progress at a given time, for example, at the end of a term or year, or on transfer to another school" (Department of Education, 2002:97).

My experience is that there is a great confusion among teachers in South African schools about these two uses of assessment. Instead of understanding it as two instances of assessment

for different purposes, the association of formative assessment with continuous assessment and the association of summative assessment with once-off, high-stakes assessment led education officials and teachers to believe that summative assessment refers to tests and examinations and that formative assessment refers to all other types of assessment, e.g. projects, orals, performances and role-play. A better statement of the difference between summative and formative assessment by SAQA is provided in the table below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
• Designed to support the teaching and learning process.	• At the end of a learning programme (qualification, unit standard, or part qualification).
• Assists in the planning of future learning.	• To determine whether the learner is competent or not yet competent.
• Diagnoses the learner's strength and weaknesses.	• In knowledge and inputs-based systems, this usually occurs after a specified period of study, e.g. one year.
• Provides feedback to the learner on his or her progress.	• In OBET, learner-readiness determines when assessment will take place.
• Helps to make decisions on the readiness of learners for summative assessment.	• Is carried out when the assessor and the learner agree that the learner is ready for assessment.
• Is developmental in nature.	
• Credits/certificates are not awarded.	

(South African Qualifications Authority, 2001:26)

NB: OBET = Outcomes-based Education and Training

Under OBE in South Africa the idea of formative assessment comes stronger to the fore than in the previous system. Its natural link with a learner-centred approach and the project of democratising education makes this use or purpose of assessment desirable to progressive teachers.

Because of the confusion with the use of the concepts of summative and formative assessment, alternative concepts to distinguish between the purposes of assessment, i.e. 'assessment *of* learning' and 'assessment *for* learning' were coined by the Assessment Reform

Group in the United Kingdom (UK), under the leadership of Paul Black. This terminology was taken over by various authors in other parts of the world. There seems to be a consensus that internationally there is enough experience with 'assessment *of* learning', but that the full potential of 'assessment *for* learning' is yet to be realised. The consensus is that the emphasis should not only be on *measurement*, but most importantly on *learning*. Grant Wiggins, who coined the phrase 'educative assessment', which is roughly synonymous with 'assessment *for* learning', puts it this way:

> [T]he aim of assessment is primarily to *educate and improve* student performance, not merely to *audit* it. I use the terms *auditing* and *audit test* to describe checking up on activities after they are over, as accountants audit a business's books to check that all the financial records match over a fiscal year. People do not run their businesses only to satisfy an auditor's requirement for records that appear accurate. But schools too often worry about the equivalent: we focus on teaching students to pass simplistic, often multiple-choice tests composed of 'items' that neither assess what we value nor provide useful feedback about how to teach and how to learn. (Wiggins, 1998:7)

In this sense the urgency behind arrangements that would ensure 'assessment *for* learning' is a development that needs to be saluted. It is a way of saying that assessment is part of teaching and learning; that assessment can contribute to the learning of learners and be an aid for teachers in their teaching. Another phrase, coined by Ruth Dann (2002), is of importance: 'assessment *as* learning'. This use of assessment emphasises self-assessment by learners and the role of the learner in the assessment process. Here is Dann's central argument: "If assessment genuinely seeks to give some indication of pupils' level of learning and development, in ways which will further advance learning, pupils need to understand and contribute to the process" (Dann, 2002:2).

The use of 'assessment *for* learning' and 'assessment *as* learning' holds great promise, but I want to warn that such promise is compromised if the thinking around it is still located within an outcomes-based discourse.

A variety of assessment strategies

Because of its acceptance of the principle that each learner learns differently, there is strong support in the outcomes-based discourse for psychological theories such as Gardner's

Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993). It is assumed that different assessment strategies should be applied in the assessment of learners. This has an implication in terms of the capacity of teachers to implement different assessment strategies. Although teachers might have understanding for the democratic intent, the practicability of designing and administering different assessment strategies for different learners on a continuous basis, especially in the absence of capacity to do so, may be an obstacle.

Administration and management of assessment

The Senior Phase Policy Document (Department of Education, 1997) made little mention of assessment. The National Assessment Policy was spelt out in Government Gazette No. 19640 of 23 December 1998. This document provides the theoretical and legal framework for assessment, without going into the practical administration and management of assessment. Administration and management issues are spelt out in more detail in the RNCS (Department of Education, 2002) and the National Protocol on Assessment for Schools in the General and Further Education and Training Band (Grades R to 12), October 2005 (Department of Education, 2005).

In the RNCS documents, the same chapter on assessment forms part of each of the RNCS learning area statements. The section on "Managing assessment" deals with the people involved in assessment and the school assessment programme, which I assume should have read "School assessment plan". The "Keeping records" section gives specific prescriptions about record books and what they must contain. After giving a brief overview of different kinds of assessment codes, it introduces the notion of national codes. Specific prescriptions on progression schedules and learner profiles are also provided. The section on "Reports" deals with the information to be included in reports and the minimum requirements for a report card.

The Teacher Guides for the Foundation and Intermediate Phases also provides more detail on the administration and management of assessment. The latest government statement on assessment, The National Protocol on Assessment (Department of Education, 2005), acknowledges the negative effect of excessive recording and reporting on teacher workload. This document was drafted at the request of the Minister of Education. The wish is that "[t]he protocol would regulate recording and reporting in all schools and also reduce the workload of teachers" (Department of Education, 2005:2).

In this section I engaged at length with outcomes-based assessment, and how it is different from assessment in South Africa before the introduction of OBE. In the next section, I explore how outcomes-based assessment is related to what has been called 'the assessment revolution'.

Section IV: The assessment revolution

The requirement to give account, to measure oneself against standards and against others, is so pervasive in contemporary Western society that we do not even reflect on it anymore. The competition such an approach invokes among individuals and the vocabulary of 'delivery and performance' is unmistakably rooted in models of industrial production and in the culture of performativity. Therefore I disagree in part with the initial quote of Broadfoot at the start of this chapter where she states that assessment was once "the preserve of teachers and a small number of professional specialists" (2002:285). I believe what has happened is that methods of industry (most notably time and motion studies, quality control mechanisms and performance management) and the policy technology of performativity have taken over all spheres of contemporary society; it was not as if educational assessment has been exported to other spheres of life. Education itself is a victim of an ever-expanding reign of the industrial metaphor and performativity. Performance indicators, outputs, key measurable objectives or key performance areas are increasingly becoming part of the lives and vocabulary of individuals in our time.

According to Broadfoot and Black (2004), we are living, at the turn of the century, in an assessment era and an assessment society and are experiencing an assessment revolution. We are experiencing an "increase in assessment activity of all kinds and the penetration of assessment in its various guises into almost every aspect of human endeavour" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:19).

Our assessment society is as "wedded to our belief in the power of numbers, grades, targets and league tables to deliver quality and accountability, equality and defensibility as we are to modernism itself" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:19).

Broadfoot and Black (2004) are of the opinion that history will dub the 1990s and the first years of the new millennium as the assessment era; a time during which the "belief in the power of assessment to provide a rational, efficient and publicly acceptable mechanism of judgement and control reached its high point" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:19).

I argue that this state of affairs in this era, at the turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century, is related to developments in management theory at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century and to more recent developments with regard to performativity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Frederick Winslow Taylor published his seminal work in the area of management theory, called *The principles of scientific management*, in 1917. In this book he described how the application of scientific methods to the management of workers could greatly improve production in the steel industry. I have described in the previous chapter how professionals in basically all other spheres of society became enchanted with the magnificent efficiency gains that Taylor recorded in industry and how they uncritically applied the industrial metaphor to their fields of work. It is this widespread application of the industrial metaphor in various sectors of society, overlain by the policy technology of performativity, that Broadfoot and Black (2004) call the assessment revolution.

Nowadays, the need to control professionals, because of what is essentially a distrust in their ability to do a job efficiently, and the urge to break down larger tasks into ever more smaller, simplified, but 'manageable' units, shows that the dream of finding a best way to do a job (nowadays called benchmarks, standards and best practices) is not over; in fact it seems to have been realised to a great extent through the policy technology of performativity.

Broadfoot and Black describe the current assessment revolution as "a revolution that has elevated *quantitative data* – the raw material of most public assessment – as the principal mechanism for delivering transparency, accountability and predictability" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:19).

As I argued in the previous chapter, assessment becomes the 'science of measurement' that will determine whether the desired efficiencies have been attained in the system. As such it assumes an important and crucial place in the system: If there is no way of gathering evidence and measuring performance, there is no way of determining the efficiency gains or whether the best input-output ratio has been achieved or what kind of interventions need to be taken to improve efficiency. Therefore, all kinds of 'scientific measurement instruments' are developed and much time is spent on measuring performance. People are supposed to accept and internalise the measurement instruments uncritically and adapt their behaviour and even their lives in such a way that they are positioned to satisfy the assessment criteria. The ideal citizen under such circumstances is the one who is governable and self-regulating. There is a conceptual link between the assessment revolution and governmentability. Outcomes-based

assessment therefore becomes a prime instance of performativity, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Section V: Assessment in education

Arguably, no other sphere is as heavily affected by the assessment revolution (performativity) as the sphere of education. According to Broadfoot, "[a]ssessment activity now shapes the goals, the organization, the delivery and the evaluation of education" (Broadfoot, 2002:285).

Over large parts of the world (e.g. Australia, England, Europe, the United States of America (USA) and Southern Africa) a movement of OBE and standards-based education has gained momentum. The idea is that if standards or outcomes for schooling were spelt out and known in advance, it would be simple to measure the success of learners and teachers against these standards or outcomes. It would then also be possible to measure the performance of the educational system in a country against the pre-set standards or outcomes and also to compare the educational system in one country with that of other countries. It is chiefly a system of how to manage education, i.e. an application of management theory on education. Its roots lie more in management theory and in (industrial) psychology than in pedagogy.

In the international quest for more efficiency and accountability, considerable "policy borrowing" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004:14) is taking place between countries. This means that governments that are busy with similar developments exchange policy texts among each other to inform their own eventual policies. Sometimes whole sections or ideas are taken over or 'borrowed'. The effect of this is that various mutations of outcomes-based and standards-based approaches currently exist around the world. Policy borrowing strengthens the grip of these types of approaches on education systems worldwide. It became part of the international 'good governance' debate of governments; the story of how they are 'managing' education by 'remote control' in an 'efficient' way. South Africa is no exception.

Section VI: Assessment – innocent technology or socio-political practice?

In many contemporary education systems (e.g. the ones mentioned in the previous section) assessment is made to seem innocent, neutral and objective. It (assessment) is viewed as a process where care is being taken to eliminate any bias that might exist, even before the assessment process. Contemporary educational assessment has an air of being scientific, borrowed from the psychological tests (IQ and other) within which, among other things, it is

rooted. Delandshere (2001) is of the opinion that there are many implicit theories and unexamined assumptions in current-day educational assessment. One of the aims of her article is "to analyze the basis of evaluative judgments in educational assessment and to question some of the tacit assumptions and ideas that seem to underlie them" (Delandshere, 2001:114).

She suggests that in much of contemporary educational assessment, assessment is seen as a *technology*. Her position is that for the most of the twentieth century the purpose of assessment did not change substantially: it is used for placement, selection and certification decisions, based on measures of what individuals know. Nowadays one could add as an implicit purpose the construction of governable persons, as I have explained in the previous chapter.

According to Delandshere,

> … the judgments that are made about learning are mediated through the design of measurement instruments and the assignment of scores and their interpretation. The pre-eminence of measurement and statistical methods in education, in the USA in particular, has called for increased specialized and technical knowledge, which further identifies assessment with technology. (Delandshere, 2001:115)

Substantive questions about learning and understanding are turned into technical or method questions. Assessment is primarily a matter of technique and procedure to which other concerns are subordinated. As such it is a prime instance of performativity.

Politicians who are dissatisfied about the perceived quality of public education (as indicated and evidenced by test scores) frequently demand more educational testing. Policy-makers are expecting tests to serve as instruments of change in teaching and learning. The argument behind this is that if one could prescribe assessment requirements, assessment could act as some kind of Trojan horse for curriculum change and the way teachers teach in the classroom. Ball asks a crucial question: "Who is it that determines what is to count as a valuable, effective or satisfactory performance and what measures or indicators are considered as valid representations of value?" (Ball, 2003:7).

In most cases relating to education it is politicians and bureaucrats, without necessarily having to know the details of the pedagogical situation, who spell out a set of desired outcomes and

teachers who have to implement measures to achieve them. In this way, politicians and bureaucrats steer education by remote control.

Conversations about assessment takes place within a selected circle using a highly specialised vocabulary, e.g. curriculum and assessment experts and educational psychologists. Even teachers are in many instances alienated by the new jargon. New labels are given for known things in the selected circle of educational assessment experts. On the occasions where assessment in education becomes an issue in public debate, e.g. through appeals by parents and learners against assessment decisions, it tends relatively quickly to become a specialised conversation again. The help of various expert witnesses is normally solicited in such cases and descriptions of a very complicated and specialised system are given in an attempt to pacify and finally dismiss the complainants on the grounds of their 'ignorance' of the system.

A view of *assessment as external and separate to teaching and learning* is created. Assessment is also seen as *separate and objective in relation to other social practices*. Assessment comes to be viewed as *a technology developed by technicians or measurement experts, and used by others to make specific decisions or induce changes*.

The criticism against assessment as a technology to make teaching and learning more effective is aligned with the criticisms against OBE as a system, which were explored in the previous chapter. It is also related to the issue of performativity and the industrial metaphor, which was discussed above.

Delandshere proposes a different view of assessment than the above. She argues that seen "[i]n a broader historical perspective … assessment should be more appropriately viewed as a *practice* whose function and purpose are defined within the particular socio-political structure" (Delandshere, 2001:114, my emphasis).

To elucidate this point, Delandshere cites different historical examples that she regards as roots of the current assessment system and their purposes, e.g. examinations in the ancient Chinese civil service, the medieval universities, the practice of disputations, the move towards experimentation and experience and competitive examinations in the era of industrialisation and mass production (2001:116–118). I now summarize each Delandshere's examples briefly:

- In the ancient Chinese civil service the purpose of the examinations that were conducted was purely to identify suitable individuals capable and moral enough to

hold high office in this service. The purpose of these complex and highly complicated examinations was *selection* in a society that did not have a hereditary ruling class.

- In the medieval European universities examinations were conducted for the purpose of *public acknowledgement*. At these early formal education institutions, masters prepared students for examinations. The masters decided when the students were ready and capable of achieving success in these examinations. Because of this fact, the occasions on which students failed were exceptionally rare. The examinations would determine on which books the students could answer questions and they would be granted licence to teach others on these books.

- Also during the Middle Ages, disputations were a popular form of 'assessment' whereby students would, through the use of deduction, defend a thesis publicly to establish its validity. The purpose of this type of assessment was to *validate students' knowledge* and to *create new knowledge*.

- With Descartes, Bacon, Newton, Locke and Hume came an era of *experiment and experience* as a source of knowledge. Disputations were seen, against this background, as futile exercises.

- The era of industrialisation and mass production brought with it an era of competitive examinations. This was in line with the ethic of individual ambition and achievement towards personal success. Examinations therefore became a determining factor in the career and future of any individual. Delandshere states that

- ... assessment lost its didactic or educative function as it became used as a means by which the social structure would be reorganised in order to create the possibility of social mobility. Assessment practices then began to be viewed and developed as a technology used for specific societal purposes of *selection*. (Delandshere, 2001:117, my emphasis)

My reading of Delandshere is that she provides us with a broader, historical view of assessment and a transparent and honest description of its societal role and function in particular societies and communities. It is a view that strips assessment of its innocence as an ahistoric, neutral and benevolent technology. It is closely linked to issues of citizenship and the distribution of life chances; therefore it deserves continuous inquiry and debate.

A view of *assessment as external and separate to teaching and learning* is worrying to me. I want to espouse a position where assessment, teaching and learning are integrally linked and where none of the three unfairly dominates if our purposes are educative and not otherwise.

Further, a view of assessment as *a technology developed by technicians or measurement experts, and used by others* cannot simply be accepted without scrutiny or contest. Those who use or implement assessment strategies, especially teachers, need to play an important role in its development or at least be able to critically engage with the criteria, outcomes and assessment strategies; if this is not the case, they will be seen as potentially self-monitoring individuals, who do not question and are controlled from a distance according to the logic of performativity. Also, a naïve view of assessment as *separate and objective in relation to other social practices* needs to be contested by a broader view of assessment as a socio-political practice with specific purposes that are not always educational.

How would one view this description of pre-OBE assessment in South Africa in the context of Delandshere's portrayal of assessment, which was discussed in the previous section of this chapter? For me it seems as if assessment in this era was portrayed as an innocent technology, but served, in the racially segregated education system, to appropriate different life chances to children of different races. The different education acts contained explicit statements about the aims of education for different race groups and different examination bodies administered the examinations for different race groups. Just as fundamental pedagogics masqueraded as an objective science of education under apartheid, educational assessment was portrayed as an innocent technology. Those who looked deeper saw assessment for what it was: a technology that was used to ensure that particular contents were learnt and regurgitated and that was used for societal purposes of selection in a racially segregated society where there was a particular hierarchy described in racial terms.

Is OBE assessment in South Africa an innocent technology or socio-political practice? The C2005 Assessment Policy (Department of Education, 1998) gives the broad theoretical basis for OBE assessment in South Africa. It is clear that this policy has a democratic intent and that the authors hoped for a shift from past assessment practices, especially if one looks at the assessment principles contained in the policy. There seems to be an appreciation that assessment should be viewed in a wider socio-political context, and not only as an innocent, independent technology.

The RNCS chapter on learner assessment (Department of Education, 2002) and National Assessment Protocol (Department of Education, 2005) are focused more on describing the technical process of assessment. It represents a narrowing of focus. It is in essence a list of technical instructions. This seems to be related to a dilemma that was described in the

previous chapter: The more transparent one wants to make the criteria in OBE, the more one runs the risk of becoming more and more prescriptive.

Although there is a democratic intent and vocabulary, as well as clearly visible moves away from assessment in the pre-OBE era as discussed above, current practices under OBE in my experience suggest that much of the old is still with us, mainly because in many cases the capacity to implement the new ideas is non-existent and because of the conceptual muddles that teachers face in the process of moving from the existing system to the new. A safe retreat then seems to be to view assessment as a technology and to concentrate more on the "how" than the "why" question. At a deeper level, the pre-established curricular regime (OBE) could be seen as interested in control. Outcomes-based assessment is presented as an innocent, benevolent technology, while a less charitable or critical view would portray it as a prime instance of performativity – it aims at surveillance and ultimately self-regulation.

Section VII: Some concerns about outcome-based assessment in South Africa

There are certain developments with regard to outcomes-based assessment in South Africa that I view as worrying, and which I summarise in this section.These developments are intimately related to the criticism that was offered of OBE in the previous chapter, because of the internal link between assessment and OBE.

My concerns are the following:

- The grammar of this approach to assessment in the educational sphere is too closely related to that used in production processes in the economic sphere. It seems ill at ease within the practice of education. It uses terminology and procedures that seem foreign to the practice of education.
- This approach to assessment, especially the advance formulation of assessment criteria in distinct behavioural terms, is related to behavioural psychology. This kind of prior statement of desirable behaviour, when taken to the extreme, harbours dangers such as behaviour modification, brainwashing and indoctrination that are not constitutive of the practice of education.

- This approach to assessment is a prime instance of performativity, with its associated grave implications of the construction of governable subjects, surveillance and self-monitoring.

- The assessment process itself is increasingly becoming a technicist process and assessment is viewed as a technology detached from teaching and learning. Ultimately, it could be associated with an impoverished view of education that makes no accommodation for imagination, creativity, professional judgement and agency. Rubrics are constructed to measure ever smaller and smaller parts of learning processes, with the danger that the whole of a learning process is lost out of sight. It could inspire a 'tick-fest' where teachers and officials believe that ticking off lists of desirable behaviour is indicative of mastery of complex learning processes.

- The internal link between assessment and OBE can lead to the dominance of assessment over teaching, learning and the curriculum, as was discussed in this chapter and the previous one. What is to be desired is a situation where this dominance could be avoided. Assessment is necessary, but should not be allowed to determine teaching, learning and the curriculum.

- My last concern is about how close assessment links to issues of accountability and control. In the sphere of education assessment is often linked to *accountability*. Learners can be assessed against the outcomes to ascertain whether they have learnt what they were supposed to. Teachers can be held to account by measuring their performance and the performance of their learners. A system can be held to account by assessing the capabilities of the learners in the system against desired outcomes. The question is: To whom should learners, teachers and the educational system be accountable? The parents of learners, the voters of a county, the government of a country and the economic sector of a society all demand accountability. How legitimate are all these claims? As long as it is suspected that assessment is leaning too much in the direction of accountability and control, it will be difficult for assessment to rid itself of its negative connotations. Assessment needs to earn its legitimacy within the context of teaching and learning.

Section VIII: Conclusion

In conclusion, we need to pay attention to what the effect and impact of our OBE assessment practices are. Like Broadfoot we need to ask the following questions:

> Is all this assessment activity really improving the quality of educational outcomes? Is it making young people better equipped to face the challenges of a new and very different society? Has the bridling of professional autonomy brought about the improvements in quality and transparency that users quite rightly seek and certainly deserve? Or are the enormous sums of money, the effort, the time and the expertise being directed towards these ends in fact achieving something very different: a deadening of learners' natural creativity, the demoralization of professionals and an enormous waste of precious educational resources? (Broadfoot, 2002:286)

Some would say that these questions cannot as yet be answered conclusively. The jury is still out. We have not researched the full impact of this new system and its assessment component yet. They would argue that much research still has to be done. But, if the few initial studies and anecdotal evidence from teachers are anything to go by, we seem to be heading full speed in the direction of a negative response to Broadfoot's first three questions and an affirmative response to her last one.

In her last editorial as editor of the journal *Assessment in Education*, Patricia Broadfoot urges that

> ... [i]t is essential that as much effort be given to documenting the impact of assessment as has traditionally been given to its design. Otherwise we are not only wasting our time as a community of scholars and practitioners; we may also be in danger of unwittingly unleashing a Frankenstein's monster. Indeed, we may already have done so. (Broadfoot, 2002:285)

I can sense Broadfoot's concern and, as a person who was closely involved in the implementation of the new outcomes-based assessment system, I feel chills running down my spine when reading her last sentence ...

Patricia Broadfoot seems to me to be a person with a genuine interest in the development of learners, who has come to the end of her term as editor of an influential journal about

assessment and now feels the need to evaluate her contribution. The burden of responsibility let itself be felt at that moment and she has a strange feeling that something might be amiss. Her uncertainty about her contribution might stem from being caught between good intentions and the growing reality of the predicament that outcomes-based assessment is presenting to teachers, and to the practice of teaching as a whole.

This predicament will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT AS A PREDICAMENT FOR TEACHERS AND THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Section I: Introduction

I argue in this chapter that outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to teaching conceived of as a practice. I start by briefly giving a profile of what the 'new teacher' required in post-apartheid South Africa looks like. After that I engage with the term 'predicament', drawing on the work of Burbules and Hansen (1997). Then I briefly explore different understandings that teachers might have of teaching, engaging with the work of Hogan (2004) and Noddings (2004). I explain what I mean by 'practice' and indicate my preference for the understanding of teaching as a practice. Thereafter I explain in which ways outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to the practice of teaching. I end the chapter with a short conclusion.

Section II: The 'new teacher'

South Africa embarked on a major restructuring of the education system. The expectations that government has of teachers under the new system are vastly different than under the previous system. The Department of Education (2002) spells out the kind of teacher that the new, democratic South African government envisages. It acknowledges the particular importance of the role that teachers have to play. The RNCS envisions teachers who are

> … qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000 (Government Gazette No. 20844). These see teachers as mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and life-long learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and learning area/phase specialists. (Department of Education, 2002:3)

Carl (2005:223) argues that many teachers experience these expectations as being developed "elsewhere" and as "handed down to them from the top". The result of this is that the only say that teachers seem to have in the matter is to implement the policy and to try to be what the

policy expects of them. It is one thing to state in a policy document what teachers should be and should do, but quite another for them to be or to do what is intended by others for them. At the present moment there is little evidence of intentional, purposeful teacher development interventions undertaken by the government that aims to develop teachers in the direction of these roles that are specified above. The expectation of teachers to be assessors, itself a big expectation of teachers in an outcomes-based system, is but one of seven substantial roles (spelt out in the quote from the RNCS above) that they are expected to fulfil in order to fit the description of the 'new teacher' required in post-apartheid South Africa.

Section III: What is a predicament?

In the introduction to their book *Teaching and its predicaments*, Nicholas Burbules and David Hansen describe a predicament in the following way:

> A predicament is a problematic state of affairs that admits to no easy resolution. Predicaments require compromise and trade-offs. They do not necessarily paralyze human action; people can and do respond to them all the time. However, responses to predicaments tend to take the form of provisional, working resolutions: *provisional* because no response can permanently dissolve the predicament, but *working* because the response at least provides a strategy or a way of addressing the situation. (Burbules & Hansen, 1997:1)

Teaching, like other human practices, is not spared its share of predicaments. But, as Burbules and Hansen (1997:1) point out, teaching, in spite of all its problematic dimensions, also yields unspeakable joy and fulfilment to successive generations of teachers and gives their lives form and direction. Some would even contend that the predicaments of teaching are part of the ethos of teaching. Every generation has its set of predicaments; it is conceivable that some predicaments are perennial and re-occur in different ways at different times while others are specific to a given time and context; some may be more threatening to the practice of teaching than others.

I want to argue that outcomes-based assessment is a predicament that is extremely threatening to teachers and to the practice of teaching at this point in time in South Africa. This assertion is based on recent research findings as well as my personal experience and conversations with teachers in my previous job as an education department official. I explain the ways in which

assessment is a predicament to teachers and to the practice of teaching in Section V of this chapter.

I now move on to an exploration of the different ways in which teachers might view teaching.

Section IV: Teachers' understanding of teaching

Some South African teachers understand their work as a *vocation*, others would rather describe it as a *profession*, while still others understand teaching as *just a job*. I now briefly discuss each of these understandings of teaching in turn.

According to Hogan (2004:19), the understanding of *teaching as a vocation* has a long history associated with the prominence of church influences. This understanding of teaching carries strong connotations of service that is provided for a higher purpose than monetary reward. It is also linked with religious requirements of obedience to a higher authority. In this regard, missionary education and the influence of the church in the South African educational sphere can be understood as strong origins of such an understanding.

Another understanding of teaching is *teaching as a profession*. According to Noddings (2004:164), professionalisation usually refers to the status characteristics of an occupation:

> It is defined by sociology, not by the internal standards of the occupation. When sociologists discuss professions, they mention the following features: control over selection and regulation of members, specialized knowledge and language, altruism or service, privilege and status hierarchies, collegiality and autonomy. (Noddings, 2004:164)

Earlier teachers' associations in South Africa strove towards these features in their emphasis on teaching as a profession, much in line with other professions such as medicine or law.

Another understanding of teaching, *teaching as just a job*, holds that teaching is like any other job, with a certain set of skills to be mastered and performed. Underlying this understanding of teaching is often a resistant stance towards the idea of a higher authority to whom obedience must be observed and also an adversarial relationship between teachers' unions and education authorities. Hogan (2004:19) says that more sophisticated versions of this understanding might describe teaching as a 'multi-skilled' job or even a profession. The formation of a large teachers' union, SADTU, as part of a confederation of trade unions,

COSATU, in the recent history of South Africa has had a very definitive influence on the understanding of teaching as just a job.

I do not want to advance any of the understandings of teaching above; I want to avoid the shortcomings of each of these understandings of teaching. Although, as a religious person, a conception of *teaching as a vocation* seems attractive to me, I want to steer clear of it because of the connotations of teaching standing under the influence of an external, higher authority. Such an understanding would not gain much currency in the pluralistic society such as the one we have in South Africa. I want to avoid the view of *teaching as a profession*, because (as Noddings states) most of the features that define a profession are external to the practice. I also want to distance myself from *teaching as just a job*, because I think that it is a poor and inadequate description of what a teacher does. Although this understanding of teaching might profess to be against the idea of an external higher authority that imposes its will on the teaching fraternity, more often than not other powers, e.g. government departments or economic forces, come to occupy the seats of power that were left vacant by their religious predecessors.

The view of teaching that I want to advance in this dissertation is the view of *teaching as a practice* with integrity of its own. I draw on articles by Margetson (1979), MacIntyre and Dunne (2004), Dunne (2004) and Hogan (2004), as well as the UWC Metatheory Coursebook (University of the Western Cape, 2001) to construct the view of teaching as a practice.

Margetson (1979), discussing the absurdity of practicism, i.e. an approach that is opposed to theory and theorising and that prioritises practice, invokes Hamlyn's distinction between 'behaviour' and 'movement'.

> Movement need not be conscious, intentional, deliberate, or purposeful, but behaviour – which is, roughly, meaningful movement – must involve some of these things if it is to be distinguished from mindless mechanical movement. That is, both human beings and machines make movements, but some human movements are meant and it is this that makes them instances of behaviour rather than mere movement. (Margetson, 1979:13)

I prefer the term 'action' to Hamlyn's 'behaviour' because of its closer association with being conscious, intentional, deliberate or purposeful, but also to prevent any confusion or association with behaviourism.

Practices are *sets of conscious, intentional, deliberate, or purposeful actions*; these sets of actions (now defined as practices) have particular histories and traditions. The UWC Metatheory Coursebook (University of the Western Cape, 2001) states the following: It is not intelligible that an individual can engage in a practice; a practice, as a set of purposeful actions, is shared by the community of practitioners of that practice; the understanding of the practice is the shared self-understanding of the practitioners and represents the 'theory' of the practice. It is, however, intelligible that an individual can engage in a practice without being able to articulate the 'theory' of the practice, e.g. novices coming into the practice or a practitioner who has never given thought to systematically articulating the theory of the practice.

A natural scientist can claim to 'externally observe' his or her subjects, but the social scientist does not have the luxury of such direct access. The social scientist, studying the actions of human beings, needs to find some way of determining the reason, purpose or intention for specific actions. We cannot identify human actions or practices from a distance to mean such or such. Those actions and practices are not innocent and devoid of meaning. Some kind of interpretation is necessary. It would seem that the best kind of interpretation would be the meaning that the actors themselves attach to the actions or practices; their reasons for acting in a specific way. Of course others can argue that the actors themselves are suffering from false consciousness and therefore may not be able to articulate their reasons in the best possible way, but that is not at issue now. The issue is that *human actions and practices need to be interpreted.*

From this viewpoint, a practice can never be seen as being innocent or logically independent of theory: "[A]ll practices are 'theory-laden' – a practice is an embodiment of a theory" (University of the Western Cape, 2001:41).

Following the above account of human actions and practices, I want to argue that teaching can be seen and defined as a *practice,* i.e. as a *set of conscious, intentional, deliberate or purposeful actions*; with particular histories and traditions. The understanding of teaching as a practice is the shared self-understanding of the practitioners (teachers) and represents the 'theory' of the practice of teaching. It is intelligible that some teachers can engage in the practice of teaching without being able to articulate the 'theory' of the practice, e.g. novice teachers or teachers who have never given thought to systematically articulating the theory of

the practice. What is needed is continuous critical reflection of the practice by the practitioners; such reflection will serve to improve the practice.

Great was the consternation among some philosophers of education when Alasdair MacIntyre, an eminent philosopher who was instrumental in introducing the notion of 'practice' to philosophy, stated in a recent interview with Joseph Dunne that

> … teaching itself is not a practice, but a set of skills and habits put to the service of a variety of practices. The teacher should think of her or himself as a mathematician, a reader of poetry, an historian or whatever, engaged in communicating craft and knowledge to apprentices. (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2004:5)

Dunne (2004:170–186) argued for teaching as a practice in reply to MacIntyre's claim above. He sees this characterisation of teaching by MacIntyre as an impoverished conception of teaching. His argument to counter MacIntyre's claim proceeds as follows: "… less through analysis of the concept of practice than through a reflection on the realities of teaching" (Dunne, 2004:170). His basic position is that MacIntyre's claim in the interview seems to misjudge what it is that teachers do. He interprets MacIntyre's conceptualisation of 'practice' in his previous writings and contrasts the rich account of teaching offered by MacIntyre in his book, *Dependent rational animals*, with his impoverished conception in the interview. He also notes that MacIntyre himself later in the interview unproblematically refers to teaching as a practice. My own inclination is to believe that there is not much at stake in their disagreement (as much was stated by MacIntyre in the interview) and that other utterances and works of MacIntyre could be interpreted as supporting a view of teaching as a practice.

Apart from the possibility of viewing teaching as a practice, another sense in which the notion of 'practice' is important to teaching is the sense that teachers help learners to become proficient participants in the practices of mathematics, science, art, etc. On this issue MacIntyre and Dunne agreed in their interview. MacIntyre emphasises the role of teachers and teaching in this type of initiation into various practices (MacIntyre & Dunn, 2004). What is taught (the subjects) can also be characterised as practices. The instruction of subjects can be seen as initiation into practices, in which the teachers are proficient and into which the learners need to be inducted and in which it is hoped they will in time become proficient practitioners.

Hogan (2004) advances a view of teaching as a practice that he calls *teaching as a way of life*, which is appealing to me. Hogan says that arguing the case for teaching as a way of life does two things:

> It calls into question any view which holds that teaching is essentially the kind of work, multi-skilled or otherwise, that is to be decided in all essentials by a body of superiors and carried out by subordinates on the instructions of that body. Second, it is to bring *learning* centrally into the picture: to allow a view to emerge that gives due recognition to the experience and the responsibilities of human learning in any adequate understanding of teaching. These points suggest that to make teaching one's way of life, properly speaking, is to make an occupational commitment to a form of action that has an authority of its own and responsibilities of its own, and to understand that these two features constitute the integrity of that way of life. (Hogan, 2004:19)

Two views of teachers are contrasted: Teachers as functionaries or underlings versus teachers as uncoerced participants in an occupation with its own authority and its own forms of responsibility. The latter is Hogan's (and my) preferred view.

Hogan's view of *teaching as a way of life* is not a naïve view. I share this view and find it a reasonable and honest one. I find that it takes into account what needs to be taken into account, but nevertheless it bravely and consciously opts to swim against the tide. It takes into consideration historical and cultural contexts, the powerful interests that over the years have denied teaching and learning the integrity that is desired, and the fact that this view might be in tension with established forces of power and influence.

The occupational commitment that Hogan refers to is a commitment to teaching and learning as a human practice, "not just a repertoire of competencies to be mastered, transmitted and shared" (Hogan, 2004:20). According to him, it is "a commitment to teaching and learning *as a distinctive way of being human* in a world that is now one with an unprecedented plurality of lifestyles, value orientations and careers" (Hogan, 2004:20, emphasis in original text).

The view of teaching as a practice or, as Hogan puts it, a 'way of life', opens up a view of teaching as an occupation with the freedom to conduct its own affairs in accordance with its practitioners' views on how the best interests of teaching and learning are to be understood and advanced. It is such a view that I want to support before moving on to the next section in

which I deal with the ways in which outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to teaching as a practice.

Section V: Outcomes-based assessment as a predicament for teachers and the practice of teaching

In this section I discuss the ways in which outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to teaching as a practice. I refer to my own experience within the WCED, but also to the report of a survey in 2005 conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) on educator workload in South Africa (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005), the report of a 2004 research survey by Brombacher and Associates on the evaluation of the 2003 General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) developmental process of the WCED and a seminal article by Morrow (1999). The HSRC study involved a nationally representative questionnaire-based survey in 900 schools and case studies in 10 schools. The principal researcher was Linda Chisholm, who also chaired the committee that reviewed Curriculum 2005. A total of 506 participants in 57 schools participated in the WCED study. The principal researcher was Aarnout Brombacher, an ex-teacher at a prominent Cape Town school who has vast experience in curriculum matters, both at provincial and national level.

The following are the ways in which I think outcomes-based assessment presents a predicament to teachers and to teaching as practice:

A whole new language

Referring to the introduction of OBE and speaking as a teacher, Morrow (1999:25) states that "the wholesale revision of our language which we are invited to take – the elimination of such key words as 'knowing', 'appreciating', 'thinking', 'valuing' and 'understanding' – distorts and, thus, undermines our understanding of what we think we are doing".

This 'wholesale revision of our language' that Morrow refers to does not only exclude certain keywords from the practice of education, but also seeks to totally redescribe the practice itself, e.g. learners are no longer tested or evaluated; they are 'assessed'. Teachers no longer plan a lesson; they are expected to 'design a learning programme'. 'Lesson plans' substitute the familiar 'prep book'. Even teachers themselves are not referred to as teachers anymore, but as 'educators' or 'facilitators of learning'. Assessment and its associated new terminology play a central role in OBE.

One of the results of this revision of the language of the practice of teaching is that teachers are muddled and confused. Ultimately, given the total redescription of the educational sphere, it is possible that they can lose faith in their ability to participate meaningfully in a practice that they have chosen as their occupation, but no longer recognise. What seems to have happened is that in an ambitious project to transform education in South Africa, the constitutive meanings of what it is to be a teacher and what teaching itself is were totally redefined and replaced with a vocabulary that was foreign to the teaching practitioners.

Radical change that is imposed from the outside, without proper participation of the members of a practice, does not have a good chance of succeeding. It will be met with confusion, resentment and ultimately with resistance. A new vocabulary on its own will not be enough to change a practice. Here is Morrow again:

> Within a language the meanings of particular words and phrases are held in place by a web of relationships between them and their embeddedness in non-linguistic practices. Coming to learn a language involves gradually coming to find one's way in this complex web of meanings, and in the context of the non-linguistic practices in which they play a role. (Morrow, 1999:26)

The architects of OBE failed to recognise the importance of considering and respecting the historical embeddedness of the practice of teaching in South Africa, its members and its language. It has distorted and undermined the understanding that teachers have of what they are doing.

What is the predicament to teachers? It is a redescription of their occupation in a foreign language that they as practitioners are not proficient in. Teachers find it difficult to relate to a practice that they can hardly recognise; it comes down to disempowerment. A lot of these concepts and procedures have to do with assessment, e.g. outcomes, assessment standards, rubrics, checklists, portfolios and profiles. This is the language of performativity and part of why teachers feel uncomfortable with it, is because it brings with itself new work rules and work relationships that are foreign to the practice of teaching.

What is the predicament for teaching as practice? It can be interpreted as an attempt by bureaucrats to redefine the practice of teaching itself in a way that is not in line with the life world of teachers. The practice itself stands in threat of being debased and twisted so that it is

no longer recognisable to the practitioners as well as to other interested parties such as parents.

The administrative workload predicament: a lot of outcomes, a lot of documents, a lot of subjects and a lot of children

The new system brought with it a multitude of different kinds of outcomes that have to be addressed and against which each learner must ultimately be assessed. Firstly, there are the 12 critical and developmental outcomes that provide the profile of what South African learners should embody when they leave the South African education system. These are broad 'life-roles' that learners should be able to play. Secondly, there are the specific outcomes, that later became learning outcomes in the RNCS. These are the outcomes that have to be addressed and assessed in each learning area or learning field. These are supportive of the critical and developmental outcomes. Thirdly, on the next level are a multitude of assessment criteria that later became assessment standards in the RNCS. These provide more detail about the learning outcomes and also have to be addressed and assessed in some way.

Taken together, these levels of outcomes are numerous and the task of keeping record in terms of this level of minute detail for each learner can become extremely daunting, if not impossible.

The new system also places strong emphasis on detailed planning of learning experiences. In some cases teachers are provided with templates of planning schedules, which require great detail from them. It is obvious that teachers will have to spend a considerable amount of time on planning to satisfy the system. Education officials monitor the planning schedules of teachers. Paperwork that has to be prepared by teachers include learning programme phase planning (three-year plan), work schedules (one-year plan), lesson plans, mark sheets, educator portfolios, learner portfolios, learner profiles, progression and promotion schedules and report cards. While all the administrative requirements might at first sight seem like practical implementation problems, it is also possible to interpret the forms, routines, schedules, etc. as instances of Foucault's disciplinary society and Ball's performativity.

Added to the above administrative requirements, teachers in the GET Band have more subjects to teach than under the previous curriculum. Teachers of lower classes now have eight learning areas that they are responsible for, i.e. an increase in workload in terms of preparation, marking and record keeping. In addition there is a shortage of teachers for some

of the new subjects, e.g. EMS and Technology, in the GET Band. This means that teachers who are inexperienced in those subjects have to teach it and incur the extra workload. Such teachers require much more time to prepare themselves properly to teach those subjects.

Further, in spite of equal provision of teachers in all schools, large classes are still a reality in practice. This means that schools that do not have the financial ability to pay for more teachers from their school funds (i.e. most schools in underprivileged areas) will have to live with the reality of large classes. Large classes increase the amount of marking and record keeping required from teachers. It is also not possible to give individual attention to learners who need it.

The result of a multitude of outcomes, detailed planning requirements, more subjects that have to be taught and large classes is a monumental increase in the administrative workload of teachers. Complaints like "We do not get enough time to teach" or "Our private time is taken up by administrative tasks, which have a detrimental effect on our family and social life" are commonplace. These are key criticisms against outcomes-based assessment that can be seen as related to the policy technology of performativity.

Similar findings were reported in a study conducted by the HSRC. The HSRC conducted an investigation into the impact of new policies on teachers' workloads in 2005. This investigation included a pilot survey, closed survey questions and open-ended questions.

The pilot findings identified OBE, and especially outcomes-based assessment, as a source of strain for teachers. Especially the pilot findings in terms of primary school teachers are of concern:

> Primary school educators said that they spend most of their time on assessment and often had to find extra class time to complete assessments. Educators observed during the pilot study reported that assessment and record keeping had increased as well as the number of policy documents they were required to read and process. At that particular time of the year there was also a lot of administration relating to assessment portfolios and promotion. MTN ('more time needed') referring to learners' promotion took a substantial amount of time because it required analyzing year and test marks, letters and phone calls to parents and educator discussions. There was not enough time to fulfil teaching objectives and cover the syllabus because of administration. (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005:129)

The HSRC report (2005:135) finds in conclusion of its closed survey results that educators reported that

- They spent more time now than five years ago on their different activities;
- Three in four educators feel that their workload has increased;
- The new curriculum, CASS (Continuous Assessment) and IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System) had increased their workload; and
- They are moderately supported in their work by principals but not at all by the Department of Education

The HSRC's analysis of the open-ended questions

> … also revealed the importance to educators of class size, shortages of classrooms and overcrowding, all of which make teaching more difficult, increases the burden of paperwork, and prevents them from paying individual attention to learners and being able to deal with learners with special needs. Departmental accountability requirements appear to drive Principals batty. And curriculum changes have resulted in burdens imposed by too many learning areas; too much preparation and planning, marking and reporting and demands that cannot be met without adequate resources. (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005:149)

This formal study by the HSRC seems to be strongly supporting the anecdotal evidence that I have gathered from teachers during my years as an education official. If this is indeed the case, it can be argued that there can be no doubt that outcomes-based assessment especially is presenting a grave predicament to teachers and to the practice of teaching.

What is the predicament for teachers? They are overwhelmed by administrative tasks, to the extent that they find that they do not have enough time for their core activity of teaching and that their family and social lives are detrimentally affected. The administrative requirements can be interpreted as an attempt to regiment their lives and to impose work rules and relationships on them that seem foreign to the practice of teaching.

What is the predicament for teaching as practice? It is a high level of prescription in terms of how to prepare lessons, how to assess, how to keep record of learner achievement, etc. This prescription emanates from a source outside of the life world of teachers.

An unwelcome audit regime

The initial training of teachers (starting in 2000) to implement OBE took five working days and was undertaken by education department officials. These sessions took place in the spirit of instruction in scripture. Brombacher (2004:23) state that the OBE training has "been received as sets of instructions on how to act and on what to do without any deep understanding for why [it] has been implemented".

I experienced that invariably there would be a point during those sessions where teachers would vent their frustration with the officials and the department and the new expectations of them. Normally the concerns of teachers were communicated to the education department but no systematic feedback was given. After the initial five-day training sessions, teachers were left to their own devices to make OBE work in their classrooms. In many cases, the department officials were just as confused as the teachers were, because most of them did not teach in an outcomes-based system. The officials would therefore be reliant on teachers to produce exemplars of what could work in classroom situations. There was a general lack of support from the education department once implementation got underway.

The same education officials who, in general, provided inadequate training and follow-up support became the ones to oversee a new audit regime whose task it was to ensure that OBE was implemented. They had a keen interest in the supporting documents that teachers could produce and their emphasis was especially on auditing the planning and assessment of teachers in a very quantitative way. The learning of learners seemed to escape the audit regime; it seemed to be all about policing the teacher. As time went on, the emphasis came to be more on control than on development. A section of the research report by Brombacher reads as follows:

> Instead of providing the support and guidance they could or should, teachers (in general) saw the subject advisors as a policing system. Rather than suggesting ways of dealing with the problems teachers experience with the system, the advisors were perceived to be inflexible with regard to the technical requirements of, for example, schedule layout and/or portfolio composition. Teachers readily admitted that this led to a lot of 'window dressing' on their part and resentment toward the advisors and the department. (Brombacher, 2004:13)

This audit regime performs its work during school visits, cluster moderation and promotion/progression visits. Education officials armed with checklists and rubrics descend on schools to make their ticks where they find things to be in order and their question marks where they think things are not in order. The emphasis is on the administrative records that teachers are able to produce, much less than on the classroom interaction between teachers and learners. Requirements in terms of 'forms of assessment' for each learning area have also been spelt out. Education officials have the task to audit whether those were adhered to or not. The 'new teachers' envisaged by the audit regime seemed to be self-monitoring individuals; 'postmodern professionals' who have internalised the audit requirements.

What is the predicament for teachers? The judgement of teachers as practitioners is eroded and they are answerable to an unwelcome, external audit regime that attempts to transform them into 'postmodern professionals' who are capable of self-regulation according to the policy technology of performativity.

What is the predicament for teaching as practice? The predicament is presented by a redescription of accountability that involves adversarial new work roles and work relationships as well as by external control of teaching as a practice by bureaucrats.

Erosion of the judgement of teachers as practitioners

As described above, under the outcomes-based system a prescribed way of working for teachers developed. They merely had to implement the system. There was at some point even talk of the development of 'teacher-proof' curricula, i.e. curricula that would be successful in spite of the teacher that implements it. Such was the passion, confidence and arrogance of the advocates of OBE.

The prescriptions would then be controlled via quality control mechanisms that were administered and overseen by education officials. The effect of this is that the judgement of teachers as practitioners was seriously eroded and the conception of *teaching as just a job* was firmly emphasised. Teachers were not seen as the primary authors of what they were doing; they were cast in the role of functionaries and subordinates who had to fulfil a mandate from above. Here is an excerpt from the research report by Brombacher:

> Teachers' sense of being policed also led to them feeling undervalued as
> professionals. They believe that they have professional judgments that are both

reliable and valuable and yet not valued by the process. This was most notable with regard to the passing and failing of learners – teachers felt disempowered to exercise their professional judgment and to contribute to decisions. (Brombacher, 2004:13)

The predicament for teachers is that such a situation does not leave much room for initiative, creativity or own judgement on their part. It is prescription from above. Teachers are seen as tools. The trend is for teachers to become more uniform in their approach, i.e. the trend is towards uniform functionaries and not towards exceptional teachers or 'characters' that could enrich the lives of children and communities.

The predicament for teaching as practice is that the practice is inappropriately being put in service of other, unrelated practices in an instrumentalist way.

Inadequate capacity and preparation for assessment of learners with special education needs

The new dispensation furthermore brought with it the integration of learners with special needs into mainstream schools. While the scale of provision might have differed, there were special schools for learners with different types of barriers to learning under Apartheid Education. While I regard the policy of integration of learners with special needs into mainstream schools as commendable, the downside of it is that teachers in mainstream schools seldom have the capacity or formal training necessary for dealing with these learners that were now their responsibility. This could possibly contribute to frustration on the part of both teachers and learners. The facilitation and assessment of learners with special education needs might require different strategies than those followed with other learners. Mainstream teachers are expected to be proficient with this type of assessment without being prepared for it in any way. This could possibly lead to learners with special needs not being taught and assessed in the appropriate or best possible ways and it may ultimately hinder their progress in the school system. The HSRC report includes the following:

> National policy currently advocates inclusivity and the mainstreaming of learners with special needs. Teachers' Guides draw attention on how teachers can and should plan for learners with special needs. The challenges faced in schools where teachers have large classes, few resources, and many administration demands were described by an African female teacher in a semi-rural school in Mpumalanga. She mentioned a learner in her class who cannot walk by himself: "I have to take him out of the

wheelchair to the chair. He cannot sometimes use his fingers. So I have to prolong finger exercises for him. Sometimes saliva comes down so I have to take extra care of him and only to find that there are other learners with barriers who also need my attention and I give the least time I have". (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005:138–139)

The predicament for mainstream teachers is that they are not competent to deal with learners with special education needs, and the assessment of their efforts, despite the provision of teachers' guides that are written outside of the contexts of their specific classrooms.

The predicament for teaching as practice is that this could potentially contribute to frustration on the part of both learners and teachers, to exclusion of learners with special education needs and to unfair assessment practices.

Predicament of dual reporting of learner achievement

The final stage in the assessment process is the reporting of learner achievement to parents and to the public in the case of external examinations. In the past, reporting of learner progress was expressed in terms of marks, percentages and symbols, e.g. 240/300, 80% or A. With the advent of OBE the use of codes was introduced. The coding system in the GET Band is the following:

4 = Learner's performance has *exceeded* the requirements of the learning outcome for the grade

3 = Learner's performance has *satisfied* the requirements of the learning outcome for the grade

2 = Learner's performance has *partially satisfied* the requirements of the learning outcome for the grade

1 = Learner's performance has *not satisfied* the requirements of the learning outcome for the grade

(Department of Education, 2002:130)

The audiences for whom the reporting is intended are not ready for the use of codes. Even teachers experience difficulties with the use of codes. The outcomes-based regime wanted to move away from marks towards codes that symbolise the extent of achievement against outcomes, but it did not manage to do it. Later an attempt was made to combine codes and

percentages, e.g. Code 3 = Learner's performance has *satisfied* the requirements of the learning outcome for the grade = 50–75%. This led to confusion and a mix-up between codes and marks. Today (2009) a hybrid of codes and marks is still used in South African schools, with confusing results. A section of the research report by Brombacher reads:

> Criterion referenced assessment and norm referenced assessment are two mutually exclusive philosophies. They cannot be used in conjunction with each other. While criterion referenced assessment is concerned with establishing whether or not a criterion has been achieved (a standard met), norm referenced assessment is concerned with comparing candidates to a norm. In crude terms criterion referencing can only tell one of two things: either the standard has been met or it has not. By contrast norm referencing is concerned with placing candidates in sequence from 'best' to 'worst'. For reasons that are not at all obvious to teachers and which are certainly not clearly explained in the guideline documents, the DoE has decided to use a dual system in the senior phase. The upshot of this unexplained dual system is that teachers cannot accept that all 'learners who get between 40% and 69% are the same'. In turn they and the parents see this as a 'lowering of standards' and we see schools preparing reports on which they present codes (because the DoE says they must) and percentages (because that is what parents want and understand) side by side. (Brombacher, 2004:22–23)

The predicament for teachers is that they are caught between the reporting demands of norm-referenced assessment and criterion-referenced assessment and they have no choice but to satisfy both. This leads not only to more work, but also contributes to a conceptual muddle caused by the conflation of what seems to be two mutually exclusive philosophies (criterion- and norm-referenced assessment). This muddle is continued in the FET Band where a six-scale dual system has also been adopted.

The predicament to teaching as a practice is that a long-standing reporting tradition is being fundamentally redefined and revised.

Section VI: Conclusion

Outcomes-based assessment is a predicament for teachers and the practice of teaching. It leads to the colonisation of the life world of teachers, attempting to redefine the practice and to rewrite its theory. By introducing a whole new vocabulary that is foreign to the

practitioners, putting an excessive administrative burden on teachers, imposing an unwelcome, external audit regime on teachers, eroding the judgement of teachers as practitioners, not preparing mainstream teachers adequately to deal with learners with special educational needs and by instituting a confusing dual system of reporting this represents a *wholesale restructuring* of the practice of teaching. Andy Hargreaves distinguishes between

> … *restructuring as bureaucratic control* (where teachers are controlled and regulated to implement the mandates of others) and *restructuring as professional empowerment* (where teachers are supported, encouraged, and provided with newly structured opportunities to make improvements of their own, in partnership with parents, principals, and students. (Hargreaves, 1994:57)

The introduction of OBE and outcomes-based assessment into South African schools on this account can be characterised as *restructuring as bureaucratic control* as opposed to *restructuring as professional empowerment*.

Outcomes-based assessment can be seen as part of an instrumentalist approach to education that has a keen interest in the control of the educational sphere. This kind of approach is nothing new; it is a contemporary statement of the old dream of a science of education – a supposedly foolproof, scientific approach to education that makes available the levers of control and manipulation to those who oversee the system. This old dream is overlain by the new policy technology of performativity that seeks to construct governable subjects. The chief agents or apologists for such an approach to education are persons other than the practitioners of the practice of teaching, i.e. the politicians and bureaucrats for whom such an approach has a high level of appeal and who are at hand to fill the seats of power that were left vacant by the church officers of medieval times.

This instrumentalist approach, overlain by the culture of performativity, is at the heart of the predicament that outcomes-based assessment poses to teachers and to the practice of teaching. It is my opinion that it is extremely difficult to deal with the predicament that assessment poses to teachers and the practice of teaching while still embracing an outcomes-based approach. To find *a provisional, working resolution*, in the words of Hansen and Burbules, to the predicament (as characterised in Section IV) while remaining within the outcomes-based paradigm requires teachers to deliberately claim their judgement as practitioners.

Ball (2003:11) argues that teachers

> … risk having to struggle with a "bifurcated consciousness" ... or "segmented self" ... or with "outlaw emotions" ... as they try to live up to and manage "the contradictions of belief and expectation" ... and multiple subject positions of authenticity on the one hand and reform on the other.

They have to challenge and defy education department officials; and do in their classrooms what is best for teaching and learning, thereby incurring the risk of disciplinary action by the education department. This is not something new in South Africa; successive generations of teachers undermined Apartheid Education while teaching differentiated syllabi in racially segregated schools. Teachers are resourceful enough to find ways that apparently please education department officials, while simultaneously actively undermining a prescriptive system bent on control.

Teachers who still have to function under the current outcome-based regime find provisional, working resolutions for the predicament that outcomes-based assessment poses to them or accept their fate in a system that could be seen as casting them in the roles of self-monitoring underlings and subordinates of an external audit regime. It is my view that the predicament is so serious that it is threatening to the practice of teaching itself in the long run, that there is little chance of "compromise" or "trade-offs" (Burbules & Hansen, 1997:1) without compromising and restricting the practice of teaching in profound ways.

My assessment is that the predicament is so grave that it is necessary for us in South Africa to seek a different way of viewing education if we want to transcend this predicament. I attempt in the next chapter to construct such an alternative view of education.

CHAPTER 5
LOOKING DIFFERENTLY AT EDUCATION

Section I: Introduction

I have argued in Chapters 2 and 3 that OBE and outcomes-based assessment have certain theoretical commitments that result in the kind of predicament for teachers and the practice of teaching, as described in Chapter 4.

Instead of trying to 'fix' what is 'wrong' with outcomes-based assessment, I have followed an approach of "epistemological defamiliarization" (Fataar, 2008:1) by looking with new eyes at education. I want to follow an approach that "challenges the prevailing common sense" (Fataar, 2008:1) in the hope that it will lead me to a new vantage point from where a fresh view of the educational landscape is possible. Fataar (2008:1) argues that "[f]or this purpose we require epistemological courage and unorthodox methodological approaches that are able to provide, following Wittgenstein, new pictures to hold us captive, or pictures that can release us from our epistemological captivity".

Drawing on my narrative and lived experience, in dialogue with the ideas of a number of contemporary philosophers, I have developed a rich account of education that is different to the prevailing common sense of OBE. Into our contemporary South African educational reality, I have again voiced the old question: "What is education?" and allowed myself to explore exiting and promising responses to the question. In this chapter I therefore develop an alternative view of education which, I argue, could provide a way to transcend the predicament caused by OBE and outcomes-based assessment.

I begin by briefly discussing Charles Taylor's concept of "constitutive" meanings (Taylor, 1985:34) I then proceed to draw the outlines of my alternative way of viewing education by identifying and discussing what I regard as some 'constitutive meanings' of education. I wish to present a view of these constitutive meanings as connected and interrelated, i.e. as mutually supporting and reinforcing. These meanings did not develop *ex nihilo*; they grew out of a dialogue between moments in my own narrative (see Chapter 1) and the thoughts of contemporary philosophers with whose work I engaged. An evaluation of OBE forms part of the discussion of what I regard as constitutive meanings of education. I argue that OBE is in

most part incommensurate with the constitutive meanings of my alternative view of education.

In the conclusion of the chapter, I have decided, after careful thought, to give a name to my alternative way of viewing education. It is a name that I hope will accommodate all the interrelated constitutive meanings that I have identified. I defend my decision to characterise my alternative view as a pedagogy against a charge that it could constitute a new grand narrative or a new alienating language.

In terms of *methodology*, I should make it clear that I have followed an inverted process of philosophical enquiry. I start off with my formative experiences pertaining to education, identify in these those elements that inspire me towards an alternative view of education and move from those to what I regard as constitutive meanings of education. I then evaluate the object of my critical engagement, OBE, against these constitutive meanings, before reaching a conclusion.

Although I have committed to epistemological defamiliarisation, I needed to acknowledge that, in terms of *theoretical framework*, my alternative view of education is informed by critical theory. I was, however, careful to avoid the pitfalls associated with a truncated version of critical theory that itself has the potential to become a source of manipulation. Such a version of critical theory makes use of quasi-causal and functional explanations and pretends to know what the 'real interests' of people are. It can easily foster a 'vanguardist' view that can be anti-democratic in the sense that researchers can advance interests other than those of the researched. I wished to create imaginative spaces for a more autonomous notion of education, which is why I engaged with the work of authors such as Maxine Greene (imagination), Alisdair MacIntyre (conversational justice), Martha Nussbaum (compassionate imagining) and Seyla Benhabib (cosmopolitan justice) to develop my alternative view of education.

Section II: What are constitutive meanings?

My alternative view of education is characterised by a couple of things; these 'things' I want to characterise as what Charles Taylor (1985) calls 'constitutive' meanings. I regard *education* as a *practice*, and see these meanings as constitutive of the practice of education, i.e. for me these are the meanings that make *education* what it is; without these, the practice would not be education, but something else.

In a patient argument in support of a central role for interpretation in the "sciences of man", Taylor describes such meanings (constitutive meanings) as not merely subjective meanings of individuals but rather as "intersubjective" meanings (1985:36). This is what he means:

> The meanings and the norms implicit in these practices are not just in the minds of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, practices which cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but which are essentially modes of social relation, of mutual action. (Taylor, 1985:36)

And, further:

> Convergence of belief or attitude or its absence presupposes a common language in which beliefs can be formulated, and in which these formulations can be opposed. Much of this common language in any society is rooted in its institutions and practices; it is constitutive of these institutions and practices. (Taylor, 1985:37)

This is the sense in which I want to characterise what I regard as constitutive meanings of education in my alternative view of education. I further wish to present a view of these constitutive meanings as connected and interrelated, i.e. as mutually supporting and reinforcing. They should not be seen as distinct, mutually exclusive entities.

Section III: Constitutive meanings of education

I

I believe that an educated person is one who has the *ability or capacity to reason* with others and to give plausible justifications for his or her actions. For me, the absence of rationality equals the absence of education, i.e. a person who is unable to reason and to provide reasons for his or her actions, will be considered a moron, stupid, unreasonable, at best an uneducated person.

Not only should an educated person be capable of reason, but he or she must be capable of *critical* reason. He or she is a person who can argue convincingly for a certain position in the presence of and in opposition to other positions. Lack of criticality in a person alerts one to possibilities of weakness of character and susceptibility to inappropriate influence, indoctrination, brainwashing and conditioning. The view one would take of such a person is

that he or she is not educated in the sense of being autonomous, independent and emancipated from backward influences.

For me, a constitutive meaning of education is the fact that one is capable of ***critical rationality***. However, this does not translate into a disconnected, absolute description of either rationality or criticality.

I have been very fortunate in my life that I have found myself in informal and formal learning situations that required and demanded critical rationality of me. After a school career that was dominated by instances of rote learning, the informal learning context of MJUSA and the critical spaces that were created by some progressive lecturers at UWC provided the context for me to develop the capacity for critical rationality.

MJUSA challenged me to get involved in a lot of self-study in order to prepare myself to teach whatever I was required to my comrades. I had the knowledge that as I was doing self-study, others were also reading to inform themselves from various perspectives and disciplines; one would therefore be presenting to an informed public. Most of them were students or young professionals. In the deliberative space that was created on MJUSA camps, reason stood against reason.

During my formal full-time and part-time studies at UWC, progressive lecturers such as Wolfgang Thomas, Mogamat Ajam and Wally Morrow acted as important mentors in my development of critical rationality; often challenging me to reformulate positions numerous times to be more cogent and convincing.

In my own teaching, as a critical teacher, I wanted to cultivate critical, independent thinking in my learners. I wanted to get the *understanding* of learners in their own words. The essay questions in the Economics and Business Economics question papers allowed 20 'insight marks' along with 60 marks for content; this created an opportunity to determine the understanding and reasoning of my learners. I remember a learner who would obtain a perfect score out of the 60, but who would then continue under the heading "My own opinion" to give very interesting views that sometimes were at odds with what he was saying in the content section, but I valued that he was making his own argument and was demonstrating insight, instead of merely regurgitating the textbook.

The reasons that an educated person gives are not only ones that he or she thinks are true and compelling, but they are reasons that are also compelling to others. Cohen argues that

> … it will not do simply to advance reasons that one takes to be true or compelling: such considerations may be rejected by others who are themselves reasonable. One must find instead reasons that are compelling to others, acknowledging those others as equals, aware that they have alternative reasonable commitments, and knowing something about the kinds of commitments that they are likely to have … if a consideration does not meet these tests, that will suffice for rejecting it as reason. If it does, then it counts as an acceptable political reason. (Cohen, 1996:100)

Whether reasons are compelling or acceptable or not, are determined in *deliberation* with others; this is an important link between *critical rationality* and *deliberation*, a meaning that I discuss in a next section.

A critical interlocutor might at this stage remind me that thus far I have engaged with critical rationality in a very formalistic way, almost without context. This is a fair criticism. Burbules (2005) takes to heart the criticisms of those who are concerned with formal conceptions of rationality understood as being universal. He concedes the role that context, power, cultural imperialism and purpose play in terms of rationality understood in such a formalist way. Yet, he seeks for a way to describe a substantive concept of reason that will take into account the postmodern criticisms while at the same time avoiding the fall into relativism. He finds this substantive concept in what he calls "reasonableness" (Burbules, 2005:2).

He argues that what makes reasonableness a substantive concept of reason is that the *outcome* of a specific line of argument cannot be predicted with certainty in advance, neither can it be deduced using rules of logic; rather it is the *process* of reasoned inquiry that is manifested in the thoughts, conversations and choices of the actual persons involved that lead to some conclusion. Although the conclusion cannot be predicted precisely in advance, Burbules has faith in reasonable people to come to conclusions that are themselves reasonable.

Burbules argues that reasonableness relates to the virtues of a specific kind of person. He identifies four traits that are central to reasonableness:

- *Being objective*: Burbules describes this trait as being tolerant and acknowledging and accepting pluralism.

- *Accepting fallibilism*: He describes this trait as being able to change based on personal error, failure or disappointment. This would involve making certain commitments that puts one at risk of error, being able to admit that one was wrong and a capacity for reflection.
- *Embracing pragmatism*: Here Burbules refers to a belief in the importance of practical problems in driving the process of intellectual, moral and political development and a tolerance for uncertainty, imperfection and incompleteness as the existential conditions of human thought, value or action, while recognising the need for persistence and flexibility in confronting such difficulties
- *Exercising judgement*: By this he means the ability to distinguish situations in which a rational calculation in the narrow sense might be called for, and when it is not. (Burbules, 2005:4–7)

Burbules therefore provides us with a substantive conception of reason (*reasonableness*) that takes into account the postmodern criticisms of formal reason but also prevents an entirely relativist position in terms of reason. His substantive conception has as its components objectivity, accepting fallibility, embracing pragmatism and exercising judgement.

In a similar way as I have scrutinised the concept of *reason* above, the idea of *criticality* needs to be subjected to scrutiny. Criticality also cannot be cultivated in isolation of other people and their reasons. Given the purchase that 'critical thinking' has on the current South African and worldwide education scene, it is possible that some teachers might try to teach 'critical thinking' in a formalistic and mechanistic kind of way. If taught in such a way, it cannot achieve its full potential; this can only be realised by engaging in authentic deliberation with others. Another dubious action on the part of teachers would be to try to condition students to be critical at all costs, which could lead to dispositions other than criticality, more associated with pessimism or cynicism. (In this regard, compare the kind of comments that are given to participants in the myriad of reality shows on television these days.)

Critical rationality, as described above, has to be acquired, learnt and practiced. *How* does this happen? Drawing on Rorty, Winch and Peters, I have argued elsewhere that

> … in order for human beings to become educated, they first need to be inducted into
> the store of worthwhile knowledge that society has to offer (socialization); this
> provides them with the basis for subsequent criticism and questioning of the very

society that they are part of (individuation). The idea is that doubt comes after belief, that the terms of later questioning make use of concepts belonging to a context in which a great deal was not questioned, or, to put it plainly, that we cannot be critical beings out of nothing. Both socialization and individuation are necessary for education. (Slamat, 1993:74)

What I attempt above is to provide a description of *how* it might be that people come to learn critical rationality; the main idea being that later critical dispositions build on earlier contexts in which learning took place without much questioning. However, no linearity of process or progress is implied.

Another question might be: "*Where* do citizens learn critical rationality?" Enslin, Pendlebury and Tjiattas (2001:47) dismiss the family and the market place since they "are held together by private interests or respect for authority, we cannot rely on them to promote a democratic culture and nourish the virtues dependent on it".

While I am wary of such a wholesale dismissal of the family and the market place, I agree to a large extent with them and Amy Gutmann (1995:579) that "the realm of *public schooling* is a democratic government's single most powerful and legitimate means of teaching respect for reasonable political disagreement" (my emphasis).

This places a heavy burden on schools and teachers; it is particularly challenging in a plural society such as in South Africa, where difference is a starting point, not some position to still emerge from deliberation.

Education in a democratic South Africa should help children to become critical, rational agents. This is a tremendous challenge for schools and teachers, because there are expectations from many different quarters about what kind of learners should emerge from our education system. The business sector, communities, parents, professional organisations and especially the government all have expectations of what learners should be capable of. The challenge that critical rationality poses to the government is that the very institutions that are funded by the government to educate young people, can provide these young people with the capacity to engage in critique of the actions of the government. My argument is that in a democratic country, the government would not be threatened by such a possibility and in fact should accept and embrace it as a constitutive meaning of education. The government's funding of education is not some benevolent act for which it should expect returns on

investment to the government, but it takes place on behalf of the citizens of a democratic country via taxes contributed by those citizens. My alternative view of education entails that the people of South Africa wilfully endorse a version of education that promotes critical rationality, and that its elected officials also endorse and make provision for it.

I have provided nuanced descriptions of both *reason* and *criticality*. The reasons that citizens are able to advance for acting in such or such a way are not random, but are situated within human practices. In addition to being able to advance reasons for one's actions (rationality), critical rationality implies the ability to interrogate the reasons given for a course of action by others and even one's own reasons. This implies opportunities for deliberation with others.

For me, the development of **critical rationality** is one of the main constitutive meanings of education.

One could argue that OBE, as a minimalist version of critical pedagogy, fosters critical rationality. I think that such a claim is problematic. On a philosophical level, I have argued earlier, building on the thoughts of Solway (1999), Ball (2003) and Graham and Neu (2004), that OBE can be seen as a prime instance of performativity. One of the aims of the pre-established curricular regime is the construction of governable subjects. Those are the kind of people who have unquestioningly internalised the criteria of the audit regime and are capable of self-regulation. This desired disposition is far removed from critical rationality; in fact, it is exactly the opposite.

On a practical level, in terms of how OBE was introduced, there never was an invitational approach that also encouraged deliberation and critical discussion with teachers about OBE and its premises. It was presented as a given to teachers; they had to adapt to it or leave the profession. The instrumentalist, technicist language that is associated with OBE and the implementation strategies also did not inspire critical rationality on the part of any stakeholders in education, especially teachers. The introduction of OBE was not accompanied by a critical, sustained debate among teachers and educators, more by a prescriptive approach by the government.

I therefore think of OBE as seriously constrained in terms of critical rationality. In my opinion it is capable of producing only a mechanistic, shallow version of critical rationality.

II

Following on the discussion above, another important constitutive meaning of education for me is ***deliberation***. This meaning is closely related to critical rationality and, in fact, builds and depends on it. In a later discussion, I establish links between *deliberation* and the constitutive meaning of *caring and compassion*.

When I reflect on my experience in MJUSA, it is filled with memories of intense debate, dialogue and deliberation. The annual MJUSA camps were organised around contextual themes. A theme would be introduced by a main speaker, but the real action would take place in the smaller groups that took the discussions further and in the feedback plenary sessions, where a wide spectrum of ideas would compete with each other. It was my mentors in MJUSA who first taught me how to use small-group techniques and other participative deliberation methods. When I became national chairperson in the mid-80s, I introduced what was called issue-based groups, i.e. groups that discussed a topical issue, which was introduced by a facilitator, but where enough time would be given to discuss and to deliberate. These groups would typically assemble on the grass or under a tree and in that context many meaningful, life-changing discussions took place. From my MJUSA years, the value of *peer education* and *deliberation* is very clear to me. A slogan of the time was "Each one, teach one"; in MJUSA we literally practiced that slogan. Later, during my part-time, postgraduate studies at UWC, the joint seminars organised by Professor Wally Morrow had the same invigorating effect on me (refer to Chapter 1). In my current job at Stellenbosch University debates about race, class, gender, culture, language and diversity still rage on at the University, as can be expected at a previously exclusive institution. The current rector and vice-chancellor's response to this was to create opportunities in the form of 'courageous conversations' to address these issues. In a context where limited conversation takes place about issues such as these that I have mentioned, and the tendency is to rather avoid ethical conflict and the accompanying emotional distress, trust has to be built and the ability to differ robustly must be practiced. Nevertheless, I regard the 'courageous conversations' as a courageous step in the right direction.

When I reflect on these instances of deliberation in my life, it is clear to me that during these times my own education was hugely advanced. This is why I am convinced that deliberation should be regarded as a constitutive meaning of education. My theoretical reflection on deliberation led me to an insightful article by Enslin et al. (2001) in which they discuss and

contrast, in a context of citizenship education, different models of deliberative democracy developed by eminent contemporary philosophers.

Enslin et al. (2001) discuss three models of deliberative democracy, namely public reason (as exemplified by John Rawls), discursive democracy (as exemplified by Seyla Benhabib) and communicative democracy (as exemplified by Iris Marion Young). They find contributions in each of these models for an account of how to educate citizens by teaching talk and that help to illuminate the appropriate role of the values of 'autonomy' and 'tolerance' in citizenship education. These two concepts sometimes are seen as competing, but this need not be the case.

From the article by Enslin et al. (2001), I noted that certain delimitations are put on different aspects of *deliberation* by all three models; some just expand the boundaries more than others. The following are the delimitations I noted:

Firstly, as seen from the quote by Cohen in the previous section, not just any reason qualifies as a reasonable one; a participant in a democratic conversation at least has to advance reasons that are compelling to others. So it does not suffice to justify an action by just any kind of arbitrary reason; it must be compelling to others, otherwise it does not count as an acceptable reason.

Secondly, in terms of the concept of the *public* that is involved, Rawls seems to limit his public to the state and its institutions, especially the legal ones. Benhabib argues that this public space should be expanded to include civil society. Young takes a more inclusive approach by assuming a broad heterogeneous public, with group representation, and sees group difference as a 'deliberative resource'.

Thirdly, in terms of the *matter or agenda* of deliberation, Rawls is concerned with the protection of basic rights in the public sphere and deliberately excludes from the agenda the inviolable issues within constitutional democracies and items placed outside the arena of debate because of difficulties in reaching agreement about them. Both Benhabib and Young are uncomfortable with placing some items outside the arena of debate because they are afraid that debate about significant issues can be silenced by doing this. Rawls would defend his position as a rational way of dealing with the burdens of 'diversity': A reasonable public discussion allows for both the virtues of tolerance and autonomy. He would argue that

participants of a public deliberation are free to express *private* opinions about those matters in which it is difficult to reach agreement, but for the public deliberation they are off limits.

But it seems that Benhabib and Young are both aware of the potential harm that can be done or the emotional distress that could be caused by venturing on the terrain of matters in which it is difficult to reach consensus; therefore both of them spell out their own delimitations in terms of these matters. Benhabib insists on (in addition to Rawls's formal mechanisms of decision making) strong egalitarian commitments to delimit deliberation. She introduces the norms of *equality* and *symmetry* to govern deliberation; this means that all participants will have the same chances in the deliberation and all aspects of it. As long as these norms apply, there is really no limit on the matter or agenda of deliberation according to Benhabib. Young proposes procedural conditions for a minimal unity among participants that includes an acknowledgement of interdependence, respect for each other and agreement on procedural rules of fair discussion. Other than that there also seems to be no limitations on the matter or agenda of deliberation for Young.

Fourthly, with regard to the *manner* of deliberation, both Rawls and Benhabib seem to be restricted to the reason of critical argument. Young finds this confinement to critical argument too narrow, since in her view, the deliberative model of democracy is closely associated with the ruling institutions of the West, which could tend to unfairly benefit those who are familiar with and proficient in it. She expands the range of deliberative interactions to include, in addition to critical argument, greeting, rhetoric and storytelling. (I find Young's inclusion of greeting as a form of deliberation very interesting. My late father always had an obsession with greeting and being greeted. The rest of the family often joked about how upset he became at not being greeted. Young helped me to understand greeting as a way of acknowledging the presence and existence of the other, which might have been close to the way my father thought about the act of greeting.)

Fifthly, on the matter of *unity* of the participants to democratic deliberation, it seems as if Rawls starts from the premise of unity or consensus, while Benhabib argues that not all deliberation needs to result in consensus; she does however foresee moments of temporary consensus. Young worries about these conceptions of unity as a starting point or an outcome; because it could lead to 'another mechanism of exclusion' since the appeal to reach unity for a common good may be made in terms of some dominant group's understanding of the common good. She seems to be arguing for caution to rush into unity too quickly, before a

chance is given to accommodate the transformation of the opinions of the participants. Her solution is to appeal for procedural conditions for a minimal unity as described above.

Enslin et al. summarise Young in a striking way:

> Understanding is reached not by transcending what divides and differentiates, but by speaking across differences to learn the partiality of one's own perspective, to frame one's own claims in terms of appeals to justice, to expand one's social knowledge by "expressing, questioning and challenging differently situated knowledge". (2001:128)

Besides the authors discussed in Enslin et al. (2001), another author on deliberative democracy that I want to note is Eamonn Callan (1997). I am not quite sure where to position him according to Enslin et al.'s classification, because he seems to share a willingness to dare into the emotional distress of ethical confrontation and so shares company with Benhabib and Young, but ultimately, it seems to me, retreats into the rational way of dealing with the 'burdens of diversity' that is provided by Rawls. Callan (1997:209) initially flirts with John Stuart Mill's attempt to make a virtue of the emotional antagonisms that dialogue marked by *care* would suppress, i.e. a dialogue marked by *belligerence*. He quickly points out that a dialogue marked by belligerence can instead of leading to enlightenment lead to strong emotional distress among participants, which can compromise dialogue itself. Like Benhabib and Young, he also sees the need for conditions to be put in place for ethical confrontation to be fruitful.

All the above characterisations in relation to democratic deliberation have implications for education and the schooling sector. These are explored in the next chapter. For now, I want to argue for **deliberation** as one of the constitutive meanings of education, i.e. for me, any full account of education has to include an element of deliberation. I envision independent, critical, rational learners (autonomy) who at the same time are sensitive to the reasons and accounts of others (tolerance or care), and who will over time acquire the requisite emotional sophistication and cognitive ability to conduct truly courageous conversations.

One could possibly argue that OBE, seen as a minimalist version of critical pedagogy, will foster deliberation. Deliberation is dependent on the ability to advance reasons that are compelling not only to oneself but also to others. Because of the lack of a solid basis for critical rationality in OBE, the scope for sensible deliberation is also restricted.

Also, there is no evidence that caring and compassion is conceptually linked to OBE as basically an instrumentalist approach to education. Therefore it is not obvious that respect, tolerance and care in deliberation are promoted by OBE. Neither Iris Marion Young's communicative democracy nor Martha Nussbaum's compassionate imagining seems to be conceptually linked to the instrumentalism of OBE, which tends to view teachers and learners as uniform, instead of unique.

Similarly, as explained with regard to critical rationality, there has never been an invitational approach displayed towards teachers to deliberate the premises of OBE itself. As a radical, new pedagogy it was not introduced to teachers in a conversational way. It did not take teachers as deliberation partners seriously and was implemented from the top down.

In my view, OBE is not conceptually strongly linked to deliberation; it seems to be seriously restricted in this respect.

III

When I reflect on the example of my own teachers, especially my primary school teachers, I am always deeply inspired. For most of my teachers, their understanding of their work was more than just a job; it seemed to be a calling or a vocation. This was clear to me from their actions and from their interactions with us as learners. They had an understanding of their work that was broader than just teaching; their interaction with us as learners was characterised by caring, passion for their work and compassion with the children in their care. They were good teachers; characters, most of them, free from an urge to be uniform, carbon copies of somebody else's design. They were also very diligent; as mentioned in Chapter 1, my primary school teachers at times worked three shifts a day, which must have been very tiring and taxing. This is where my concept of *teachers as compassionate, caring role models* comes from.

When I became a teacher myself, I aspired to take over the *caring and compassionate approach* towards learners of my own teachers. Closeness to the learners, their parents and the community was important to me. I had to know the living conditions of my learners. For most of them, life was harsh. I wanted to inspire my learners to create a vision for themselves beyond the township. I organised extra classes and excursions to lift their sights beyond their everyday misery.

I joined the WCED as part of a first generation of post-apartheid officials. There was no script or formal induction for us as a new generation of post-apartheid officials. We had to make one up as we went along. Two things that stand out for me was the distinction we made between a developmental versus a judgemental approach to teacher support, and the pastoral role towards teachers that the job entailed. The judgemental approach was associated with (apartheid) education officials whose intention it was to judge the performance of teachers, after which this judgement was linked to rewards or punishments. Against that, a developmental approach posited that teachers had to be assisted in areas where they might have weaknesses in order for their performance to improve, and for the learners to benefit ultimately. The education official had the duty to mentor the teacher according to a mutually agreed plan. We all strove to model a developmental approach, as a post-apartheid cohort of education officials. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the job also entailed a pastoral role towards teachers, which recognised the vulnerability of teachers and their need for advice, support and motivation.

A *developmental approach to teacher support* and the *pastoral role towards teachers* are related to *caring and compassion*. **Caring and compassion** is a golden thread that weaves through my experience in education as a learner, and later as teacher and education official. It is such a vital part of my understanding of what education is that I regard it as a constitutive meaning of education.

Alasdair MacIntyre's *Dependent rational animals* (1999) helped me to think about *caring* as a constitutive meaning of education. MacIntyre makes the point in this book that human beings, like other intelligent animal species, are dependent on others in early childhood and in old age, due to their vulnerability in those stages of their lives. In those stages of their lives they are in obvious need of care from others. But it would seem, according to Western philosophy, that in between childhood and old age *independence from others* is the desired state for human beings. Independent rational reasoning seems to be what characterises humans between those two stages of life.

MacIntyre then makes an argument that denies that vulnerability is only limited to the early childhood and old age stages of our lives. Right through our lives there are situations in which we are vulnerable or prone to vulnerability (and therefore in need of the care of others) or situations in which we encounter others that are in need of our care because they are vulnerable. To deny this, is to take the position of Aristotle's *megalopsychos* who "is ashamed

to receive benefits, because it is a mark of a superior to confer benefits, of an inferior to receive them" (Nicomachean Ethics 1124b 9-10).

MacIntyre sees this as an illusion of self-sufficiency that leads to a person's exclusion from certain types of communal relationships.

According to MacIntyre, the virtues that we should strive towards are not only *virtues of independence*, but also *virtues of acknowledged dependence*. The powerful message for me in this is that critical rationality and caring are not opposing or mutually exclusive meanings. Both virtues of independence and virtues of acknowledged dependence are developed through social relationships of giving and receiving. These virtues find expression in established communities, but could also include strangers, in communities that have, in respect of the virtues, developed a sense of what human beings need to flourish as human beings. So, the networks of giving and receiving are not limited to those we know and from whom we have received care. Those who will become our objects of care are not readily known to us; neither is it guaranteed that only those who cared for us at some stage of our lives will themselves become the objects of our care.

Parents prepare their children to be educable for others (like teachers) to further induct them in the goods of society. Teachers cannot relinquish the responsibility of caring about the flourishing of the young people placed 'in their care'. In a closed, rural community, where all the inhabitants know each other and have participated for ages in networks of giving and receiving, it is conceivable and fair to think that those who are appointed as teachers are expected to care for their students. But following MacIntyre's argument that involves strangers and communities that have, by reference to the virtues, developed a sense of what is needed for human beings to flourish, even within an anonymous urban setting it is conceivable that teachers should care about the flourishing of the learners entrusted to them.

But what about the vulnerability of teachers themselves? Increasingly we hear in South Africa of cases where teachers are treated disrespectfully, assaulted, abused and even killed while on duty. They too are vulnerable and in need of care of those who are in a position to provide it: the learners themselves, their parents, the broader community and, importantly, their employer, the education department. One of the main reasons why I left teaching in the high school was because it became so unsafe that I could not guarantee that I would be alive at the end of each day. When I asked the circuit manager in a meeting whether there were any

measures that the education department could institute to guarantee the safety of teachers, he responded that it was not the duty of the department. I have a strong suspicion that there is a widespread feeling among South African teachers that their need for care is not being acknowledged.

I want to argue for *caring* as a constitutive part of education. An uncaring disposition undermines not only education, but also the community itself. I am aware of the fact that care cannot be managed into existence. The least that can be done is to create the conditions under which care or caring attitudes could be developed and nurtured. I am also aware that such caring will be properly actualised within the broader context of a caring society.

Related to *caring* is the notion of *compassion*. Critical rationality on its own does not suffice as a description of an educated person. Reason needs to be augmented by care and compassion for the other. MacIntyre makes a case for the acknowledgement of vulnerability at all stages of life, therefore for the need to give and receive care; his emphasis here is on the virtue of acknowledged dependence. This does not mean that he has abandoned the virtue of independence; both virtues are seen to be pursued by human beings simultaneously.

In the pursuit of independent rationality, Martha Nussbaum (2001) argues that it is appropriate to consider the vulnerability of others by way of compassionate imagining.

Situations are possible where the voices of certain individuals cannot be heard in critical, rational argument because they might be disadvantaged in one or other way. This is mostly not of their own doing. It could imaginably be in terms of language, social status, power, some or other form of personal misfortune, suffering, etc. Those persons' contribution to rational deliberation is impaired or, in the worst case, prevented. Teachers and fellow learners need to be aware of and on the alert for such classroom situations and create conditions where it becomes possible for such persons to add their voices to the deliberation. They should be able to identify with such individuals, on the basis of their own vulnerability. Nussbaum (2001:317) argues that "the recognition of one's own related vulnerability is, then, an important and frequently an indispensable epistemological requirement for compassion in human beings".

This ability to show compassion, and especially the ability to imagine oneself in the situation of the other, is for me a constitutive meaning of education. The person, who, in full knowledge of the conditions that prevent full participation of others, displays a disposition in

deliberation that is the opposite of compassion, cannot be regarded as educated in the full sense of the word. An educated person would be able to "look through the eyes of others", in the words of Maxine Greene (1995:86) and would be capable of compassionate imagining, in the words of Martha Nussbaum (2001). To ignore or worse, to exploit the vulnerability of participants in deliberation, is to lack what is today commonly called 'emotional intelligence' and on this account one can be found to be uneducated or inadequately educated.

I therefore want to portray *compassion*, in addition to its related meaning of *caring,* as a constitutive meaning of education. This is a very real position that acknowledges that many voices are silenced, suppressed or impeded and that an ideal speech situation does not always exist. A disposition that does not allow for *compassion* with those persons whose voices are silenced, suppressed or impeded undermines not only education, but also the community itself.

One could possibly try to make a case for OBE, as a minimalist version of critical pedagogy, as fostering caring and compassion. I argue against this. As an instrumentalist pedagogy couched in the language of outcomes, performance indicators, quality assurance, etc. and embedded in an audit culture, OBE in its application does not exhibit care and compassion towards teachers and learners, even if it should claim to do so. The nature of such an instrumentalist, performative approach to education is that it is conceptually linked to control. It views teachers and learners as subjects that must in a mechanistic way exhibit certain behaviours after prescribed interventions. Because of its perceived obsession with standardisation, it tends to promote a view of teachers and learners as *uniform*, as opposed to *unique*. Its obsession with uniformity might blind it to difference, which could compromise notions of care and compassion.

This is the result of the focus on only one of the three types of interests that Habermas described, namely the technical interest, and the neglect of the conversational and emancipatory interests.

I argue that OBE is instrumentalist and therefore not conceptually linked to caring and compassion as a constitutive meaning of education.

IV

For Maxine Greene (1995) it is important that teachers release the imagination that is inside of their students in the educative process. She places great value on aesthetic experiences that can occur through encounters with the arts and literature. She is of the opinion that transformations in persons can take place through such encounters. According to Greene, teachers should explore and create pedagogical possibilities for enriching whatever it is they are teaching by the arts and literature to release the imagination of their students. Greene has the following to say about the importance of the arts in school education:

> The arts hold no guarantee as to true knowledge or understanding, nor should they replace other subject matters in middle school and high schools. They should become central to the curricula and include exhibitions and live performances, thus adding to the modalities by means of which students make sense of their worlds. With aesthetic experiences a possibility in school, education will be less likely merely to transmit dominant (usually middle class and sometimes usually patriotic) traditions. Experiences with the arts and the dialogues to which they give rise may give the teachers and learners involved more opportunity for the authentic conversations out of which questioning and critical thinking and, in time, significant inquiries can arise. (Greene, 2000:267)

This quote of Greene's points to a strong relationship between the imagination, which is released by the involvement of learners with the arts, and critical rationality. Contemporary proponents of the 'hard sciences' overlook this vital link in their underestimation of the enormous potential of the arts.

In addition, Greene also emphasises the use of the narrative to allow students to 'see through the eyes of others'. This ability, which was also referred to above in terms of *compassionate imagining*, opens up possibilities for the creation of a community inspired by a passion for multiplicity and social change.

Anne Pautz writes in a collection on the ideas of Maxine Greene:

> Literature provides a ground from which to understand that which may be too volatile to view clearly from personal experience only. Engagement with literature, as well as other art forms, transports the reader to another reality from which to look

at the present moment and lived experience. Just as importantly, literature can provide access to the experiences and realities of others. (Pautz, 1998:33)

I share Maxine Greene's propagation of the use of the arts, literature and narrative to release the imagination of students because of amazing educative experiences throughout my own life. As a child I was impressed by the ability of my teachers to inspire me by the use of poetry, music, art and the like. One of the greatest gifts one of them gave me was to teach me to read and play music myself. I remember being deeply moved by dramatic presentations of gifted teachers; those experiences often led to transformations in my own life and contributed to my learning for life. The teaching of my teachers, especially my primary school teachers, had a multi-faceted approach; in fact they were prepared for their work in that way. Most of them tried their hand at music, since in those days every teacher could expect to be called on to be a choirmaster at some time during his or her career. The same applied to literature and poetry: I had a very good introduction to the poetry of William Wordsworth in Standard 5, and still remember most of the poems by heart. In those days, every teacher was considered to be a language teacher. Many teachers did art education as an elective in their teacher education and were very proud of their art rooms with its cupboards full of chalk paint, brushes, manila paper and unprinted newspaper. Only the brave and the politically informed and inclined dared it onto the territory of political education; their early lessons in equality and non-racialism left a lasting impression on me, especially the ones who combined literature and the arts with politics. The teachers themselves were prepared in their teacher education to teach a balanced curriculum and to give their learners a balanced, well-rounded education. They did not understand themselves to be teachers of only one subject. It is this experience that established my inclination *against narrow specialisation and compartmentalisation of knowledge fields and for a well-rounded education, stimulating creativity through the arts.*

As an activist student, I employed the power of street theatre to bring across an anti-apartheid message. In my MJUSA years, skills such as silk-screening, the making of arts and crafts items and drama were part and parcel of the interest groups that were offered at the camps. The products of these interest groups would then be proudly presented at the end of every camp. Visible from these presentations would be not only the products, but also the relationships built during the process of crafting the products.

In my own experience as a teacher, I have often used role-play and music in the teaching of commercial subjects. I remember capturing the attention of my learners with a recording of a song by Abba (*Money, money, money*) at the start of a section on "Money and Banking" in Economics. Afterwards they were humming the tune, but also remembered the associated learning, because it was presented in an unusual way. Some contemporary songs allow for good analysis of current social issues and were also used with great effect by some of my colleagues, especially in literature classes. Business Economics and Economics both lend themselves well to role-play; I have used this medium with success during my teaching career, because of my striving to get learners as close as possible to practice.

In the higher education context I have witnessed with what great effect a colleague uses educational theatre in teaching about the social aspects of HIV/Aids. So, like Maxine Greene, I believe in the power of literature, the arts and narrative to open up possibilities to contribute to the education of people in meaningful ways.

I take the release of ***imagination*** as one of the constitutive meanings of education. I support an exposure to the arts and literature for all students to cultivate creativity and compassion. I am rather sceptical about the current over-emphasis on Mathematics and Science, which has the potential to foreground approaches to education of an extreme technicist and sterile type and which can effectively stifle imagination. The distinction between 'hard sciences' and 'soft sciences' and the ensuing differential treatment thereof in terms of resources is also not useful. Creativity is to be nurtured by all science, not only through the 'hard sciences'. It is interesting to note that exactly the 'hard sciences' thrive on imagination and creativity for innovation and new discoveries. Too prescriptive approaches can work against the flourishing of those sciences also, although it might not be intended.

What we need to seek in education are the possibilities to release the imagination of our learners. In this way, deep learning might occur, students might be able to 'see through the eyes of others', be stimulated to take responsibility for their own further learning and to pursue inquiries, and become part of a community that values multiplicity. Possibilities for social change could be created. One particularly good way of achieving this is through the exposure to literature, the arts and the narrative, as Maxine Greene argues. This would add to a balanced curriculum; to develop all the aspects of an individual. This implies that both teachers and learners are exposed to these sources of releasing the imagination. In this sense, a

character of education that encourages curiosity, creativity, wonder, excitement, fulfilment, discovery, and to be deeply moved, on other levels than only the cognitive, is realised.

This is the rich character that I would like to ascribe to education. The opposite would be a characterisation of education as dull, predictable, instrumental, calculated, limited, tightly specified and specialised, which one could argue is in itself an impossibility. Such an account of 'education' would most probably refer to something that masquerades as education.

One would probably be able to make an argument that OBE, as a minimalist version of critical pedagogy, fosters imagination. I argue against this. There is no generic commitment in OBE to release the imagination of learners. I have in earlier criticism of OBE used Solway's (1999) reference to OBE as a pre-established curricular regime that, because the outcomes are spelt out in advance, works against and closes the space for imagination. Whereas imagination is associated with what is unexpected and novel, open-ended and leading to new discoveries; OBE is conceptually linked to a view of education as specified, specialised, standardised and uniform; basically a limited and poor variant of education. This approach to education, as stated earlier, is more associated with control than with imagination.

I therefore find it difficult to establish any kind of conceptual link between OBE and imagination on the part of teachers and learners.

V

I have mentioned in Chapter 1 that my mother was a domestic servant and my father was a painter. Most insightful for me were the times that I accompanied both my parents to work, usually during school holidays. I witnessed the humiliation of both my parents by their (white) employers, on occasion also by the children of those employers. I witnessed my mother's helplessness while being scolded in my presence by an angry employer, who was of the opinion that she was not doing one of her tasks properly. I witnessed in different situations how my parents had to suppress their real feelings and how the space was not created for them to advance their reasons for their actions, because they were in need of the job for their and our survival. My parents were struggling to make ends meet while witnessing and contributing to their employers' life of affluence.

I learnt from my parents to have dreams that I could one day be free from this type of existence that was keeping them captive. In a sense, I was my own as well as their hope of

freedom from a difficult existence. My experience of growing up in this working class family and neighbourhood explains why my bias will always tend to be towards the poor and marginalised, towards the working men and women of this world. My view of education will understandably involve a teaching towards *emancipation*, out of poverty and subjugation, towards the liberation of both mind and body.

Education should teach children not only to read the *word*, but also to read the *world* (Freire, 2004). It should educate towards sharing and keeping alive a dream of a better and gentler world, in which people are interdependent of each other. I see social critique as integrally linked with visions of hope; the one does not exist independently from the other. To concentrate on only one is 'like one hand clapping'. I borrow this analogy from a contribution made by Professor Herman Giliomee, a professor of History at Stellenbosch University at a community meeting. He described the writing of his magnus opus, *Die Afrikaners*, a book about the history of white, Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, as that it was without reference to the history of 'Coloured' people, as 'one hand clapping', i.e. he acknowledged that one cannot write a history of Afrikaners without reference to the history of 'Coloured' people. In the same way I see *social critique* and *hope* as integrally linked to each other.

As I have also mentioned in Chapter 1, the MJUSA played a big role in my life and education. In 1981 I attended my first MJUSA camp at Thornham (Blouleliesbos) in the Eastern Cape. This was a turning point in my life; up till then I was relatively naïve and politically innocent. For the first time, older mentors inducted me into a critical, Christian reading of the world and of its inequalities. I learnt to articulate the frustrations I felt with life as an oppressed person in South Africa from a religious viewpoint, using Scripture as the basis of my critique. The daily Bible study was the core of the MJUSA camps. The progressive, contextual themes of the different camps and the deliberate use of participatory methodologies to enhance debate, discussion and deliberation bore witness to the progressive nature of MJUSA during the apartheid years. I remember themes of MJUSA camps such as "In Christ a New Community", "Let my People go", "Participation, Justice and Peace", "Hope for Tomorrow" and "New Horizons". It is at the MJUSA camps that I have learnt to use innovative small-group techniques, feedback sessions, plenary discussions and contributions other than verbal ones effectively to enhance debate and to ensure participation. The regular MJUSA campers included many young people who later achieved prominence in the South African political and public life. This influence in my life cultivated in me a strong desire for freedom from unjust structures and helped me to visualise a future of hope.

During my own tertiary studies I met many persons who were a direct influence on my life and thinking. The person that stands out in my undergraduate years is Professor Wolfgang Thomas, a white South African of German descent. He introduced me to Development Economics as a branch of Economics that was formerly unknown to me. Under his guidance during the apartheid years, we dreamt about alternative economic arrangements for a free South Africa that would eradicate the widespread and racialised poverty. He provided us with the intellectual tools and motivated us to think independently. During my HDE year, Professor M Ajam, a Coloured, Muslim, Cape Malay person, stands out among the others. He was the one to introduce us as students to Freire, Giroux and other proponents of critical theory. These were the kinds of theorising that we could relate to as progressive students and that provided us with the intellectual tools that equipped us in the search of an alternative to Apartheid Education. The late Professor Ajam had the courage to teach according to his conscience at the height of the apartheid era and displayed a caring attitude towards us as students. For that I salute him. I completed my postgraduate studies as a part-time student, while teaching at Range High School and Bishop Lavis High School. The one big influence in my life then was Professor Wally Morrow, a white, English, liberal South African who together with Miss Nelleke Bak and the late Professor Tony Holiday shaped my thinking in very meaningful ways. During my BEd years, Professor Morrow's Metatheory module in the BEd course was a major influence on me. He used a text by Brian Fay to introduce us to three main frameworks in educational thinking: positivism, interpretive pedagogy and critical pedagogy. These provided me with lenses to read much of the world around me and assisted in the search for an emancipatory pedagogy for South Africa. Morrow's Metatheory module inspired me to continue to master's level, with Morrow himself being my promoter. It is inevitable that the people who have shaped me, my academic mentors and the authors they have introduced me to, and many of the ideas that we deliberated with each other, would have influenced my view of education.

The university where I work now, Stellenbosch University, is inextricably bound to the sad past of my country. Some would say that it was the conservative, Afrikaans, government-supporting university par excellence. Stellenbosch is regarded by many as the 'maternity ward of apartheid'. Professor Chris Brink, former rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University, puts it this way:

> The association of the University with the power structures of Afrikanerdom was, for a long time, a close one. DF Malan, the first apartheid Prime Minister, was a

Stellenbosch man. Hendrik Verwoerd was a Professor of Sociology and Social Work here before turning to politics. John Vorster was a prominent student leader who later, as Prime Minister, became Chancellor of the University. The last apartheid President, PW Botha, likewise became Chancellor at the time of his political power (even though he had no previous connection with the University). Rectors of the University were typically prominent members of the Afrikaner Broederbond … The world of Afrikaner power and hegemony, and the centredness of Stellenbosch in such a world, came to an end on 27 April 1994. (Brink, 2005:1)

A very significant thing happened at Stellenbosch with the appointment of its current rector and vice-chancellor, Professor Russel Botman in 2007. He is an academic, a theologian by discipline, but he was also a prominent student leader during his study years at UWC and an anti-apartheid activist during his career as a clergyman. During his career as a clergyman, he was detained several times by the Security Police because of his involvement in the struggle against apartheid. This was the person that was elected to become the rector and vice-chancellor of the one-time 'cradle of apartheid'! He is also the first person of colour to occupy this position. In his inaugural address he emphasised issues of access and non-racialism. As tenor for his term as rector and vice-chancellor, he interpreted Freire's *pedagogy of hope* in the context of Stellenbosch, South Africa and Africa and indicated that he seeks some kind of alignment between the work done at the university and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

A central issue of his inaugural address was the equal access of all to education. In his inaugural speech as rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University on 11 April 2007, he said "[w]e can only feel satisfied that there is fair access when the daughter of the farm worker has the same future opportunities as the son of the farmer" (Botman, 2007:5).

In this one statement, he took a swipe at inequality based on race, class and gender in one go. This was the articulation of a desire for the emancipation of Stellenbosch; a desire to rid Stellenbosch of its complicity in the system of racial oppression in South Africa and to establish an institution that is able to create hope for a better, gentler world.

The term 'emancipation' is mostly used by scholars in the tradition of critical pedagogy to refer to liberation from pre-Enlightenment forces such as tradition and religion. There is recognition among these scholars that there are or might be forces at work in contemporary

society that have the same effect as tradition and religion might have had in medieval society, i.e. that it tends to enslave and keep people in shackles.

These forces or conditions of bondage are the subject of critique by critical scholars. By such critique these limiting forces or conditions are exposed to public view. However, critique is not an end in itself; it is accompanied in critical theory by a positive vision of hope for a better future that would be free from domination. Even under extremely horrible conditions (e.g. Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa) it was and is possible for people to imagine a better future. Often literature and the arts are used to portray this better future. In critical theory, critique and hope are two sides of the same coin, as I have explained earlier.

McLean (2006:8) states "[w]hatever the differences between critical theorists, there is a common dual commitment to critiquing current conditions and to propelling action towards future emancipation and social justice".

The purpose of critique is to show the contours of a more just and free future. It is also important to note that critical theory does not offer final solutions. The struggle for a more just and free society is a perennial one. There will always be opportunity for critique. According to McLean (2006:9), the "argument of critical theory should always be kept open; it is an argument against the possibility of a final solution".

Critical theorists see education as a very important site of struggle: It can be used to reproduce existing unequal social relationships *and* it can be a force for social change. Critical pedagogy does not appeal to dominant, mainstream interests because its interest lies in resisting inequities and in the political and social potential of education to transform individuals and society. Critical pedagogy, as exemplified in the work of Freire, Apple, Giroux and Habermas, has as its main aim the change of society in the direction of justice and reason.

During apartheid times, the racially differentiated education system was an object of critique for those who had an interest in the emancipation of the majority. This critique was accompanied by the hope of a truly People's Education that would serve the needs of all South Africans, especially the poor. An alternative was actively pursued through the deliberation and negotiation processes that preceded the political settlement in South Africa. In the end, OBE emerged victorious as the carrier of the hopes of many disenfranchised people. They saw in this pedagogy one that could show the way to a more just and free future.

Almost 15 years into democracy, I can, as somebody who was intimately involved in the South African education system at all levels, bear witness to the fact that OBE did not deliver on its early promise. I would venture to say that OBE, instead of realising the dream of a better educational dispensation for the poor of South Africa, became a *nightmare* that many feel must end as soon as possible. A less dramatic and more charitable interpretation would be that OBE represents a minimalist view of critical pedagogy.

I want to draw attention to two levels of enslavement or bondage with regard to education in South Africa, firstly, at the level of the outcomes-based *pedagogy* (i.e. issues relating to teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment) and secondly, at the level of the *economic system*, because of the link between the outcomes-based pedagogy and a managerialist approach, which could be seen as closely related to the capitalist system, although those of a socialist persuasion have an equal tendency towards control. Race and class are still working against the poor in South Africa, despite the political liberation in 1994.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I only discuss the bondage of teachers at the level of *pedagogy*. I want to argue that teachers are disempowered by the outcomes-based pedagogy. During some of the initial OBE training sessions, some unscrupulous and zealous subject advisors advised teachers to forget everything that they have learnt and practiced up to then. They (the subject advisors) would teach them the 'new, better, right way' to do things, which of course was the OBE way. As a subject advisor, I always tried to find ways with teachers to align their current practices with the new demands that were placed on them. I know of many other colleagues who took a similar, empathetic approach. Unfortunately there were others who thought nothing of unsettling teachers, who were already confused and frustrated, by insisting that they should forget everything that they have learnt and practiced up to now in favour of the new approach. What happened in effect was that the life world of teachers was colonised, to use the language of Monica McLean (2006). A foreign language, which included terms such as performance indicators, outcomes, standards and assessment, invaded their world. This was improved in the RNCS, but the fact remains that technical terms foreign to the life world of teaching are still being used. New names and meanings were given to practices and procedures that have evolved in teaching over many years. Experienced and confident teachers found themselves doubting the things that have worked for years. Inadequate training to implement the new approach to education was provided. This was accompanied by inadequate follow-up support and inadequate guidance; where guidance and

support was provided, it was in most cases by subject advisors, who had no experience of the implementation of OBE in the classroom and who were themselves uncertain of what to do.

The attitude of education officials increasingly became one of *control*. Teachers were expected to be curriculum developers, because prescribed textbooks were frowned upon under the new approach. Most teachers still cannot cope with this expectation of them. At the same time the administrative requirements for teachers became more and more. Especially the requirements for the promotion of learners from one grade to the other demanded a lot of evidence and paper work. Cluster moderation sessions were convened by the education department. The nature of these cluster moderation sessions soon dropped all pretences of teacher development and became all-out mechanisms of control, with the education official in the role of quality controller-in-chief. Detailed records had to be kept against the learning outcomes for individual learners.

The implication was that teachers found themselves having less time to teach and spending most of their time on preparation and administrative matters. Many teachers confided in me about the negative effect of the unreasonable expectations on their social and family lives. I have heard teachers talk with resentment of this new approach to education, and often they diplomatically implicated me, as an education official, as having to bear some of the responsibility. I also know of many similar accounts from the reports of the assessment coordinators in the seven regions of the WCED, whom I met on a monthly basis in my position as head of GET Assessment. They relayed many negative reports from teachers during the 'open space' I created for them on our monthly agendas; basically they shared their difficult situations with the group and sought remedies mostly from me. Apart from these sources, i.e. my own conversations with teachers and the reports of the assessment coordinators, I have many family members and friends who are teachers. They, too, told me how they felt that their professional judgement was compromised. They complained about how the way they teach is prescribed, how which learners progress is not in their hands, how an audit culture expects of them to produce evidence of minute actions, how this leads to excessive workload, and how the demands on their time are unfair. They questioned whether all the administrative work and control mechanisms are leading to better teaching and learning. They resented the audit regime that was overseen by departmental officials and had already found innovative ways to subvert or to 'work' the system. They resented the insistence on standardisation and the tendency of OBE to view and treat teachers and learners more and more as *uniform* as opposed to *unique*.

145

The above descriptions given by teachers smack of a pedagogy that engenders an instrumentalism that leads to the disempowerment of teachers and to the compromise of the judgement of teachers as practitioners. What seems to be needed in South Africa today is a view of education that is couched in a language and practices that are gentler and less restrictive, and that respects the identity and judgement of teachers.

I categorically resist and reject the impositions and limitations on teachers' lives in terms of *pedagogy* and the *economic system*. It is important that we reclaim the space for a new dream, without any prescriptions, boundaries or limitations, for a better pedagogy and for a more equitable society. For me this dream is conceptually linked to the constitutive meanings of education that I am describing in this chapter. Once the space to dream the dream of a more equitable society is reclaimed, it opens up the space for change and hope. As Paulo Freire (2004:77) puts it: "There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope".

From the above it should be clear that I accept a postmodern theoretical framework, in which the struggle for the achievement of human fulfilment and freedom is a perennial feature. The measure will always remain whether the needs of the poor and oppressed have been met. It cannot be that the future vision of young people in the townships of South Africa is still allowed to be restricted to a life of the same kind of bondage that my parents experienced during their working lives. A perpetual cycle of critique and new conceptions that points in the direction of a more just and free future needs to be in operation. In the continuing deliberation about what constitutes a more just and free future for South Africa, the business of this dissertation is to critically engage with OBE, mainly in terms of its instrumentalist nature, and to formulate an alternative view of education that will hopefully move us towards a more just and free future.

Emancipation and hope are constitutive of my pedagogy of compassionate rationality; my account must address the concerns of teachers, inspire them to critically engage with the current educational arrangements and to dream once more of a better future, unrestrained by forces of bondage.

If one listens to the laments of hundreds of teachers as I have done, one has no doubt that OBE itself represents a force of bondage from which teachers want to be emancipated, because it restricts them in very substantial ways. From initially being a vision of hope built out of a critique of Apartheid Education, it has now itself turned into a source of bondage, i.e.

OBE has failed to move us in the direction of emancipation and social justice; it is seen as part of the reproduction of unequal social relationships. It attempts to prescribe to teachers how they should understand what it is they are doing, how they should understand themselves and ultimately how they should live their lives!

This failure of OBE to live up to the vision of emancipation from oppression calls for an alternative view of education that will be able to move us in the direction of a freer and just future. The hope is that a new way of viewing education can be found that will be able to emancipate us from the constraints of OBE. I hope to offer such a view in this chapter. This view includes emancipation and hope as constitutive meanings.

VI

During March 2008 a series of events took place in South Africa that made me ashamed to be a South African. A wave of xenophobic attacks spread through the country that seemed to take the country and the government by surprise. These attacks were limited to black townships. Houses of foreign nationals were burnt down, their shops looted and a number of them were killed. The horrible picture of a Mozambican migrant worker who was set alight by a mob was sent into the rest of the world by the media and became a symbol of shame to peace-loving South Africans. My family was directly affected. In the local primary school in Stellenbosch that my 12-year old son attends, fellow learners were mocking and beating up children from other countries; the parents of such children were mocked, taunted and threatened by both local learners and their parents. My daughter, who is a Political Science major, reflected on the situation in an essay, but was also personally troubled by the cruel actions of fellow South Africans. My wife belongs to a support group for spouses of foreign postgraduate students and experienced first-hand the feelings of fear and rejection of her fellow group members who are of foreign origin. The students of Stellenbosch University, where I work, mounted a massive relief effort to assist foreign nationals who were displaced by the violence. In my position in the Community Interaction Division, I was closely involved in these efforts.

One of the questions that kept haunting me was: "What kind of people does this?" From different sources, e.g. political parties, churches, and other social groupings came the cry that education was what was necessary for South Africans to rethink their relationship with foreign nationals and to restrain them from engaging in xenophobic attacks. There seemed to

be consensus that xenophobia and lack of hospitality are the business of uneducated people. An educated person would not engage in such activities; yet those who committed the xenophobic attacks were products of the South African education system!

Part of my compassion with the foreign nationals stemmed from the fact that I myself have been a foreigner in another country. I am therefore to some extent in a position to see through the eyes of the other. I remembered the attack on my family by skinheads at Dresden station and the beating of Reverend Akoto, my friend from Ghana. (Refer to Chapter 1.)

I also reflected anew on encounters with foreign nationals earlier in my life. From my childhood I remember very vividly a Chinese family by the surname of Chong and a Malawian family by the surname of Banda, who used to live in Elsies River. Both these families were the subject of suspicion of local community members. Chong, who owned a shop in the main road, was rumoured to have links with Chinese who drove in big black cars and abducted children. They were suspected of luring the children into their cars with red lollipops! The Bandas were rumoured to have an inclination towards cannibalism and witchcraft. I am ashamed to admit that adults in our community warned children not to have contact with the children of these families. Despite the warnings from the adults, we as children, through our curiosity, quickly found out that boys like Ramazan Banda were not very different from us. It also gladdens my heart that Chong's son, Patrick, recently concluded a successful process to get Chinese South Africans recognised as previously disadvantaged. From those early memories, the differential treatment and demonisation of strangers, as well as a general lack of hospitality towards strangers in my own community, stand out clearly in my mind. What was added in 2008 was flagrant and overt aggression towards strangers in our country.

The work of Seyla Benhabib helped me to reflect on these matters. Benhabib (2006) argues that an international human rights regime has emerged since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. She describes this regime as "a set of interrelated and overlapping global and regional regimes that encompass human rights treaties as well as customary international law or international soft law" (Benhabib, 2006:27).

In her first lecture, Benhabib draws on Kant's three levels of right and presents the duty of *hospitality* in terms of cosmopolitan right, not as a virtue of sociability, but *as a right that*

belongs to all human beings by virtue of their status as potential participants in a world republic.

Benhabib (2006:16) states that "[c]osmopolitan norms of justice, whatever the condition of their legal origination, accrue to *individuals* as moral and legal persons in a worldwide civil society" (my emphasis).

This is an extremely important statement. Although nation states may be party in bringing into being international human rights regimes, it is important to note that the cosmopolitan norms of justice accrue to individuals, not to states. The implication is that the manner in which nation states treat both their citizens and residents within their borders cannot be regarded as a private affair anymore. Therefore, the possibility of conflict between sovereignty on the one hand and hospitality on the other is created; democratic rule and claims to justice may conflict, even if the nation state is party to the arrangement that brought into being the cosmopolitan norms of justice.

What is described above, is what Benhabib (2006:35) calls the paradox of democratic legitimacy: "The paradox is that the republican sovereign should undertake to bind its will by a series of precommitments to a set of formal and substantive norms, usually referred to as 'human rights'".

The ultimate implication of this, according to Held (1995, cited in Gould, 2004:169), is that "states would no longer be regarded as sole centres of legitimate power within their borders".

It is important that for me to remark that, on Benhabib's account, the right to universal hospitality is applicable to both citizens and residents alike. The nation state could possibly decide to extend or to refuse to extend citizenship rights and state protection to strangers who reside within their boundaries. In the case of citizens, it is conceivable that a state could, for some or no reason, want at some stage to denaturalise sectors of it citizens on account of religion, race, ethnicity, language or culture (e.g. South Africa under apartheid, Bosnia and Ruanda) and withdraw from those sectors citizenship rights and state protection. These are typical cases in which cosmopolitan norms of justice need to overrule the republican sovereign's democratic rule.

Some of the theoretical concepts that I find very illuminating in Benhabib's account of cosmopolitan justice are "ethnos", "demos", "democratic iterations" and "jurisgenerative politics" (2006:45-68).

Benhabib (2006:65) accepts the importance, but bemoans the exclusivity and limitation of what she calls the 'ethnos', described as "a community of shared fate, memories, and moral sympathies" and champions what she calls the 'demos', which she characterises as a "democratically enfranchised totality of all citizens, who may or may not belong to the same ethnos" (Benhabib, 2006:68).

According to Benhabib, the 'demos' is perpetually redefined through a process of "democratic iterations", which she characterises as "complex ways of mediating the will- and opinion-formation of democratic majorities and cosmopolitan norms" (Benhabib, 2006:45).

Jurisgenerative politics, i.e. politics that has the potential to result in the generation of (new) laws, is offered by Benhabib (2006:49) as a "model that permits us to think of creative interventions that mediate between universal norms and the will of democratic majorities".

Democratic majorities reiterate universal norms and can decide to include those in their will formation processes through argument, contestation, revision and rejection. The recent examples of democratic iterations that Benhabib gives are the 'headscarf affair in France' and the change in German voting laws.

In the French example, three Muslim schoolgirls were prohibited from wearing headscarves to a public school. This started a national debate in which eventually the French courts decided against the girls and for a traditional philosophical principle of division of church and state (*laïcité*). This can be seen as a lost chance for France to, by means of democratic iteration, expand its concept of its demos. The change in German voting laws, in which the German courts decided for the extension of voting rights to groups that do not necessarily form part of their ethnos, can be seen as an opportunity seized to expand the German demos.

Benhabib's concept of cosmopolitan norms of justice is appealing to me, given the global age that we live in and in which education is sought by everybody inside and across national boundaries. I find it attractive also because of its aptness for the diverse (multicultural, multi-faith, etc.) South Africa society, where education as a public good is sought, and also because of the fact that many foreign nationals, especially nationals of other African countries, flee

those countries because of war and famine to seek a better future in South Africa – a future that includes educational possibilities. Some South Africans would like to see immigration into South Africa as a new issue, where in fact South Africa has always been an immigration destiny.

I take Benhabib's concept of cosmopolitan norms of justice, with its conceptual links to the constitutive meanings of *caring and compassion* and *emancipation and hope*, both of which I have elaborated on in earlier in this chapter, to have important consequences for both residents and citizens, as well as for teachers, learners and assessment. I see the concept of **cosmopolitan justice** as constitutive of education. Xenophobia and lack of hospitality are the business of uneducated people.

There is no concrete evidence that OBE pronounces on cosmopolitan justice as a constitutive meaning of education. Given the fact that I have chosen to charitably view OBE as a minimalist view of critical pedagogy, it might be safe to assume that proponents of OBE would support this meaning of education. They would agree to the view of human beings as the bearers of inalienable rights. They would underwrite respect for different cultures and religions, although I suspect that they could possibly fall into the same trap as the French in the case of the headscarf affair, because of over-zealous application of secularism. I am sure that they will agree to the extension of citizen rights and the rights to protection by the state. The position of OBE in respect of this constitutive meaning is not clear, but I have chosen to take a charitable view of OBE as a minimalist version of critical theory.

VII

Professor Wally Morrow was the influence in my life that alerted me to the fact that education need not always be for something; i.e. that education has an intrinsic value and that one needs to be cautious about having a purely instrumentalist view of education. He often repeated that it is worthwhile to ask what education *is* and not only what education is *for*? Morrow leaned heavily on the non-instrumental justification for education as developed by Peters (1967).

There seems to be conflict between a view that appreciates the intrinsic value of education and what can be called an instrumentalist view of education. Those who value the intrinsic value of education argue that we need more emphasis on the question "What is education?" than the question "What is education for?"

The latter question ("What is education for?") is taken as an absolutely commonsense question in our society today; those who ask it reckon that anyone who questions its formulation must be unrealistic or idealistic; in any case not living in the real world. Global competitiveness and the perceived link between education and the economy are usually emphatically emphasised by people who mean that that question is the appropriate one to ask. They see the first question ("What is education?") as nonsense. Their response to this question is: "Why should one keep on asking this question?" Theorists have over the years dabbled with and provided answers to questions such as these; in modern times any dispute around this question seems to be 'settled': Education has to be *for* something, and mostly it must be *for* the market! Those who ask the question "What is education?" are experiencing current developments in the field of education (including OBE) as a debasement of education. They view these developments with a deep sense of loss and betrayal.

I think that both questions are important, but asked together and not as opposites, or as being mutually exclusive.

Jürgen Habermas and Monica McLean provide us with a way of proceeding with this line of thought. According to Habermas, humans are driven by three cognitive interests: 'technical interest' in predicting and controlling the workings of the environment; 'hermeneutic interest' in comprehending and communicating with others; and 'emancipatory interest' in being autonomous (Habermas, 1972).

The problem with an instrumentalist approach is that only one human interest, namely technical interest, is emphasised; only the one interest in terms of which humans can take control of the world is highlighted. The other two interests, namely the hermeneutic and emancipatory interests, in terms of which humans can collectively make meaning and in terms of which they are interested in freedom from constraint, are ignored or at best neglected. According to McLean (2006:60), "Habermas and other critical theorists claim that, in modern society, interest in the technical control of the objective world is pursued at the expense of interests in communication and emancipation".

McLean further argues as follows:

> At the heart of the problem with a technical-rational approach to education is a preoccupation with a particular form of economic and bureaucratic utility which can be seen not only in how governments limit the purposes of education to economic

considerations, but also in policies and practices of standardization: for example, in the emphasis on the pre-specification of educational objectives; in competency-based programmes of education and training for teachers that emphasize behavioural performance; and in the ascendancy of so-called transferable skills development in educational programmes. Such approaches to pedagogy mechanize and atomize a holistic and individual process by treating knowledge and understanding as commodities. (McLean, 2006:60)

With regard to the supposed role that education has to play with regard to the economy, Jansen states the following sobering fact:

There is not a shred of evidence in almost eighty years of curriculum change literature to suggest that altering the curriculum of schools leads to, or is associated with, changes in national economies. Even the most optimistic of studies, conducted in Tanzania and Colombia by the World Bank, suggest that there is simply no evidence from experimental research that curriculum diversification – that is, an attempt to make curriculum responsive to economic conditions – has 'significant' social or private benefits. (Jansen, 1999:148)

And yet the illusion of manipulating the education system in an instrumentalist way to produce results in the realm of the economy keeps education policy experts captive across generations, up to today! Under such circumstances it seems reasonable for me to warn against a too instrumentalist view of education and to plead for an understanding of education also in terms of the hermeneutic and emancipatory interests.

My view is that an over-emphasis on an instrumentalist view of education can weaken rather than strengthen the education of children by restricting it in scope, possibly through over-specialisation and a narrow specification of outcomes, and by ignoring other aspects that could make for a good education. In my view such over-emphasis diverts attention away from concepts of education as rich, broad, critical, deliberative, caring and compassionate, imaginative and allowing for the unexpected. I think that the current emphasis on 'education for the market' and its accompanying specialisation can impoverish the kind of education that children receive and that it can lead to the creation of a class of "idiot-specialists" (Solway, 1999:65). And this while there is, according to Jansen, no proof of the supposed link between the economy and education!

My tendency is also towards emphasising the other two interests identified by Habermas, namely interests in communication and emancipation. I think that education needs to be desired not *only* as a means to certain ends; it has value in and of itself that will enable an educated person to make good judgements in any range of situations.

It is also important at this point that a distinction is made between education and training. Peters (1967:7) argues: "Certainly 'training' always suggests confinement. People are trained *for* jobs, *as* mechanics, and *in* science. No one can be trained in a general sort of way. But this *lack of specificity* is just what is suggested by '*education*'" (my emphasis).

It could be argued that what has happened in South Africa is the complete collapse of the distinction between education and training (some would argue that all that is left is a concept that is more descriptive of training than of education) in pursuit of what I would call a false and simplistic egalitarianism and the espousal of a technical-rationalist view of education. The important distinction between education and training needs to be reinstated in the South African debate on education and training, but this time without the elitism that was implicit in the old order in South Africa, i.e. without ranking training and education or making one more desirable than the other, with obvious implications for the individuals and institutions affected.

Non-instrumentalism, interpreted as a leaning towards the Habermasian interests of communication and emancipation, and as a warning against a narrow technical-rational interest in education, is constitutive of my alternative view of education. It is an account of education that focuses on all three human interests, resists invariably falling into the ever present means/ends dualism, focusing also on the inherent benefit of education and distinguishing between education and training by resisting the pressure to become too democratic or egalitarian, while still being able to value all kinds of labour.

I have in most of the above paragraphs described OBE as an instrumentalist pedagogy that is closely linked to an economic rationale. This is a part of its character that OBE cannot escape. Sweeping and categorical statements and assumptions about the link between an OBE approach and the needs of the national economy are made in OBE policy documents. Schools are supposed to equip learners with certain knowledge, skills and attitudes. The knowledge, skills and attitudes are invariably linked to the economy of the country. There are a lot of *assumptions* underlying this seemingly simple assertion: There is an acceptance that *transfer*

between schools and workplace takes place in an unproblematic way. It is assumed that the *rich knowledge and understanding* that is required in the workplace can be taught and assessed at school level. It is assumed that knowledge and skills can be isolated; with disregard to the *connectedness of ideas and holism.* The sad part is that this instrumentalist thinking has no proven guarantees, as Jansen (1999) has argued.

It is my opinion that what is needed in South Africa is an alternative view of education that is not conceptually committed to an essentially instrumentalist approach. Such a non-instrumentalist pedagogy would affirm hope, care and compassion, imagination, judgement of teachers and uniqueness of both teachers and learners.

Section IV: The therapy of education

After formulating my alternative view of education, I read a book by Smeyers, Smith and Standish (2007) called *The therapy of education.* This book gave me a stunning perspective on the human condition in the late modern world; one that moved me deeply. The book is clearly informed by the philosophy of Ludwig von Wittgenstein; the philosophy that has had such a profound influence on me during my postgraduate studies at UWC and that was personified by the enigmatic Professor Tony Holiday. Engaging with this book was definitely one of the highlights of my writing process; an unexpected find almost at the end of the process of writing up this dissertation. I found much that supported my alternative view of education, some new perspectives on old themes and also some aspects that are at odds with my alternative view of education.

I firstly want to engage with Smeyers et al.'s (2007) notions of *therapy* and *education*, as well as *managerialism* and *performativity*. Smyers et al. write in the introduction to their book:

> We are … concerned with the ways in which education can serve as, or indeed simply is, a kind of therapy; but we are also interested in ways in which education itself stand in need of therapy – perhaps through the incorporation of therapeutic approaches but especially, and more importantly, in terms of the need to retrieve education from its current state of debilitation. The condition that has come to be called 'performativity' – the fixation with assessment and league-tables and the reconstitution of the pupil or student as a collection of programmable skills – has joined forces with managerialism to threaten older and more vibrant notions of education as a liberal idea. (Smeyers et al. 2007:4)

In Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation I have engaged with the notions of managerialism and performativity and its influence on education in our time. I identified outcomes-based assessment as a prime example of performativity and I sought to argue that the language that was used within the outcomes-based discourse to describe education was ill at ease within the practices of teaching and education. I sought a different way to view education that will release it from the hold of the forces (including managerialism and performativity) that seem to hold it captive in our time. Smeyers et al. describe education as standing in need of therapy in our times. For me it sufficed to attempt the formulation of a different view of education. However, what is shared between us is the feeling that something is amiss; that the language that is used to describe education in our times cause conceptual discomfort for them and for me. Smeyers et al. write: "Conceptual discomfort arises because an expression, a gesture, an action, appears out of place in a particular language game" (Smeyers et al., 2007:224).

This discomfort drives them and me in search of a different language with which to describe education. I have learnt much from their linking of education and therapy. I share their discomfort with the notion of self-esteem as the end of education and I rejoice when they unsettle and trouble this notion. I share their view that it is sheer arrogance of teachers to label those whom they believe are suffering from low self-esteem and I agree when they argue that diffidence can be understood as a virtue. This embracing of diffidence links with my constitutive meanings of caring and compassion (also in deliberation) and cosmopolitan justice in the sense that the marginalised are valued and worthy of our care. I strongly share their view that the problem does not lie with the self or the selves but with the late modern world that is itself sick and that produces sickness. Elaborating on this sickness, they cite the work of Smail in the following passage:

> The clinical psychologist David Smail writes (1993) that many therapists like himself noticed in the 1980s that they were encountering a new kind of 'client' from the professional classes – doctors, accountants, lawyers and academics – whose working lives had been changed drastically under the influence of managerialism, the market and performativity. The anxiety and neurosis that these people experienced as something wrong with them and that was in need of curing is better understood as the changing nature of the institutional, public and professional world that damages people's self-respect and self-worth. (Smeyers et al, 2007:184)

I support their account of psychoanalysis as foregrounding language and interpretation, as opposed to providing a medical model offering a cure. The role of the 'analyst' is to lead the 'patient' to solutions; similar to philosophy of mothering with its "responsiveness, a constant alertness and attuning oneself to the needs and nature of this particular child now, to whom no-one else is responsible in the same way" (Smeyers et al., 2007:213). This is a much richer account of education (or therapy for that matter) than managerialism and performativity can ever hope to give.

Forces such as managerialism and performativity lead to a state in human beings that Santner (2001, cited in Smeyers et al., 2007:80) calls "'undeadness', … this is a vampirised life in which the soul has been sucked dry". This description is similar to, but stated in much stronger terms than my description of OBE as an impoverished view of education.

Secondly, I want to engage with the notions of *scepticism* and the kinds of *knowledge* that it embraces, as well as the notions of *certainty* and *contingency* in their book. Smeyers et al., as Wittgenstein and others before them, identify scepticism as the main illness of our times. This illness is diagnosed as "our compulsion to doubt; our inclination to demand a greater reassurance than the circumstances allow or a more robust verification than they could reasonably bear" (Smeyers et al., 2007:229).

The kinds of knowledge that this illness of scepticism embrace is scientific knowledge, with its emphasis on being able to predict and control, and its bias towards numbers and quantitative research and its ultimate yearning for certainty. Even qualitative research can be employed in ways that seek to satisfy the sceptic's yearning for certainty. Smeyers et al. are critical of the narrative turn that is taken in qualitative research. This is one of the areas where I differ somewhat from them. They warn against the narcissism and self-indulgence that could accompany the use of the narrative. These are criticisms that I have dealt with in Chapter 1. I agree with them that one can never fully tell one's story; therefore I found Maxine Greene's statement "I am ... not yet" so attractive. I did not want to use narrative in any kind of formalistic way in this dissertation. It is a tool that helped me towards formulating a different view of education because I was ill at ease with the view of education that is assumed by OBE. I think my use of the narrative approximates the way Smeyers et al. feel that the narrative should be used: "Narrative should lead to recognition of the need for a different language of education" (Smeyers et al., 2007:186). I think this is exactly what my use of narrative does in this dissertation.

Against scepticism and a yearning for ever more verification, Smeyers et al. introduce the notion of contingency. The second part of their book is entitled "Coming to terms". This is how they explain it:

> In speaking of 'coming to terms' we have in mind the ways in which the finitude of our lives, spatial and temporal, governs our condition: that we are subject to chance and contingency, and live in an uncertain world. We are interested in the ways in which we can learn to live well, find happiness of a kind, within these limits. (Smeyers et al., 2007:89)

This disposition is a much more plausible and appropriate one in our world than the yearning for certainty that can prove to be ever so elusive and that can cause so much distress because the desired levels of perfection can never be reached. It embraces a much more modest kind of knowledge that fully acknowledges the contingencies of life, but that is also open to receive the unexpected gifts and treasures of life.

My rejection of the idea of a science of education, of the technical language of outcomes-based assessment, my non-instrumentalist stance and commitment to caring and compassion, emancipation and hope, cosmopolitan justice and the release of the imagination all link to the rejection of scepticism and the embracing of contingency and finitude.

Thirdly, I want to reflect on something that is related to the rejection of scepticism, namely the notion that "[g]ood understanding resists spelling out" (Smeyers et al., 2007:50). In their ninth chapter they argue against abstraction; against the sense in which education is being moved towards being "a closed system where everything can be transparent only because everything has been reduced to what can be abstracted, mapped out and made explicit" (Smeyers et al., 2007:141).

Education on this account is stripped of its richness and no place is left for contingency. Perfection is sought after and inspection and audit mechanisms are put in place to measure progress towards it. In such a system we pride ourselves on running a transparent education system within a transparent society. In the rubrics that are constructed to inspect and to audit a language that is ill at ease within the practice of education is used; the language is more at home within the economy and industry.

Education cannot be totally transparent; otherwise there would be no possibility of surprise and the unexpected, and no respect for the contingency and finitude of life. Smeyers et al. use examples from the realm of arts to explain that education can never be totally transparent. This is how they put it: "[W]e can never provide a complete picture of what a film shows, anymore than we can offer an exhaustive account of any work of art. Good understanding resists spelling everything out" (Smeyers et al., 2007:50).

My criticism of OBE, following Solway (1999), as a pre-established curricular regime, and my commitment to non-instrumentalism and to the release of the imagination are in line with a rejection of education as fully transparent.

Lastly, I want to briefly engage with the notion of *return*. Smeyers et al. argue that besides the fact that we need to be cured from the sickness of scepticism, we also stand in need of some kind of redemption. Judging from their exploration of the theme of return, it seems to me that we need to find the way back to ourselves, others and to our lived lives, not to a place of rest, but to a place where we will from time to time be troubled. It seems as though we need to find the eternal in the ordinary and everyday, otherwise we shall make ourselves and others very unhappy, chasing after elusive perfection.

According to Smeyers et al. (2007:236), redemption requires reanimation from within. To be reanimated from within means, among others, to also rediscover one's connection with others. This happens through language or what Stanley Cavell calls "conversation". For Cavell the virtues that conversation requires are "listening, responsiveness and willingness to change" (2004, cited in Smeyers et al., 2007:237).

The notion of return and the resultant conversation connects with my constitutive meanings of critical rationality and deliberation, but also with cosmopolitan justice, caring and compassion, emancipation and hope.

My alternative view of education is largely compatible with Smeyers et al.'s account. One potential area of difference could be the use of the narrative, but I suspect that my use of the narrative is different from what they are criticising. I conclude that their account of "education as therapy and standing in need of therapy" (2007:4) is an extremely rich account of education that goes a long way to provide an alternative to contemporary instrumentalist approaches to education.

Section V: Conclusion

In the main part of this chapter, I have developed an alternative view of education to that which seems to underlie OBE. This alternative view originated from a critical theory perspective, represented by the thoughts of Habermas and McLean, which featured strongly in the formulation of the constitutive meanings of non-instrumentalism, emancipation and hope. I formulated a critique of OBE, but also formulated visions of emancipation and hope. My alternative view built on the thoughts of Burbules and Gutmann (critical rationality), John Rawls, Seyla Benhabib and Iris Marion Young (deliberation), Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum (caring and compassion), Maxine Greene (imagination), and again, Seyla Benhabib (cosmopolitan justice).

The constitutive meanings of my alternative view of education were identified as critical rationality, deliberation, caring and compassion, imagination, emancipation and hope, cosmopolitan justice, and lastly, non-instrumentalism. I argued that these meanings can be seen as constitutive of the practice of education, i.e. these are the meanings that make *education* what it is; without these, the practice would not be education, but something else. These constitutive meanings grew out of a dialogue between moments in my own narrative and the thoughts of the philosophers with whose work I engaged, whom I have mentioned above.

I have decided, after careful thought, to call my alternative view of education *a pedagogy of compassionate rationality*. This is a name that I hope will accommodate both critical rationality and deliberation on the one hand, and the other five interrelated constitutive meanings on the other. The reason I have decided to give a name to my alternative view of education is simply for ease of reference, nothing more.

The constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, which I have described in the previous section, provide a rich view of education. It can be said that it represents a maximalist view of critical theory. I have evaluated OBE against these constitutive meanings. On the basis of the mostly negative findings in terms of the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality above, I conclude that OBE is incommensurate at a conceptual level with those constitutive meanings that I have portrayed as an alternative to release teachers from the bondage of OBE, i.e. I portray OBE as a poor account of education.

Some critical interlocutor, reflecting on my formulation of constitutive meanings of education and my decision to call my alternative view of education *a pedagogy of compassionate rationality*, might now ask: "Why invoke a grand narrative again? It did not work in the past, why would it work now? There is no place for truth and values in a postmodern world!"

My response could be that I believe as does the critic Rorty (1989:44) that it is necessary to transcend the language of enlightenment rationalism and only seek to redescribe social phenomena in the absence of independent grounds. But this does not mean by far that one has to abandon all concepts of 'objectivity'.

Putnam (1985:4), Rorty's fellow pragmatist, argues that if people find themselves without things they need, they sooner or later find ways of making those very things (or some approximation) that will answer their needs. If one therefore finds oneself without recourse to independent grounds, one will sooner or later find something that will stand in good stead. I believe that the *constitutive meanings* of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality provide such an alternative. These forms of agreement are relatively stable and are good enough to perform the job that independent grounds would have done. Objectivity is therefore redefined as *intersubjectivity* and is definitely not equal to arbitrariness.

Another, perhaps more cynical response might be to say that maybe we, in our pluralistic democracy, *want to be* morally relativistic in response to the plurality. Maybe we do not know any other response to plurality. Against this I am saying that moral relativism is not helping us in any way. It tends to paralyse and censure us, which is why we often find ourselves today in situations that seem hopeless and dismal. I argue that we need some account of values and truth, albeit not foundational and independent of the practice of education. Otherwise we have nothing to appeal to and nothing to strive towards, while at the same time lamenting the current state of education in our country. This is equal to a lack of agency and being delivered into the clutches of objective forces that determine our destiny for us. Certainly this is not a situation that we find desirable.

I believe that my proposed *pedagogy of compassionate rationality* provides a basis to rethink education in South Africa; an alternative view that could help us to transcend the predicament that is caused by OBE and outcomes-based assessment in particular. In the next chapter I consider the implications of the constitutive meanings of *a pedagogy of compassionate rationality* for teachers and for assessment.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS OF A PEDAGOGY OF COMPASSIONATE RATIONALITY FOR TEACHERS AND ASSESSMENT

Section I: Introduction

In this chapter I consider the implications of my alternative view of education, which I have decided to call *a pedagogy of compassionate rationality*, for teachers and for assessment. The implications identified in this chapter are each linked back, where apparent and applicable, to the account of the pedagogy of compassionate rationality that was given in the previous chapter.

In general, I argue that my alternative view of education imagines teachers that themselves *live and exemplify* the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, i.e. critical rationality, deliberation, caring and compassion, imagination, emancipation and hope, non-instrumentalism and cosmopolitan justice. Likewise, I accept in general that assessment practices, strategies and policies should *support, strengthen and reinforce* the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality.

In the next section (Section II) I consider the implications of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality for teachers and for assessment. Section III at the end of the chapter is a conclusion that points to the promise of viewing education in this alternative way, which I have called a pedagogy of compassionate rationality.

Section II: Implications for teachers and assessment

I reiterate what I have said in the introductory section: In general, teachers should themselves *live and exemplify* the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, i.e. critical rationality, deliberation, caring and compassion, imagination, emancipation and hope, non-instrumentalism and cosmopolitan justice.

I was struck by a comment of one of my lecturers during my HDE year and have remembered it ever since. His question was: "What is it that will tell young people what they should be?" After a long discussion in class, he provided a quote that he attributed to Spencer (reference unknown) as his answer: "Not all the books on all the shelves, but what the teachers are

themselves". This is the sense in which I formulate the high expectations on teachers to exemplify and to live the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality: passionate practitioners who live and teach by example.

I also reiterate what I have said about assessment in the introductory section of this chapter: If we take this alternative view of education, it should be expected that assessment practices, strategies and policies should *support, strengthen and reinforce* the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality.

I now discuss the implications of each of the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality for teachers and assessment.

Critical rationality

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of critical rationality for teachers?

It implies teachers who are themselves capable of critical rationality. There is a huge expectation of society that teachers in public schools are responsible to cultivate critical rationality in their learners. This expectation was articulated by Gutman (1995) and Enslin et al. (2001), to which I referred in the previous chapter. This assumes that teachers are themselves *skilful and competent participants* in the community of practice who teach a certain subject, that they are up to date with the latest developments in their field and that they themselves are capable of *critical rationality*. For me this means that teachers should have a solid training in their specialist subjects, but also in the use of different teaching and learning strategies. In addition to their chosen specialist subjects, they should be allowed to choose electives (e.g. sports coaching, arts and culture, additional method subjects) so that they can provide their learners with a well-rounded education. Ample continuous professional development possibilities must be made available to them, preferably done at universities, and incentives for good work must be awarded. The importance of good textbooks and the fact that teachers do not have to be forced to select and produce their own texts must be emphasised. The rootedness of teachers and principals in the community in which they work is another important feature for me; i.e. the nearness to and involvement in community that was earlier discussed. Critical rationality also emphasises the necessity of participative management, i.e. the involvement of all the different role-players, including teachers and the community, in decisions regarding the school. There is a need for a public education that is typically South African; that draws on the richness of our diversity; not borrowed from

elsewhere. This is the context within which teachers should position themselves as life-long learners, with a critical disposition. Inside their classrooms, they should have the ability to exercise discipline and independent judgement, and be respected by others in the execution of their work.

It also implies that teachers as critical thinkers (as described above) have the duty to induct learners into critical thinking. This they do by for example acknowledging compelling reasons, pointing out reasons that are not compelling, proposing different lines of argument, challenging learners to respond to certain propositions, acting as mediator between different viewpoints of learners, especially where sensitive topics are concerned, and by teaching learners how to interact appropriately with other conversation partners.

Further, it implies critical rationality that is developed within the context of subject knowledge and authentic deliberative settings. Although critical rationality is seen as generally desirable, i.e. across subjects or disciplines, this does not translate into a teaching of *critical rationality in abstraction* from subject knowledge or outside of authentic or near to authentic deliberative settings. The argument of Burbules (2005) against a formal conception of rationality that was introduced in the previous chapter applies in this case.

It implies classrooms that have a *dialogical nature*. Dialogue and deliberation need to be practiced by both teachers and learners, given the predominance of one-way communication (teachers to learners) of the past in South African classrooms. However, it is important to recognise that allowance has to be made for teaching moments, because of the expertise of teachers in subject areas and the lack thereof in learners, i.e. the epistemological inequality that is constitutive of education has to be recognised.

It implies teachers as intellectuals, who prepare their students as intellectuals and who intellectualise teaching and learning. McLean (2006:118) describes an intellectual as "a person who deals in ideas, questions, argument and critique". This is a vibrant view of teachers and learners, which seeks to raise the bar on routinised, unimaginative teaching and is definitely opposed to a view of teachers as functionaries. Teachers, who are competent participants in the communities of practice of all those who teach a certain subject, introduce concepts and different kinds of reasons for different arguments to learners in challenging and stimulating ways. A heavy reliance on everyday knowledge, as what seems to be happening in OBE, does not have a place here.

It implies that teachers should guide learners towards what Burbules (2005) describes as being objective (tolerant with a pluralistic sentiment), accepting fallibilism (making certain commitments that run the possibility of error, the capacity to recognise that one is wrong and the capacity to reflect on one's mistakes), embracing pragmatism (a tolerance for uncertainty, imperfection and incompleteness, yet recognising the need for persistence and flexibility) and exercising judgement (to distinguish situations in which a rational calculation in the narrow sense might be called for, and when it is not).

It also implies that teachers are agents of democracy because they are educating future, critical citizens. This means that teachers and public schools have a great responsibility to a democratic nation, as was emphasised by Gutmann (1995) and Enslin et al. (2001). They are public servants in the true sense of the word, rather than mere government employees, underlings or functionaries. Their judgement as practitioners needs to be respected, also by whoever is currently in government.

Lastly, and related to the previous point, it implies that teachers should accept a role in transforming society. McLean (2006:122) states it in the following way: "[They do so more modestly and indirectly by teaching students who have been introduced to critique, whose minds are developed and who believe *they* have a role in transforming society".

These implications in terms of critical rationality for teachers open the possibility for a totally different view of teachers than under OBE. With its link to performativity and the construction of governable subjects capable of self-regulation, OBE presents a view of teachers that could be interpreted as seriously compromised in terms of critical rationality. In contrast, a pedagogy of compassionate rationality opens the possibility of a view of teachers as agents, capable of judgement and critical rationality.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of critical rationality for assessment?

It implies certain kind of assessment tasks. The types of assessment task that will foster critical rationality are open-ended, with no definite, correct answers. (I realise that not all assessment tasks are of this nature.) This type of task is often posed in the form of a question, which expects the learner to take a certain position and to defend it. It is expected of learners to show their ability to reason critically, i.e. it is the assessment of reasonable argument. It is not the position taken or the conclusion that is important, but the argument and the process of reasoning. More is expected of learners than to regurgitate a list of facts. One implication is

that memoranda will necessarily be more open-ended (no more accurate memoranda!) and that assessment of this type of task will rely heavily on the competence and judgement of teachers as practitioners. This type of assessment is already in place in certain curricula, most notably in History, but this type of questioning is still not widely practiced because of the hold that fixed contents have on teachers and the education system. This type of assessment holds the promise of learners that are on their way to become proficient members of the communities of practice in their subject field.

Further, as mentioned above, it implies that the kind of open-ended assessment task has to be practiced in a formative way in deliberative settings that are as near as possible to authentic. This type of assessment task will have to be practiced in class, whether in writing or orally. It implies that teachers give learners ample opportunities to reason and deliberate in class and that teachers guide learners in the development of critical reasoning. The ability to respond to such assessment tasks does not come naturally, but has to be developed through formative assessment, which involves feedback to the learner about his or her argument and how to improve it. Important is that the teacher has to induct the learner into critical reason; in this process the teacher acts as coach and referee, if need be.

It also has implications for summative assessment, i.e. situations where the teacher has to assess the progress of learners at a certain point. *Verbal answers, oral assessment and presentations* (possibly followed by *question and answer sessions*) could be used as summative assessment, instead of only written tests and examinations. These are strategies that have the potential of fostering critical reason.

It also has implications for continuous assessment, i.e. it is possible to award a mark for learners that reflect their contribution towards classroom discussions and the quality thereof during the year. This mark becomes a barometer of the competence of the learner in respect of critical reason, and should also encourage learners to contribute in class on a continuous basis. I know this is possible, because such a mark was allocated in earlier years for Economics and Business Economics, although it was managed in a very arbitrary way.

On the surface it seems as if OBE is able to accommodate all of these implications. But that is only true in terms of classroom assessment, which still counts relatively little towards the final assessment of learners. This is evidence of the fact that the audit system does not completely trust the classroom assessments designed and administered by teachers. In a sense

this is understandable given different levels of competency of teachers. This is a situation that I say must be corrected by an aggressive campaign of teacher development.

External assessments that do little to develop critical rationality still count for most of a learner's final assessment and in these instances OBE is committed to standardised examinations that are not open-ended. As stated earlier, History is a notable exception to this.

Deliberation

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of deliberation for teachers?

It implies teachers who are committed to deliberation. Deliberation builds on critical rationality and is dependent on its presence. Burbules (2005:6) describes the orientation or outlook of teachers that are committed to deliberation as "a tolerance for uncertainty, imperfection, and incompleteness as the existential conditions of human thought, value, or action, yet also [a recognition of] the need for persistence and flexibility in confronting such difficulties."

It requires openness, reasonableness, respect for the force of reasons and a willingness to inquire further, without the need to rush to strict and conclusive endings.

It also implies teachers who are responsible for the civic education of learners. As I have argued above, teachers are agents of democracy because they cultivate the future, critical citizens for a democratic nation. The sense in which it is used here is that teachers have the duty to induct learners into the deliberative structures and processes of a nation. Very important with regard to the preparation of learners to take part in the deliberative structures and processes of a country, is the development of what Rawls (1993) calls 'conversational restraint', which is linked to tolerance. Teachers have to assist learners to balance autonomy with tolerance, because this will be what is needed in public discourse.

It implies further that, in addition to the formal opportunities in the class for the development of deliberative skills, teachers can use the context of extramural deliberative activities such as clubs and societies to practice deliberation. Enslin et al. (2001:124) interpret Benhabib's "plurality of modes of association" in a deliberative school context to include the informal curriculum that is offered by clubs and societies. There is not one set of rules for deliberation inside of the classroom and another for outside. In fact, the out-of-classroom experiences may provide authentic, substantial contexts for deliberation.

Further, it implies that teachers, through their own conduct, model care in deliberation for learners. This is linked to Rawls's notions of 'conversational restraint' and 'tolerance' that were mentioned in a previous point.

It also implies that teachers act as referee and coach (or facilitator) in settings where deliberation is practiced, using their judgement as practitioners especially in the discussion of sensitive matters. This implies that teachers create opportunities for deliberation in which they will guide or coach learners in reasonability, care and belligerence.

Lastly, it implies that teachers are aware of power relations in deliberation and that they are committed to create opportunities for those who are disadvantaged in deliberation. This links with the emphasis that Young (1997:399) puts on "difference as an index of structural inequalities", the concept of compassionate imagining of Nussbaum (2001) and seeing through the eyes of others (Greene, 1995). This requires of teachers to acknowledge the importance of narrative in education. It requires knowledge of the different narratives within a classroom as well as a sensitivity to pick up those situations where certain narratives are suppressed or marginalised.

This view of teachers in terms of deliberation opens more opportunities than the view associated with OBE because of the same reason that was given above under the heading of critical rationality, i.e. the link of OBE to performativity that can be interpreted as assuming a view of teachers as governable, self-regulating subjects. A pedagogy of compassionate rationality aims to establish conditions that will ensure the teacher's sense of personhood, agency and judgement as a practitioner.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of deliberation for assessment?

Because deliberation is closely related to critical rationality, most of the arguments in terms of the implications for assessment are the same. The implications for continuous assessment (learners assessed for participation in classroom deliberation over the course of the year), formative assessment (linked to opportunities to practice deliberation) and summative assessment (culminating oral assessments, presentations, etc.) are the same as in the case of critical rationality.

In addition, a very significant implication of a commitment to deliberation is that *deliberation about assessment itself* becomes possible. Teachers and learners can plan assessment together

as a *celebration of learning* and not as punishment. This is definitely not an abdication of the judgement and competence of the teacher, as some conservatives would label it. The date, type and format of assessment could all be part of deliberation, taking into account the judgement of the teacher as practitioner. This kind of deliberation about assessment itself can go a long way to rid assessment of a character of punishment, trickery and high stakes. In this deliberation, the judgement of the teacher as practitioner plays an important role.

Further, a commitment to conversational justice would imply fairness and inclusiveness in education. This is a point that is made in the works of Nussbaum (2001), Young (1997), Benhabib (2006) and MacIntyre (1999), which was referred to in the previous chapter. The fairness and inclusiveness that is referred to are not based on a medical model (as is so prevalent nowadays) and cover more than psychological barriers to learning.

The pre-established curricular regime of OBE can be viewed as making deliberation *about* assessment difficult and its tendency towards uniformity can compromise fairness and inclusivity.

Caring and compassion

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of caring and compassionate for the teacher?

Caring and compassion refers to the quality of the relationship between the teacher and his or her learners and his or her community, but also to the relationship between the state as employer (as represented by it representatives) and the individual teacher.

It implies teachers who embody caring and compassion as a starting point. It means that not just anybody can become a teacher. Individuals have to be carefully selected to fulfil this important task in society. What are sought are individuals who are moral role-models for their learners and communities. What are sought are individuals who care about their learners and their colleagues, their communities and their country.

It also implies that teachers have a duty to care for their learners, even for those who are unknown to them. This is in terms of the teacher's role in networks of giving and receiving, according to MacIntyre's (1999) virtue of acknowledged dependence. Because learners are vulnerable during the early stages of their lives, teachers as independent rational thinkers have a duty to give care to them, and to induct them in critical rationality at the same time.

It further implies that teachers have the right to receive care in their own vulnerability. This is in line with MacIntyre's (1999) claim that we are not only vulnerable in childhood and in old age, but at different stages of our lives. Teachers are expected to give care, but sometimes also stand in need of care themselves. Some South African teachers work under trying and difficult working conditions, including threats to life and property. Teachers have a right to receive care from those who are able to give it, including the learners, their parents and the community. When such care is not given, it is symptomatic of the fact that the position of teachers is not valued in such a community. Caring and compassion also speaks to the need for a more developmental approach to teacher support and development from the side of the state. Similarly, when such care and compassion are not forthcoming, it is symptomatic of the fact that the position of teachers is not valued.

It implies that teachers create or utilise authentic opportunities within the classroom or community setting to elicit caring and compassionate responses from learners. Examples of these might be to respond to the call from different relief organisations for donations and volunteers. Such opportunities could be used to educate learners to see through the eyes of others (Greene, 1995) or to teach compassionate imagining (Nussbaum, 2001). Through such experiences learners can learn about the life world of vulnerable groups and find out in which ways they could exhibit care and compassion towards those groups.

It also implies that teachers have to model compassion by creating opportunities for those learners in the class who are disadvantaged in deliberation to come to voice, i.e. allowing space for marginal voices. It implies that teachers should not ignore, or worse, exploit vulnerability in learners. This is related to the duty to care and model care to learners. It further implies that teachers should have the ability to imagine themselves in the situation of the other and that they help learners to develop that ability. The teacher needs to make especially those learners who are dominant in the classroom aware of the situation of others in order for them to see the world through the eyes of the others who are marginalised in deliberation by all kinds of impediments, most of which are not of their own doing. Again this relates to Nussbaum's notion of compassionate imagining and Greene's seeing through the eyes of others. As discussed in the previous section, this will require awareness on the part of the teacher of the different narratives and the power relations (Young, 1997) that are operative within the classroom.

It can be argued that OBE, with its link to an audit regime, control and uniformity is seriously compromised in terms of caring and compassion. A pedagogy of compassionate rationality opens up the possibility of caring and compassion as central to the understanding of teaching and education.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of caring and compassion for assessment?

In general, teachers need to realise that learners are unique, not uniform; and that they deal with personalities, not products. It means differentiated assessment for learners with different abilities; it means seeing a person and not an entity.

It implies multiple assessment opportunities for learners, i.e. that they get more than one chance to show their ability. This is basically a caring and compassionate position against the uncaring nature of once-off, high-stakes examinations, which casts a harsh judgement over learners and their futures. This is also a view that is subscribed to by OBE.

It further implies different assessment strategies for different learning styles. This too is a view that OBE supports. Learners are unique; therefore uniform assessment strategies for all students do not seem fair. Howard Gardner (1993) identified and researched different learning styles and one of his interesting findings is that learners with a learning style that is closest to the teacher's style are advantaged. Of course it implies more work for teachers to provide different assessment strategies for different learning styles of learners, but the gain is an increase in fairness and the display of a caring and compassionate approach towards learners.

Also, the teacher's duty to care must lead to inclusiveness in assessment. The teacher needs to acknowledge differences in abilities, language, culture, religion, nationality, advantage and vulnerability. This too is linked to fairness and the display of a caring and compassionate approach towards learners. Again, the link of this implication is to the ideas of Young (1997), Greene (1998), Nussbaum (2001) and Benhabib (2006).

Further, it implies that teachers will create or recognise situations that could develop caring and compassion in their learners. This was discussed under the implications of caring and compassion for teachers. The main point here is that situations should be created or utilised to assess the development of a caring and compassionate attitude in learners.

OBE makes certain claims that tend towards caring, compassion and inclusivity, e.g. multiple opportunities and accommodation of different learning styles. These should, however, be weighed against the interest of OBE in control and its tendency towards standardisation and uniformity.

Imagination

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of imagination for teachers?

It implies the existence of imaginative teachers, i.e. teachers capable of giving their imagination free reign, capable of taking initiative and who have faith in their own judgement as competent practitioners. This is opposed to government servants waiting for instructions or a manual before taking action. It means that teachers should be well prepared in their teacher training to find those kinds of activities that have a good chance of releasing the imagination of learners. It could imply that, in addition to their specialist subjects, teachers are prepared in a creative elective, possibly one or more of the arts or literature. It could also imply that teachers need to be prepared well in teaching and learning strategies pertaining to their subject. All this will empower teachers to release the imagination of learners and will counteract an overly specialised, technicist and limited view of education.

It also implies that teachers find ways to release the imagination of their learners. Maxine Greene (1995; 1998; 2000) suggests literature and the arts, but individual teachers may find other contextual ways in a given situation. As mentioned in the previous point, this has profound implications for the initial training of teachers. It also means that they will be equipped with learning support materials and that they will be given opportunities to improve their repertoire via in-service training. This training should preferably be conducted by universities because of the presence of many private service providers whose quality of services is not always apparent.

It further implies teachers who realise the importance of narrative in teaching and the potential it has to create communities inspired by a passion for multiplicity and social change (Greene, 1998). The use of narrative, like explained above, could help learners to see the world through the eyes of others.

It implies teachers capable of creating transformative experiences for learners (Greene, 1998). Creative, dramatic learning experiences utilising the arts, literature and narrative have the

potential to leave lasting memories and to change the lives of learners. Many people remember lessons involving certain pieces of literature, books, dramatic presentations, songs, poems, life stories, etc. These were lessons that had a life-changing effect on them because it appealed not only to their cognitive abilities, but also involved their emotive and affective aspects. As a teacher, I always used to think of the front of the classroom as my stage on which I have licence to give performances that should touch the learners in meaningful ways. In those performances I knew I had to employ unconventional and interesting approaches to capture and to keep the interest and attention of my learners. Whether it was successful or not, the learners will be able to tell best.

Lastly, it implies teachers who realise that there are no ends to education. When one educational destination is reached, it leads to and opens up other learning experiences. This openness and the possibility of unexplored routes is what make education so exciting. Any perception of reaching ends or ultimate outcomes is a poor and limiting idea of education.

These implications in terms of imagination could not be realised under OBE as a pre-established, instrumentalist curricular regime that spelt out outcomes in advance. A pedagogy of compassionate rationality has the potential of being an approach to education that encourages and welcomes the imagination of teachers.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of imagination for assessment?

It relates to Maxine Greene's emphasis on literature, the arts and narrative to release the imagination of learners (Greene, 1995; 1998; 2000). Rich possibilities of culminating performances, to which the parents and community can be invited, come to mind. It means that a variety of assessment strategies can be employed, depending on the imagination and judgement of the teacher as practitioner. It also means that learners can experience the world from the view of the 'other' and that they can be deeply moved by this. This is a way of promoting dialogue, tolerance and diversity. Unforgettable experiences that do not only develop learners on a cognitive level, but also on other levels, e.g. emotional and physical, are possible.

It implies that a broad range or wide variety of assessment strategies can be used; and that the choice of teachers is not limited to only tests and examinations. This is also a view that OBE subscribes to. The possibility is created for non-conventional ways of assessing the progress of learners, dependent only on the imagination and judgement of teachers as practitioners, i.e.

assessment strategies should not be prescribed to teachers. The implication here is that teachers need to be trained in a variety of assessment strategies in their pre-service education, continuous professional development and during teacher support sessions conducted by education officials.

It, very importantly, implies possibilities for authentic assessment, e.g. by way of public presentations, possibly with the use of different kinds of media available. This also makes possible the cumulative performances to which parents and the rest of community could be invited that were mentioned above. It allows assessment to become an exuberant celebration of learning, as opposed to the current view of assessment as punishment.

It also implies a possibility for assessment to change lives positively (Greene, 1998). This is because the possibility is created for assessment to have intrinsic, as opposed to extrinsic, rewards. A few years ago, children at the school my daughter attended staged a play that was a contemporary enactment of the fairy tale of the Ugly Duckling; the name of the play was "Honk". The play included powerful messages related to the experiences of the main character as an outsider. It is my belief that the children who were involved in this wonderful play will remember those powerful anti-discrimination messages for the rest of their lives, especially since it was followed up with deep discussions on the issues at stake. It is not something that they have learnt for an examination and that they have forgotten within three weeks. It remains a lesson for life and it will make them sensitive to the plight of others who are regarded as different. Maxine Greene's (1998) discussion of narrative, seeing through the eyes of others, the creation of communities committed to pluralism and life-changing pedagogical experiences are applicable here.

Further it implies the *absence* of pre-packaged lists of knowledge, skills and attitudes, or even outcomes! Surely a broad framework will be needed, but a pedagogy of compassionate rationality has the potential of circumventing the specificity, prescriptiveness and limitation of outcomes that are associated with OBE.

It implies that there is no standardisation of teaching and curriculum. Standardisation leaves no room for imagination; in fact, it can be argued that standardisation kills imagination and innovation. Under a standardised curriculum, local contexts are not respected and there is no place for teachers as unique characters, only as clones of the same boring kind. Standardisation limits education and is conceptually irreconcilable with imagination.

It implies that the judgement of teachers as practitioners must be developed. The view of teachers as unique, competent and confident educational leaders presuppose that these attributes must be developed somewhere. They cannot be assumed to possess these traits innately. This should happen, as referred to earlier, in the pre-service education of teachers, continuous professional development and during teacher support sessions or workshops.

OBE, as a pre-established curricular regime, is not able to realise all of the implications above because it can be seen as limiting the imagination of teachers. A pedagogy of compassionate rationality opens up the possibility of releasing the imagination of teachers in terms of their assessment practices.

Emancipation and hope

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of emancipation and hope for teachers?

It implies teachers that want to claim their integrity, judgement as practitioners and their voice as important role-players in deliberations about education. This does not imply a freedom from responsibility; in fact it is a more responsible position to take compared to being functionaries who execute instructions from above. What they are claiming is freedom from the colonisation of their life world and an improper imposition on their way of life. They are claiming a normalisation of an abnormal situation. Linked to this should be a claim for possibilities of self-development and empowerment, e.g. through university courses.

It means that teachers should model celebration of all aspects of diversity, e.g. race, gender, class, different abilities and sexual orientation. This links back to the works of Greene, Young, Nussbaum and Benhabib that were cited in the previous chapter. Teachers should affirm and respect the life stories and the strivings of the learners and the community they come from. It simply means that the teacher cannot put a class or other barrier between him- or herself and the learners. Teachers must themselves be agents of emancipation from mental and physical structures. In their conduct teachers should be non-racial, non-sexist, sensitive to issues of language and culture, instil hope, open access and critically analyse institutional culture.

Further it implies teachers who are able to articulate and identify factors of bondage. This links with Freire's concept of being able to "read the world" (Freire, 2004:90). In the case of OBE teachers should seek emancipation from limiting aspects such as the painstaking record

keeping and administrative load, the colonisation of their life world, the foreign language in which teaching and education is described, the audit culture and the disempowerment of teachers. They should seek freedom to teach according to their own judgement as practitioners.

It also implies teachers who are able to formulate alternatives that take into account their life world. McLean (2006:9) makes the point that the purpose of social critique in a critical pedagogy approach is to "delineate a more just and free future". This task of formulating alternatives to an oppressive system should not be left up to policy experts alone. Also, the intentions of so-called vanguardists, who speak on behalf of teachers, and who are or were themselves not teachers, should be carefully scrutinised. The warning to teachers is to beware of letting other people speak on their behalf, whether it is the experts or the vanguard! Teachers have an important voice in formulating alternatives to oppressive pedagogies and need to find it.

It implies teachers who are willing to confront education officials bent on control. They should insist on a normalised situation guided by critical rationality and deliberation. Teachers are still responsible for the teaching and learning of their learners, but they need not be subservient. Their authority is based on their classroom experience; the authority of education officials is not authentic.

It further implies teachers who organise their activities so as to prioritise teaching and learning, according to their judgement as practitioners. They should resist the pressure that the audit regime put on them to produce assessment-related documentation that does not directly support teaching and learning. They should also resist the wrong perception of assessment as an exact science (Kraak, 1999) that determines the curriculum, teaching and learning. The teacher should take responsibility for his or her teaching and for the learning of his or her learners, even if it means defying the prescriptions of officials. The responsibility of the teacher towards the learner outweighs the responsibility towards the education officials by far.

It implies teachers who seek opportunities to build hope and advance justice, even within current constraints and especially in partnership with others, e.g. through community-engagement activities. There are those teachers who resign themselves to the negative force of current constraints, but there are those other teachers who look within the constraints for opportunities to build hope and to advance justice. Those teachers and principals who have

analysed and described their factors of bondage carefully and who have formulated alternatives are also capable of formulating strategies to overcome the factors of bondage, even within current constraints. In doing this, their initiatives become islands of hope and a glimpse of what is possible under alternative arrangements.

The hope of progressive teachers is linked to a dream of freedom from an audit culture, of acknowledgement of their integrity and judgement, and of development opportunities to better serve the needs of their learners and community.

OBE, with its link to an audit culture and the construction of governable subjects, has itself come to be seen as a factor of bondage. It has failed to deliver on the emancipatory promise that its proponents have proclaimed in its early days. The pedagogy of compassionate rationality that I present in this dissertation holds the promise of being a liberatory, hopeful pedagogy.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of emancipation and hope for assessment?

Generally, within the context of OBE, it implies a move away from an instrumentalist approach to education that results in an audit culture and the accompanying excessive administrative burden. It still means that we should strive for freedom from examinations as main assessment strategy. It further means that we should question the purposes of current assessment practices since the suspicion is strong among teachers and education scholars that the current assessment regime serves other purposes than reporting on learner progress.

'Emancipation and hope' implies that assessment will have to be thoroughly reconceptualised, away from an instrumentalist approach. It implies a radical move away from outcomes and prescriptive lists of assessment requirements; as well as the resultant excessive administrative burden. Once outcomes are abandoned, the role that assessment plays will become more realistic and hopefully this will also lessen the administrative burden of teachers.

It also implies more freedom for competent teachers to choose the assessment strategies that they deem fit for a particular task. It is recognised that competence and judgement of teachers will have to be developed in a range of interventions, starting with pre-service teacher education.

It implies that deliberation with teachers about assessment will be conducted without the present jargon that is foreign to the life world of teachers. It implies more voice for teachers in terms of assessment; about what works and what does not.

'Hope' for learners in the context of assessment implies more than one chance in assessment and the use of more than one strategy to cater for different learning styles and abilities. It means access and support for all learners. In this way, learners can hope to be treated as unique and not as uniform.

OBE, when seen as itself a factor of bondage, cannot realise the implications above. The pedagogy of compassionate rationality holds the promise to be an alternative, liberatory and hopeful approach to education that is able to realise these implications.

Cosmopolitan justice

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of cosmopolitan justice for teachers?

'Cosmopolitan justice' implies teachers that are welcoming of all cultures and who embody hospitality. Benhabib (2006) presents the duty of hospitality as a right that belongs to all human beings. The teacher as embodiment of cosmopolitan justice is presupposed in the pedagogy of compassionate rationality. Closed and exclusive environments, the likes of which still exist in some places in South Africa, are not conducive to cosmopolitan justice.

It also implies teachers who treat learners as individuals with inalienable rights, irrespective of the origin of the learners. This links back to the idea of Benhabib (2006).

It further implies that teachers have a duty to care and to create opportunities for those voices that are stunted in deliberation. The teacher needs to create opportunities for suppressed voices to be heard. This was discussed more elaborately in the section on care and compassion earlier in this chapter and is related to the works of Young (1997) and Nussbaum (2001).

It implies teachers with a commitment to celebrate all categories of diversity. This point was also discussed in more detail under the section on emancipation and hope above.

It implies teachers who will actively participate in democratic iterations, as described by Benhabib (2006). This requires openness and a seriousness to participate in public

deliberations about education. The view of the teacher as an active participant in public deliberations stands in stark contrast to the view of the teacher as functionary.

It implies teachers who provide opportunities to foster tolerance in the face of xenophobia, racism, religious intolerance and cultural insensitivity. Examples of such opportunities could be exchange arrangements and exposure of learners to different narratives. Again, the link of this implication is to the ideas of Young (1997), Greene (1998) and Nussbaum (2001).

OBE does not allow for *all* the implications above, especially not for the participation of teachers in democratic iterations, but should be able to accommodate *most*, if we take a charitable stance and classify it as a minimalist version of critical pedagogy.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of cosmopolitan justice for assessment?

It implies portability for learners of different countries, the articulation of courses and qualifications in different countries and ultimately formal agreements in terms of assessment and qualifications between institutions and countries. It could be that, with increased regional and global cooperation and migration, international regimes could develop in this instance, as part of what Benhabib (2006:27) calls the "international human rights regime".

It implies exchanges of learners and teachers between different countries, e.g. at Stellenbosch University, where a host of agreements with international education institutions are in place. These agreements govern the exchange of students and staff.

It further implies inclusive assessment strategies, taking into account various grounds of difference. The teacher's duty to care must lead to inclusiveness in assessment, i.e. acknowledge differences in abilities, language, culture, religion, nationality, advantage and vulnerability. This is also linked to fairness in assessment. It links back to the ideas of Young (1997), Greene (1998) and Nussbaum (2001) that were discussed in the previous chapter.

OBE, viewed as a minimalist version of critical pedagogy, would to be able to accommodate all the above implications.

Non-instrumentalism

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of non-instrumentalism for teachers?

It implies that teachers realise that education is more than just preparation for work. Those kinds of teachers know that there are no ends to education, that education has an intrinsic value of its own and that it cannot be narrowly described in terms of outcomes (cf. Peters, 1967; Morrow, 1999; Waghid, 2003). Education need not be pressed in service of other practices. Teachers might require a broad framework, but not a list of outcomes to attain and to teach towards in a mechanistic and instrumental way. It also means that trust is put in the judgement of the teacher as practitioner. Of course this judgement needs to be cultivated in solid teacher training, continuous professional development and developmental support from education officials. It also means that the teacher cannot understand his or her work as just a job. He or she should understand it at least as "a way of life" (Hogan, 2004:20), if not a calling or vocation. It means freedom for teachers to pursue learning with their learners, also in unexpected directions. Ultimately, it implies the acknowledgement of the judgement of teachers as professionals.

It further implies that space is created for teachers to release their imagination in performing their occupation. Besides the opening up of space for the imagination of teachers, space is also opened up for all those elements that fell victim to the outcomes-based discourse that were identified by Solway (1999) and Waghid (2003): chance, serendipity, the emergence of unforeseen ideas, possibility, surprise, emergence, intuition, epistemic flexibility and the spirit of play. This is a much, much richer account of education than the narrow, self-admitted instrumentalism of OBE.

What are the implications of the constitutive meaning of non-instrumentalism for assessment?

It implies the *absence of narrowly defined outcomes* and the associated excessive administrative burden. There will be no lists of competencies because of a realisation that it is simply impossible to prescribe educational outcomes in minute detail because of different circumstances and general unpredictability within a given context. In a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, as a non-instrumental justification for education, there can be no ends to education; the attainment of given outcomes leads to others and yet others. Such a pedagogy rejects the invasion of the life world of teachers and realises that a language other than an industrial or business language is applicable in the educational sphere. It therefore

implies that education needs to be organised dramatically differently, away from outcomes, an audit regime and an instrumentalist approach to education.

It implies that there will be more scope for education officials to provide more developmental support to teachers once their role as overseers of the audit regime comes to an end. It further implies that when the roles of teachers and education officials become different, there is a chance that the relationship between these two parties can become different too: hopefully in the direction of caring and compassion.

It also implies the opening up of space for creativity, imagination and judgement to be exercised by teachers. The teacher has the freedom to choose whatever teaching strategy he or she thinks is appropriate, according to his or her judgement as a practitioner.

Lastly, it implies very importantly that *assessment will no longer drive the curriculum*. For long the adage remained with us that what cannot be measured accurately is not worth teaching or learning. This dominance of assessment over curriculum is improper. In a pedagogy of compassionate rationality the space is created to include in curricula what is important, irrespective of whether it can be measured accurately or not. Space is opened up for an educational dispensation in which the tail (assessment) shall no longer wag the dog (curriculum).

Section III: Conclusion

In summary it can be argued that a pedagogy of compassionate rationality represents a way to see education differently from the "pre-established curricular regime" (Solway, 1999:59) of OBE, in which learning outcomes are spelt out in detail in advance and in specific behavioural terms. It also provides a way to avoid the instrumentalism and technicism of OBE. As a non-instrumental justification for education, this alternative view of education opens up the possibility for the judgement of teachers as practitioners to be recognised and respected. It creates the possibility for respect for teaching as a practice and for its practitioners as important participants in matters concerning teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment. It lessens the emphasis on control and creates opportunities for genuine teacher development and support. It presupposes a different view of teachers, not as functionaries, subordinates and self-regulating underlings that are accountable to an external audit regime (as under OBE), but as practitioners with the capacity of own judgement.

Also, a pedagogy of compassionate rationality offers an extremely rich account of education. It is non-instrumental in nature and allows room for those elements that Solway (1999) and Waghid (2003) accused OBE of not accommodating: chance, serendipity, the emergence of unforeseen ideas, possibility, surprise, emergence, intuition, interpretation, epistemic flexibility, the spirit of play, rational reflection and imagination.

Because a pedagogy of compassionate rationality makes possible an abandonment of and emancipation from the 'pre-established curricular regime' of OBE, the *major implication* for assessment is that the powerful, internal link between outcomes and assessment is no more applicable in terms of this alternative view of education. Because of this, the focus on assessment also recedes correspondingly. Very importantly, it becomes possible that the administrative workload of teachers that is caused by outcomes-based assessment will be reduced considerably.

It is important to note that a curriculum framework will still be needed, but that it would not necessarily have to be outcomes-based. Assessment would still be important, but not as the kind of "pedagogical fetish" (Solway, 1999:61) or "exact science" (Kraak, 1999:50) that it is now regarded as. I still maintain that it is important for teachers to be trained in the use of various assessment strategies and to develop a repertoire that they would be able to use according to their judgement as practitioners and not only to satisfy requirements emanating from elsewhere. A pedagogy of compassionate rationality paves the way for a new focus on teaching, learning and curriculum, i.e. it has the potential to reverse the diminution of those three aspects under OBE, without neglecting assessment. In other words, a more balanced relationship between teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment becomes possible. Assessment can be rid of the character of an independent, performative technology and become integral to the teaching and learning process.

'Assessment *for* learning' and 'assessment *as* learning' would be able to realise its full promise and potential, without being constrained by pre-specified outcomes. The outcomes would not be there to unquestioningly limit the scope of what it is that learners should learn and self-assessment would be rid of the stigma of self-regulation that accompanies it under OBE. Improvement in learning would not have to be expressed only in terms of better test scores, as Black and William (1998), leading exponents of assessment *for* learning, seem to be doing currently. Deep learning and rich assessment practices, also called authentic

assessment by some, become a possibility. Teachers and others will be able to reflect critically on the purposes for which assessment is to be used.

OBE took over the focus on learner-centredness of People's Education. Elements of non-discrimination such as multiple assessment opportunities, inclusive education and accommodation of different learning styles are features of OBE. I have argued earlier that although OBE espouses these elements, they are compromised under OBE because of the stipulation of outcomes in advance. In a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, learner-centredness can potentially come to its right, without the constraint of pre-established outcomes.

These implications of the constitutive meanings of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, as described and summarised above, are profound and imply a deep-going realignment of the South African education system, should this view of education be espoused.

From the above it should be clear that the expectations that a pedagogy of compassionate rationality place on teachers are extremely high. It is important to realise that teachers will not become these super human beings out of nothing, i.e. that they cannot be assumed as innately having these desired capabilities. There is a societal duty to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, by providing good and solid teacher education, continuous professional development opportunities and developmental teacher support. This is crucial for a pedagogy of compassionate rationality to have any chance of success.

In terms of assessment, I need to acknowledge that there are already promising signs of some of these implications within individual subject areas, most notably for me in the case of History, but by and large the dominance of a technicist approach to OBE and the hold that teaching canonised contents has on the education system are not conducive to the development of such approaches on a wider scale. Nothing less than a break with the instrumentalist and technicist pedagogy of OBE is necessary to begin to dream anew about education in our country.

This is my wish for education in South Africa: that, as a free people, we could shake off the shackles of a conservative management theory (OBE) that masquerades as an emancipatory pedagogy, but that keeps our teachers and learners, and ultimately our country, in bondage.

This is the hope I have: a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, characterised by the constitutive meanings that I have described in the previous chapter, and with the implications for teachers and assessment that I have described in this chapter. I think it is a fair and good description of education and a reasonable expectation of a free people. I offer this vision in the spirit of charitable deliberation and invite others to take issue with my argument.

CHAPTER 7
OTHER POTENTIAL CRITIQUES

Section I: Introduction

During the course of my argument in this dissertation, I have already anticipated some potential critiques, e.g. in Chapter 1 the charge of self-indulgence and narcissism with respect to the narrative and critiques related to methodology, and in Chapter 5 the critique of invoking a new grand narrative. In this last chapter I want to anticipate some additional critiques that may be levelled against this dissertation and briefly respond to them.

Before I continue with the additional potential critiques against my argument in this dissertation, I want to state that I present this dissertation *in full knowledge and in spite of* the current dominance of the outcomes-based discourse in the educational sphere in South Africa. I also present it as an insider who was deeply involved in the implementation of OBE and who has witnessed its problems and failures.

I further present this dissertation in full knowledge of the global dominance of the market economy at the current juncture; also, in full knowledge of the dominance of an instrumental understanding of education as standing in service of the market.

Mine is a voice in the educational debate in South Africa emanating from the previously disadvantaged community, which in many ways is still disadvantaged because of the lack of opportunities to let its voice be heard or because of the vocabulary that is used. It is this sector of the South African population that I argue is most negatively affected by the consequences of the implementation of OBE in South Africa.

Finally, but importantly, I present this dissertation not only as a criticism of OBE, but also in the hope that an alternative view of education in South Africa is possible that will allow us to transcend the negative implications of OBE and outcomes-based assessment that is starting to show. My contribution to such an alternative view is described in the previous two chapters as a pedagogy of compassionate rationality.

I now discuss five other potential critiques against my argument in this dissertation and then provide a brief conclusion.

Section II: Potential critiques

Critique relating to 'unpractical romanticism, idealism and irrelevance in the face of the demands of the global economy'

After reading my argument in this dissertation, a critical interlocutor might accuse me of unpractical romanticism or idealism in the face of the demands of the global economy. Such a person might posit that there needs to be a strong link between education and the economy and that presenting such a link as instrumentalist is unfortunate. He or she might find talk of the 'intrinsic value of education' as a luxury or as irrelevant at a time when South Africa is losing out to other international competitors in terms of an appropriately qualified work force. He or she might argue that education is important to help South Africa be internationally competitive and to produce the human resources that are required by the local economy. He or she might also find the criticism of the collapse of education and training as irrelevant since we need all kinds of human resources for the labour market. He or she might argue that given the current global economic situation one needs to be flexible, practical and pragmatic; one should not be seen to be too strong on principle.

Firstly, in response to such critique, I reiterate Jansen's (1999) argument that in 80 years of curriculum renewal and restructuring, no significant proof was found of the much talked about linkage between the education system of a country and its economy. Such supposed linkage is the basis from which the critical interlocutor speaks; when this basis is in doubt, the whole argument for the insistence on education for the market collapses.

Secondly, I wish to address the charge of irrelevance. At the beginning of this dissertation I cited Burbules and Warnick's (2003) statement that philosophy as an area of inquiry is a method of generating knowledge and perspective. The generation of perspective helps us to provide answers to the "why" questions that underlie the practice of education. Burbules and Warnick argue as follows:

> If philosophy cannot give adequate answers to this challenge, then it deserves to be marginalized; but by the same token, if leaders and policymakers in the field of education no longer recognize the value of such understandings, then the problem is not with philosophy, but with the audience. Socrates showed us long ago that the philosopher is almost always faced with a reluctant audience; and the more 'counterhegemonic' philosophy tries to be (to use a more recently coined term), the

greater will be the pressures to ignore it or trivialize it as 'irrelevant' – because to be 'relevant' under certain circumstances would mean to abandon the responsibility of being independent and critical. Yet that is often precisely what we need philosophy for. (Burbules & Warnick 2003:20)

I reserve the right and responsibility for myself and others to ask the "why" questions, to be critical and independent thinkers, even if it involves the risk of being labelled 'irrelevant'. This is a choice that I believe is by far morally superior to the role of unthinking functionaries.

Thirdly, I want to argue that to talk about 'the market' or 'the global economy'" as mysterious, reified forces is misleading since the perfect market, i.e. unbridled capitalism, marked by the interaction between supply and demand without any intervention, is a myth. Examples of this are the multimillion rescue packages that were offered in recent months (2009) by many Western governments to private banking groups to help them to survive the effects of the worldwide recession. There is nothing mysterious about 'the market'; In the end what happens are the consequences of human choices, whether by governments, businesses or private individuals. My argument here is that there is no mysterious force called 'the market'" or 'the global economy' that we must satisfy or appease by our decisions about arrangements in the educational sphere. These are mere pseudonyms for forces such as domination, power and hegemony that tend to coerce governments and whole countries into certain economic choices.

Fourthly, if we are genuinely concerned about the quality of the 'human resources' of the country, I want to argue that people who are educated in a broad sense, as opposed to the idiot-specialists that could potentially result from OBE, are in a better position to deal with problems and to find creative solutions to those. This kind of citizen, i.e. a critical, rational, tolerant agent, would be a true asset for the economy as well as for political democracy. The imposition of an economistic and managerialist model on education is simply inappropriate and is leading to an impoverished version of education.

Critique relating to 'mourning and nostalgia'

A critical interlocutor might accuse me of mourning after some kind of romanticised past dispensation in education in South Africa, of glorifying it and of suffering of nostalgia.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) state that some people respond to change by

> … retreating to comfortable memories of the past. They long to return to schools with simple curricula and singular values as they remembered them thirty years or more ago. They are drawn to lost golden ages, to myths and illusions of ill-remembered pasts (Hargreaves, 1994). Nostalgia, it is worth noting, was originally regarded as an illness. The solutions it offers are unworkable with the diverse communities of today. (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998:23–24)

Especially the account of my own teachers during the time of apartheid might be a target. Were they really so good? Am I offering a very selective view? Am I yearning after some golden age that has now passed? Am I yearning after People's Education or even Apartheid Education? Am I simply proposing that we go back to a previous educational dispensation to solve the problems of the current one?

To immediately assume that being critical of the current educational dispensation is equal to being in favour of a past dispensation is simplistic thinking. This is also the area of political correctness and of bringing independent thinkers into disrepute for not supporting the official line. Similarly, to say that everything that has happened during the apartheid era in South Africa is bad is also simplistic thinking, because then we will be dismissing among other things all the very creative work teachers did to undermine Apartheid Education as well as all the hard-fought education battles.

What I am arguing against is the blatant disrespect of the life world of teachers, the wholesale import of a new language to substitute the language that they have used to describe and to understand their life world, a major colonisation of the life world of teachers and the undermining of their judgement as practitioners by an audit regime. This is what my argument is against. I am appealing for respect for the life world of teachers and for the practice of teaching. It could be argued that what the outcomes-based discourse has done is to colonise the life world of teachers and to make them subservient to an external audit regime. If so, this must be reversed; it is an improper imposition on teachers; it is as improper an imposition as Apartheid Education was. It is in this sense that I appeal for respect for the life world and judgement of teachers as practitioners; if this is taken to be mourning or nostalgia it is mistaken.

Also, I am not yearning after Apartheid Education; such an accusation will most probably be the argument of the political apologist for OBE. I will concede that I feel betrayed by the fact that the language of People's Education was used to describe the outcomes-based system, but I will not even concede to be yearning after People's Education, since I have described it as an incomplete project with different meanings to different people, although it was one of the most organised movements against Apartheid Education. My basic complaint is that it is improper to dress up a conservative management theory as a progressive pedagogy. This is far from nostalgia and mourning; this is a charge of dishonesty, deception and categorical misplacement against the proponents of OBE, who should by now have gained a good idea of the serious, detrimental effect of this approach to education in our country.

Were my own teachers as good as I have described? This is not a view that is held by me alone, but that is shared by many others who attended school with me, some of whom turned out to be medical doctors, dentists, professors and other professionals. But the interlocutor might argue that we could all be mistaken!

Am I mourning after a golden age that has now passed? Is my account of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality a backward notion? I do not think so, but the reader should judge for him- or herself from the descriptions given in chapters 5 and 6. Far from merely proposing a return to a previous dispensation, what I am proposing is hopefully a reasonable and progressive alternative to avoid the predicaments caused by OBE and outcomes-based assessment. In a sense it correlates with the notion of 'return' in Smeyers et al.'s work (2007) and, as they describe it: not as a return to a place of rest, but to the ordinary, that is troubled from time to time.

Critique relating to 'high expectations of teachers' and 'lack of accountability'

A critical interlocutor might want to argue that the expectation that I put on teachers in my account of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality are too high, especially when looking at the implications for teachers in Chapter 6. He or she might argue that too much emphasis is put on the judgement of teachers as practitioners and that the attributes that I expect of teachers in my pedagogy of compassionate rationality are wishful thinking, especially in South Africa where we have huge gaps in terms of teacher education. He or she might also argue that too much emphasis is put on teachers' judgement, but that it is not matched by appropriate accountability or responsibility measures.

My response to this would be that it is right to have high expectations of our teachers. They are agents of democracy because they are responsible for the education of future citizens. Not just anybody can be allowed to be a teacher. High expectations will help to give a higher profile to a practice whose profile has been eroded seriously in recent years. It will also emphasise the importance that South African society is attaching to the task of teachers as agents and guarantors of our democracy.

But I am not oblivious to the historical backlogs with respect to teacher education. As argued on more than one occasion earlier, we cannot expect teachers to innately possess the attributes that are expected of them in terms of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality. To be those professionals that society wants them to be, there is a need for extensive development of teachers in South Africa. This is a great need and should be addressed urgently. *The capacity of teachers needs to be built, especially in terms of their subject knowledge, teaching and learning strategies as well as assessment strategies.* This is an absolute priority. I would prefer that this is done through formal university programmes because of the track record of universities in terms of quality. I am not sure of the quality of the offerings of the proliferation of private providers who secure big government tenders for education and training.

The teacher ultimately remains responsible and accountable for the teaching and learning that is achieved in his or her classroom, but as a practitioner whose judgement is accepted and respected, not as a subject who reports in a minute way for each learner against each outcome as envisaged by OBE. Appropriate accountability and responsibility mechanisms need to be negotiated and deliberated with teachers and their representative organisations.

Critique relating to 'jumping on the bandwagon of negative responses to outcomes-based education'

A critical interlocutor might want to say that it is now open season for critics of OBE after recent public calls for OBE to be reviewed, most notably by the renowned South African educationist and former rector and vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Dr Mampela Ramphele. In a recent scathing attack on OBE (reported in most major South African newspapers around 14 October 2008), Dr Ramphele controversially concluded that she was better off as a child under Bantu Education than what children are today under OBE. Ms Wendy Luhabe, one of the most prominent business leaders in the country, supported her in this opinion. Also, a discussion document, that is critical of OBE, is purportedly doing the

rounds among members of the ruling party. The critical interlocutor might accuse me of conveniently jumping onto the bandwagon of negative responses to OBE.

In my own defence I could argue that the writing of this dissertation was started long before the current criticisms of OBE, as far back as 2004. It came about as a result of my work in the education department and was born out of a deep concern that outcomes-based assessment presents a profound predicament to teaching and out of the desire to find some way of dealing with this predicament.

Of course I feel affirmed and vindicated by the current criticisms, especially if they emanate from prominent educationists, who are not afraid of voicing their concerns with the current approach to education.

But beyond criticising, I want to be part of the solution. Together with critique in a critical pedagogical approach goes the hope of a freer and just dispensation. Far from merely wanting to criticise, I want to offer the hope of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality, the outlines of which I have drawn in Chapters 5 and 6.

Personal accusation: "You must also bear some of the blame"

Casting the theoretical concerns aside, some critical interlocutor might ultimately want to level a direct, blunt personal accusation at me: "You were part and parcel of the implementation of OBE! You have conducted hundreds of training sessions and have praised the virtues of the new system. You were an education official who was deeply involved in the implementation of OBE and outcomes-based assessment. You must also bear some of the blame for the failure of the system".

To such an accusation I would acknowledge my involvement in implementing this new approach to education in South Africa as an official in the education department. I resigned from my position in the education department once it became clear to me what kind of implications were to follow from the implementation of OBE, i.e. I took a principled decision to distance myself from the department, because if I were to stay, I would have had to advance a cause in which I no longer believed. That would have been disastrous and dishonest. I struggled with my knowledge that the system was fundamentally flawed and towards the end often joked with a valued colleague of mine that I was going to work myself

out of a job because of my critical stance. I felt I could trust him with this knowledge because he was a sensitive, caring and creative person who would understand my difficult position.

Initially, I was caught up in the euphoria of the new system. I honestly thought that this was the alternative to Apartheid Education that we were waiting for, also because it was couched in the language of People's Education. As time progressed, I felt more and more confused, disappointed, and ultimately betrayed. My situation could be likened to that of people waiting on a Messiah, who at some point see in someone the characteristics of the Messiah, but as time goes on, realise that they have been wrong; the 'Messiah' was false. Feelings of confusion, disappointment and betrayal follow naturally because you have invested so much of yourself in the messianic belief.

My doubts with OBE began in earnest when I read an article in 2000 called "Scripture and practices" by Professor Wally Morrow, which was prepared for a WCED conference called "Making OBE work?" that was held at Kromme Rhee, Stellenbosch on 13 to 15 December 1999. I was not among the guests who were invited to attend the conference, but was happy to receive the conference proceedings well into the year 2000. Up to then I was exposed to the teaching on OBE that was conducted by some of my senior colleagues who have attended national workshops and who had the task to cascade the workshops onto our level. These cascade workshops were never characterised by academic rigour, rather by training and induction into a new way of doing, and were presented in a spirit that Morrow would call 'scripture'. From the pages of the Kromme Rhee conference proceedings, I heard my academic mentor, the promoter of my master's thesis, speaking to me about the conceptual hazards that are associated with OBE. In his usual provocative, challenging and lucid manner, he unflinchingly switched on the hazard lights in a room packed with OBE evangelists. In the years that followed his warning was constantly at the back of my mind: "The point about conceptual difficulties is that if we ignore them they will come back further along the path to haunt us" (Morrow, 1999:22).

Those conceptual difficulties eventually caught up with me as I was dealing with OBE and outcomes-based assessment, but the OBE evangelical voices drowned it out at times. In addition, I was working under managers in the WCED whose behaviour and actions I experienced as abrasive, harsh and combative. By the end of the first term of 2004, facing the milestone of 20 years in education and asking myself about the sense of what I am doing, it became too difficult for me and I resigned from my position as Senior Curriculum Planner:

GET Assessment to take up a post at Stellenbosch University, from which vantage point I could reflect more clearly on this disaster called OBE and its understanding of assessment that has struck our country, and from where I could start writing this reflective dissertation.

I unconditionally accept all reasonable blame for my involvement in this disaster. I admit that I was wrong. I have made a commitment to OBE and in the process ran the risk of error. I have afterwards reflected on my choice and have realised that it was an error. I have reflected on why I have made this error and how I could change to avoid repeating such error in the future. I am accepting my own fallibilism", as described by Burbules (2005).

As a result of my reflection, and as a response to the predicament caused by OBE and outcomes-based assessment, I have formulated my account of a pedagogy of compassionate rationality as an honest contribution towards addressing the disaster. I have never stopped being a teacher and will always be highly interested in matters of education, schooling and teaching in this country. In whatever I do I am always inspired by the motto of the first teachers' body that I belonged to: Let us live for our children!

Section III: Conclusion

Above I have spelt out what I think additional critiques against my argument could be. There might be other illuminating critiques that I am not anticipating right now. I offer this dissertation in the spirit of reasonable, charitable deliberation.

My aim in this dissertation was never to posit absolute 'truth' as the aim of my inquiry. Nothing "can take precedence over the result of agreement freely reached by members of a democratic community" (Rorty, 1999:237). I have formulated an alternative view of education in the belief that it could contribute to a better dispensation for teachers and the practice of teaching. If there are others who have other views to offer in terms of teachers, assessment and OBE, my hope is for the deliberations to continue.

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