TEACHER LEARNING DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am 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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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to explore affordances and constraints to teacher learning as workplace learning during a time of change as initiated by the Index for Inclusion process. In particular the study investigated features on the macro-social and macro-educational level that impact on teacher learning in the workplace and the affordances and constraints to teacher learning that could be identified on the institutional-community plane as the pivotal plane of analysis for this study. It also explored features on the personal plane that impact teacher learning in the workplace. The theoretical framework of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) provided a broad platform from which to engage with the study. In particular, the work of Engeström, as a contemporary contributor in the field of CHAT, informed this study. The investigation into teacher learning in the workplace during a time of change was designed as a critical ethnographic study and was conducted in a primary school in a disadvantaged community in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. A qualitative methodology was employed. The study allowed for a critical in-depth analysis of affordances and constraints to teacher learning in the workplace by making use of an abductive process of data analysis and presentation, which implies a movement between an inductive and deductive process of knowledge creation.

The data was presented in broad themes, an ethnographic narrative using the triangular structure of activity as developed by Engeström, and in pen sketches depicting the learning trajectories of two teachers. The data revealed that the Index for Inclusion employed as tool of change in this study did indeed allow for teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace. It raised awareness of inclusive education, contributed to a shared language for inclusion in the school and created the platform for teachers to engage with own attitudes and practices in a safe and supportive environment. Certain teachers attested to significant learning gains. However, the study also highlighted how a school could act as a restrictive environment for teacher learning and the complex processes involved in changing such an environment to become more expansive in support of teacher learning for inclusion. Several factors acted as severe constraints to teacher learning. On the macro-social level, poverty and the consequences of apartheid in South Africa acted as significant constraints to expansive teacher learning. With regard to the macro-educational level, teachers struggled with innovation overload and the absence of meaningful training and support for change that negatively affected their morale, motivation and self-efficacy. On the institutional level the leadership approach in the school proved particularly detrimental to expansive teacher learning. Teacher cognition, attitude and emotion also constrained their own engagement with the learning opportunity afforded by the Index for Inclusion process in the school. The students were not allowed a platform for their voices to be heard. Furthermore, neither their parents nor the community was invited into collaborative partnerships with the staff. On the personal level the study engaged with the possibility that individual teachers could gradually bring the necessary changes into the school on the grounds of their own positive learning experience through the Index for Inclusion process. The hope for change in the school was thus embodied in individual teachers' agency, energy and incentive to work towards sustaining the progress that had been made by means of the Index for Inclusion process in the school.

Keywords: teacher learning, workplace learning, inclusive education, Index for Inclusion, cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT).

OPSOMMING

Die studie is ontwerp om ondersoek in te stel na die eienskappe van ŉ skoolomgewing wat onderwyser-leer in die werkplek moontlik maak in ŉ tyd van verandering soos deur die Index for Inclusion-proses geïnisieer, asook na die beperkinge binne dié omgewing (Engels: 'affordances and constraints'). Daar is in die besonder ondersoek ingestel na die eienskappe op die makro-sosiale en makro-onderwysvlak wat onderwyser-leer in die werkplek beïnvloed, na die geleenthede en beperkinge vir onderwyser-leer wat op die institusioneel-gemeenskapsvlak as die kritieke vlak van analise vir hierdie studie geïdentifiseer kon word, asook na eienskappe op die persoonlike vlak wat ŉ invloed het op onderwyser-leer in die werkplek. Die teoretiese raamwerk van die kultureel-historiese aktiwiteitsteorie (Engels: 'cultural-historical activity theory' oftewel CHAT) het ŉ breë platform gebied vanwaar daar met die studie omgegaan kon word. Die werk van Engeström, as ŉ kontemporêre bydraer op die gebied van CHAT, het veral die studie gerig. Die ondersoek na onderwyser-leer in die werkplek in ŉ tyd van verandering is as ŉ kritiese etnografiese studie ontwerp en is in ŉ laerskool in ŉ benadeelde gemeenskap in die Wes-Kaap Provinsie van Suid-Afrika uitgevoer. 'n Kwalitatiewe metodologie is gebruik. ŉ Kritiese diepte-ontleding is gedoen van geleenthede en beperkinge vir onderwyser-leer in die werkplek deur ŉ abduktiewe proses van data-analise en -aanbieding, wat ŉ beweging tussen ŉ induktiewe en deduktiewe proses van kennisskepping impliseer.

Die data is op drieërlei wyse aangebied: in breë temas en patrone; as ŉ etnografiese narratief wat Engeström se driehoekstruktuur van aktiwiteit gebruik; en in die vorm van pensketse wat die leertrajekte van twee onderwysers uitbeeld. Die data het aangetoon dat die Index for Inclusion wat as instrument vir verandering in hierdie studie aangewend is, wel onderwyser-leer vir insluiting in die werkplek tot gevolg gehad het. Dit het ŉ bewustheid rakende inklusiewe onderwys verhoog, die onderwysers is blootgestel aan die terminologie van inklusiewe onderwys en ŉ veilige en ondersteunende omgewing is geskep waarin onderwysers aandag kon gee aan hulle eie gesindhede en praktyke. Sekere onderwysers het van betekenisvolle leerwinste getuig. Die studie het egter ook duidelik gewys hoe ŉ skool ŉ beperkende omgewing kan wees vir onderwyser-leer en vir die komplekse prosesse wat betrokke is by die verandering van so ŉ omgewing om dit meer omvattend te laat word ter ondersteuning van onderwyser-leer vir insluiting. Verskeie faktore het onderwyser-leer erg beperk. Op die makro-sosiale vlak het armoede en die gevolge van apartheid in Suid-Afrika die onderwyser-leer beduidend beperk. Op die makro-onderwysvlak het onderwysers weens innovasie-oorlading probleme ervaar. Die afwesigheid van betekenisvolle opleiding en ondersteuning vir verandering het ook ŉ negatiewe uitwerking op hul moraal, motivering en selfwerksaamheid gehad. Op die institusionele vlak het die leierskapsbenadering besonder nadelig geblyk te wees vir uitgebreide onderwyser-leer. Onderwyserkognisie, -houding en -emosie het ook daartoe bygedra om hul eie betrokkenheid by die leergeleentheid wat deur die Index for Inclusion-proses gebied is, te beperk. Die studente is nie ŉ ruimte toegelaat waar hulle stemme gehoor kon word nie en nóg hul ouers nóg die gemeenskap is uitgenooi om deel te hê aan kollaboratiewe vennootskappe met die personeel. Op persoonlike vlak het die studie die moontlikheid ondersoek dat individuele onderwysers op grond van hul eie positiewe leerervaring tydens die Index for Inclusion-proses geleidelik die nodige veranderinge in die skool invoer. Deur individuele onderwysers se toedoen, energie en aansporing bly die hoop bestaan dat die goeie werk wat deur die Index for Inclusion-proses in die skool bereik is, volhou sal word.

Sleutelwoorde: onderwyser-leer, leer in die werksplek, inklusiewe onderwys, ‘Index for Inclusion’, kultureel-historiese aktiwiteitsteorie.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE INQUIRY

1.1 MOTIVATING THE STUDY

This inquiry explored the complex issue of teacher learning when facilitating a process of systemic change for the implementation of inclusive education in a previously disadvantaged primary school in the Western Cape Province of South Africa (henceforth referred to as the Western Cape). It was essentially concerned with the way teachers learn to transform their work and aimed to explore “the relationship between learning and the social contexts afforded by formal organizations” (Ogawa, Crain, Loomis & Ball, 2008:83).

Inclusive education is a highly visible yet contentious notion in contemporary education reform, both internationally and locally (Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn & Christensen, 2006). One framework developed specifically for facilitating the implementation of inclusive education in schools is the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), which presents education as a process of change in the cultures, policies and practices of schools to ensure quality education for *all* students. This framework has been employed extensively in many countries for this purpose. This study focused on teacher learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion in a primary school.

At the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education in Spain in 1994 inclusive education was adopted as a global strategy for addressing the learning needs of all disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded learner groups. UNESCO views inclusive education as the fundamental way of realising the vision of Education for All (EFA), whose primary principle is that all children should have the opportunity to learn. Inclusive education extends this principle in emphasising that all children should learn *together* despite diverse learner needs (Peters, Johnstone & Ferguson, 2005). Inclusive education wants to ensure that the Education for All movement is truly concerned with *all* students (Booth & Black-Hawkins, 2005).

The Salamanca Statement in 1994 emphasised that the focus was not to be on fitting the learner into the school system, but on critiquing and changing the system itself or its relationship to social justice and equity in an attempt to accommodate the unique and diverse learning needs of all students (Ainscow, 2004). Inclusive education requires a system-wide approach dedicated to making schools accessible and amenable to the learning of all students: “In the final analysis, policy and practice in inclusive education require a focus on an enabling and nurturing environment that supports the learner, rather than on a learner who must fit into an exclusionary environment” (Peters *et al.,* 2005:157).

Underlying the inclusion movement in education is the acknowledgement that learner diversity is a given and that education systems should thus find meaningful ways of responding to this diversity (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000).

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) shifts the focus to the mainstream school and the mainstream teacher. The mainstream school is indicated as the first site of placement for all students and thus becomes the site for transformation to accommodate diverse learning needs. Up until the early 1990s the majority of education systems were mostly based on segregationist principles. It is therefore inevitable that mainstream schools and other significant role-players will find it difficult to implement inclusive education, especially due to the extensive and significant changes required from them and the dilemmas that will need to be resolved (cf. Dyson, 2000).

Nineteen ninety four was likewise a ground-breaking year for the education system in South Africa as far-reaching policy changes reflective of the government's desire to restructure and transform a divided, fragmented, discriminatory and authoritarian education system to a more democratic, open, flexible and inclusive system were initiated (Sayed, 1998; Welton, 2001). Since the election of the new democratic government in 1994, the new constitution (RSA, 1996a) has foregrounded the principles of democracy, equality, non-discrimination and a respect for the rights of all. The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996c) adheres to the principles of the constitution and emphasises every person's right to basic education and equal access to educational institutions. The South African Schools Act, together with the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995), has provided a comprehensive framework for transforming a fragmented education system into a single and non-discriminatory national education system that will meet the needs of all students. As a more recent and important part of the process of transformation to a more democratic and inclusive education system in South Africa, the South African Ministry of Education released *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education – Building an inclusive education and training system* in July 2001. Education White Paper 6 of 2001 outlines what an inclusive education and training system is and how it should be established in South Africa (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006). Since an inclusive education system is consistent with the principles underlying the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, it is regarded as the educational strategy most likely to contribute to a democratic, caring, humane and egalitarian society for all its citizens. Within an inclusive education system, respect for diversity and the valuing of diversity are active values and all members have the opportunity for full participation and the fulfillment of potential (Engelbrecht, 1999).

According to the Education White Paper 6 of 2001 inclusive education is about maximising the participation of all students in the cultures and curricula of educational institutions and the subsequent minimising of barriers to learning and development. This can only be achieved by changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula, school environments and the system as a whole. But 10 years after the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the establishment of a democratic government in South Africa the implementation of inclusive education remains a considerable challenge (Engelbrecht, 2006; Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007).

In South Africa the transformation of mainstream schools to inclusive schools involves a radical rewriting of the meaning of school and community, implying a steep learning curve for school communities and teachers. Slee (2004) argues that the main challenge is to establish an awareness that inclusive education is about educational reconstruction, school reform and social change. High-quality education for all students calls for fundamental changes in the roles and responsibilities of all the role-players in the inclusive school. Inclusive schools are presented as flexible communities grounded in democratic principles and constructs of social justice embodying, the concepts of "community, collaboration, democracy and diversity" (Sands, Kozleski & French, 2000:5). An inclusive school will thus present the antithesis of the traditional hierarchical, authority-based school model favoured by the education system in South Africa during the apartheid era and emphasise a sense of belonging and active and meaningful participation for both teachers and students.

Finding a suitable framework for the development of inclusive schools in South Africa in line with the principles and guidelines as propagated in Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001) has been difficult. According to Peters *et al.* (2005) several resource guides for developing inclusive education initiatives in schools have been developed by UNESCO and other service providers, and have been used in several countries. One of these, the Index for Inclusion, which was originally developed for use in Britain, has been trialled and adapted for use in various countries. It is concerned with improving educational attainments through the collaborative inclusive development of schools (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw, 2000). In the Index for Inclusion the development of inclusive schools is not presented as an additional change initiative but as a way of improving schools according to inclusive values. The strength of the Index for Inclusion is that it can be contextualised to meet the needs of a specific school community (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

Financial assistance from UNESCO made it possible to trial the 2002 version of the Index for Inclusion in three primary schools in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The focus of the project was not so much on schools in privileged contexts, but on the ones considered to be historically disadvantaged by the previous apartheid dispensation in South Africa, and in need of additional support in implementing inclusive education.

Booth and Black-Hawkins (2005) report on the previous participation of a small number of researchers from South Africa in a workshop in India in March 2001 on possibly trialling the Index for Inclusion in South Africa, Brazil and India. England, South Africa, Brazil and India participated in this workshop, which took place after the conclusion of a collaborative research project, the Four Nation

Project. The research focused on the way schools and other education centres could be supported within an area and its specific communities.

The workshop explored the extent to which ‘an index for inclusion’ could be of use for countries of the South. The discussion was based on the 2000 version of the Index for Inclusion and some of the issues raised informed the revision process of the Index for Inclusion in 2002. It became clear that the Index for Inclusion had the potential to be of use in all countries and that the key concepts, review framework and participative process could support inclusive development in any school or other educational institution. It was expected that adaptations to the Index for Inclusion would be necessary when it is applied in less well-resourced schools situated in less affluent communities.

From May 2004 to December 2006 the revised 2002 Index for Inclusion was on trial in the three research schools in the Western Cape Province. I was involved as researcher in the UNESCO project from its inception in 2004 up until its formal termination in 2006. UNESCO granted me permission to write up my experiences as researcher in one of the research schools where my engagement with the school lasted until the end of 2008. I wanted to explore the notion of teacher learning based on the assumption that “the process of a school becoming more inclusive involves teacher learning” (Howes, Booth, Dyson & Frankham, 2005:133). It seems that change implies learning and changing schools entails a learning process that involves everyone in the organisation. According to Swart and Pettipher (2007:108) the implementation of inclusive education can serve as a “catalyst for further personal, professional and organisational learning”.

The Index for Inclusion was developed to support the inclusive development of schools and it is assumed that the process should be started and led from within individual schools (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The Index for Inclusion is thus committed to institutional change rather than individual change, which makes it essential to work with groups of staff in each school rather than with individuals. However, it is self-evident that institutional change involves substantive changes by individuals and if change involves learning, as argued before, active teacher learning is central to the process of developing a more inclusive school (Howes *et al*., 2005). Imants (2002) argues that inclusion reform and related innovations in schools also afford opportunities for teacher learning. As teachers are positioned as participants in a process of social learning within the context of their respective schools, it is clear that workplace learning is at stake.

1.2 TEACHER LEARNING IN TIMES OF CHANGE

The legislation regarding inclusive education in South Africa came towards the end of a substantive education overhaul that started in 1994 (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007) and the implementation of change initiatives enshrined in new education policies and legislation since the advent of democracy in

South Africa in 1994 have in general not brought the desired changes in classrooms and schools (Oswald, 2007; Stofile & Green, 2007). It remains a complex process to determine plausible reasons for this state of affairs. It is, however, true that many teachers feel threatened by the substantive changes introduced in the curriculum and also in inclusive education training workshops (Davies & Green, 1998; Oswald, Ackermann & Engelbrecht, 2000; Engelbrecht, 2003). Reddy (2004:142) argues that the dominant approach to in-service programmes for teachers in South Africa "seems to be a deficit model approach, which proceeds by way of advocacy campaigns based on cascade approaches". If teachers are not consulted in the development of training programmes, the result is a mismatch between training opportunities on offer and teachers' training needs. Reddy (2004) further states that his research has indicated that teachers ask for continuous professional development and support at classroom level.

Current research in inclusive education promotes continued and sustained school-based learning as the best possible answer to foster inclusive schools (Oswald, 2007). Cascade models of training and short workshops, which seem to be the preferred approach to the professional development of teachers in South Africa, do not seem to be the answer to successful teacher learning for inclusive education. In these approaches the emphasis is on individual learning away from the workplace, whilst the conditions within which teachers have to implement these strategies are ignored (Stofile & Green, 2007). It would seem as if the various professional development initiatives for the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa have tended to employ less effective and outdated approaches to teacher learning with limited success. As early as 1997 the NCSNET/NCESS Commission recommended that teacher training should be placed within the context of the school where teachers are working (Department of Education, 1997) as solutions are often embedded in local knowledge and practices which will differ from context to context (Swart & Pettipher, 2007). Aligning teacher learning for inclusive education with institutional development seems to coincide with the current international approach to developing schools as inclusive learning communities (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Oswald, 2007, Swart & Pettipher, 2007) and with the approach that the Index for Inclusion wants to promote.

However, the reality is that the conditions in which teachers work do not always promote their learning. Schools provide affording or constraining learning environments which may enhance or diminish teachers' space and energy to learn, their sense of identity, efficacy and commitment to teach students with diverse learning abilities well (Day & Gu, 2007). Schools need to create organisational conditions that promote collective and individual teacher learning**.** This means that schools need to invest in the professional learning of their teachers in order to build their professional community and develop pedagogy and organisational practice that respond to the student diversity that exists within their contexts (Deppeler, Loreman & Sharma, 2005).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As argued above, when the transformation of schools is at stake - as envisaged for the implementation of inclusive education - teacher learning is foregrounded. In this respect Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth (2001) argue that the well-being of students must be central to the process of schooling. The inclusion discourse would add that the well-being of *all* students with their diverse learning needs ought to be the object under construction. However, Grossman *et al.* (2001) contend that this constitutes only one pole of the tension of teacher community. The second aspect of teacher community highlights teachers' continuing development to ensure realising the first pole of teacher learning. Teacher community thus needs be equally concerned with student learning and teacher learning. Both of these aspects represent central ingredients in teacher learning for inclusion and constitute the discourse of my inquiry, although teacher learning for inclusion will be foregrounded.

It is important that teacher learning for inclusion should not only consider how teachers learn but also explore how the personal histories of teachers, schools as communities and the wider social and educational context affect teachers' learning and practice (Robinson & Carrington, 2002) as the links between schools as inclusive learning communities, conditions for learning, and school change for inclusion can be described as recursive relationships (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). On a macro level, and in the context of the school as workplace, teacher learning for change is embedded within the South African social and educational context, as well as in the local community in which the school is situated. Drawing on Fishman (1972), Fairclough (1995:37) argues that a social institution such as a school is on the intermediate level of social structuring and "faces Janus-like 'upwards' to the social formation", implying that the macro-level is the highest level of social structuring, and "downwards to the social actions". Social actions tend to cluster in terms of institutions, such as schools. Within the context of this study, I argued that apart from exploring the macro structures and local structures as applicable to this study, the school as immediate work and learning context for teachers needed to take a central position within this research project. Fairclough (1995:38) contends that a school as a social institution can be regarded as a 'speech community' with its own set of rules of discourse. It has its own group of participants with each member of the group allocated a specific role to play in the speech events. The school can simultaneously facilitate and constrain the social actions of its members insofar as it provides a frame for action, but the same frame can also constrain them to act within that frame (Fairclough, 1995). Taking this argument one step further: What happens within the frame that the school provides can either be conducive to teacher learning or it can act as a barrier to the learning of new practices essential in addressing student diversity.

Over and above considering the above-mentioned factors, I also located my study within the global and national discourses on inclusive education that have particular agendas for change on a system and school level. The Index for Inclusion has its own sign system and goals for school change and teacher learning within the broader inclusion debate. It becomes obvious that this study needed a theoretical framework that could explain the complexity of workplace learning and development by means of a particular tool with a particular agenda.

This study argued that cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), and particularly the work of Engeström (1987, 2001), within the broad framework of CHAT, provided such a theoretical home. Roth and Lee (2007:189, 191) present CHAT as a “metatheory”; as an evolving theoretical framework with the potential to supply “an integrative road map for educational research and practice”. They, as well as Engeström and Miettinen (1999), argue that CHAT attempts to address a number of complex problems in educational research and practice such as removing the troubling divides between individual and collective, material and mental, biography and history and in particular between thought and activity, praxis and theory, all in some way or other applicable to this study.

According to Wardekker (2000), CHAT is a theory under construction with quite a few varieties, but it is fundamentally a learning theory that ascribes to the notion that humans are embodied in actual human activities and the communities in which these activities are practiced, which holds important implications for research. Teacher learning activity can thus be studied within the context of the workplace taking into account all the complex cultural, historical, social and contextual factors that impact on such an activity. Adequate research is now related to the concepts of activity, practice and community leading to a pragmatist twist in thinking about the aims of social research (Wardekker, 2000). “[R]esearch is not about a stable and objective world or about stable narratives” as is the case in the positivist or interpretive research traditions, “but it is always about change and learning in relation to actions” (practices) (Wardekker, 2000:269). CHAT “offers a conceptual tool box to education which has the potential to enable it to operate as an engaged and transformational social science” (Edwards & Daniels, 2004:108). Given that the overall research aim of this study was to underscore and explore teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion as tool to facilitate the transformation of a school to become an inclusive learning community for students, teachers, the management team, parents and the local community, the value of employing CHAT as theoretical lens was evident.

The primary aim of this inquiry was to investigate the constraints and affordances for teacher learning during a time of change as initiated by the Index for Inclusion process. I chose to foreground the institutional-community plane of analysis whilst two other planes, namely those of the personal and the macro-social and macro-educational would also be explored insofar as they impact on the nature of the learning process of the participating teachers, both in terms of affordances and constraints.

The following complementary research questions helped in structuring the investigation of the main research question:

- Which features on the macro-social and macro-educational level impacted on teacher learning in the workplace?
- What affordances and constraints to teacher learning could be identified on the institutional-community plane as the pivotal plane of analysis for this study?
- Which features on the personal plane impacted on teacher learning in the workplace?

1.4 THE RESEARCH PLAN

In order to be able to answer the research questions adequately an appropriate and viable research plan is necessary. Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) five phases for any research inquiry informed the research plan for this study. In this chapter the first two phases are addressed in depth, whilst the rest will be explored extensively in Chapter 4. As an important first phase of the research process, it is necessary to introduce the theoretical framework from which the study was conducted as it formed the underlying structure of the inquiry (cf. Merriam, 2006).

During the second phase of the research process the researcher introduces herself and makes known the conception of the researcher as *self* in relationship to the research participants as *the other* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The last three phases of the research process will be discussed extensively in Chapter 4 and will only be mentioned briefly in this chapter. The third phase explains the research design chosen for the study; the fourth phase is allocated to the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis, whilst the fifth phase discusses processes of data interpretation, verification, presentation and discussion.

1.4.1 Phase 1: Framing the inquiry: the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework chosen for a study plays an important role in conducting almost every aspect of the study. Merriam (1998:45) argues that it is "difficult to imagine a study without a theoretical or conceptual framework". The theoretical framework supplies the "structure" and the "scaffolding" for the study (Merriam, 1998:45). It determines the problem to be investigated, the research questions to be asked, the methods of data collection and how the data will be analysed and interpreted (Merriam, 2006).

As indicated before, I chose cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) as theoretical lens but also as analytical tool (Barab, Schatz & Scheckler, 2004) for this research study. The salient work done by Engeström to extend the pioneering work of Vygotsky, Marx, Leont'ev and Luria in Russia during the

1920s and 1930s in particular framed this study. Engeström provides a valuable framework for evaluating the learning potential of such initiatives as the Index for Inclusion (Young, 2001). Empirical and theoretical research, such as done by Engeström (1987, 1999) among others, has enriched the theory, while connections made to the work of other theorists also added complexity and variety to the theory (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999; Wardekker, 2000; Wells, 2004).

CHAT can make a significant contribution to situations where learning cannot be reproductive but acquires processes of innovation and transformation. It offers a valuable framework for analysis when a more complex theory of learning is needed such as during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion in a school (Engeström, 1999a). Engeström (1987) presents the concept of activity as mediating factor to explore how new processes of learning and development are generated. Martin (2005) refers to the generation of new practices through collaboration, which she aligns with Engeström's notion of innovative expansive learning model. Roth (2005) argues in favour of CHAT when the need is there to analyse, rethink and change current practices and when it is particularly important to explore the power of collective activity which can lead to either the exclusion or the inclusion of certain groups of students in the learning activity. He also presents CHAT as a reflexive approach that allows for reflecting on and theorising our work as researchers. It endows the researcher with the possibility of actually bringing about meaningful change.

CHAT is informed by general principles as found in most theories grounded in the original work of Vygostky and Leont'ev. An important principle would be the **social origins of learning and development.** Within the context of my study, teacher learning was seen as being situated in the external world that the teachers inhabited. Any learner's interaction with materials and activity occurs primarily in a social context of relationships. The social context is the major matter of the learning activity itself (Tharp, Estrada, Dalton & Yamauchi, 2000). Central to CHAT, therefore, is the principle that human learning and development take place in cultural and social contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems and can best be investigated in their historical development.

For CHAT it is also important that **individual and social learning processes should be seen as interdependent**. Vygotsky explains this through the notion that each intramental function appears twice in development and learning; once in the form of actual interaction between people and the second time as an internalised form of this function; from intermental to intramental level (Artiles, Trent, Hoffman-Kipp & Lopez-Torres, 2000; Kozulin, 2003; Smagorinsky, 1995). Roth and Lee (2007:28) have the following point of view:

> Learning rides on a dialectical of individual and collective, each which presupposes the other: an individual concretely realizes an action, the possibility of which exists at a collective (generalized) level. What the individual does define and has repercussions for the collective such as in affirming what are legitimate or illegitimate practices. Similarly,

> the absence of higher-order social structures renders all actions by individuals meaningless and decontextualized.

Vygotsky's **zone of proximal development (ZPD)** further explains the interaction between social and individual learning. Vygotsky (1978) states that the ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". Vygotsky (1978) further argues that an internalisation/externalisation mechanism regulates activities in the ZPD. According to Keating (2005), Vygotsky's original emphasis on internalisation and the development of higher psychological functions has resulted in the process of externalisation receiving less attention. Drawing on Engeström (1999a), Keating (2005:113) emphasises that "complementary views of externalisation and creativity are crucial to contemporary research, particularly as it becomes more important to establish links between human agency and the transformation of the structural organisations of societies". In this respect, Engeström (1999a) argues that closer attention should be paid to the concept of **control.** Engeström explains that Vygotsky's idea was that human beings *themselves* can control their *own* behaviour but not from the inside out, but from the outside, whilst using and creating artifacts. From this Engeström (1999a:29) deducts that "activity theory has the conceptual and methodological potential to be a pathbreaker in studies that help humans gain control over their own artifacts and thus over their future"

Mediation is recognised as a further important principle of CHAT (Artliles *et al*., 2000). Engeström (1999a:28-29) argues that mediation is "the unifying and connecting lifeline throughout the work of Vygotsky, Leont'ev, Luria and the other important representatives of the Soviet cultural-historical school". Vygotsky created the idea of mediation as crystallised in his triangular model which is expressed as the triad of subject, object and mediating artifact. In this way, human actions as the basic unit of analysis overcame the binary between the Cartesian individual and the societal structure (Engeström, 1999a). The concept of mediation emphasises the role played by human and symbolic tools placed between the individual learner and materials to be learned. Psychological tools are those symbolic systems (language, number systems, plans, concepts) specific for a given culture that, when internalised by individual learners as knowledge and skills, become their inner cognitive tools (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller, 2003). Tools carry the reified social practices, cognitive activities and codes for how they were used by their creators, mediating a connection between the current user(s) and the creators (Blanton *et al*., 1998). It seems that teachers as learners appropriate/internalise a concept, a word or an idea in the context of their own life histories and systems of meanings, as well as in the context of the unique circumstances in which they are learning. Through such a process, people can both maintain and transform the culture embodied in tools/artifacts (Artiles *et al*., 2000).

Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), Blanton *et al.* (1998) explain another important principle of CHAT; the structure for thinking about **scientific and spontaneous concepts** of teaching. Scientific concepts (theoretical knowledge) of teaching are systematically organised bodies of knowledge which are flexible and can therefore be applied across different contexts. These concepts are embedded in cultural systems and acquired in formal learning systems through verbal (language) explanation. Scientific concepts 'move downward' and develop into spontaneous concepts (practical or everyday knowledge) in the course of participation in concrete classroom activities. Spontaneous concepts are less flexible and more context-bound. Spontaneous concepts are developed in the concrete events of teaching practice and 'move upward' to be integrated into scientific bodies of knowledge (theory). This process explains the movement between theory on teaching and the art of meaningful practice.

Building on the salient work of Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria, cultural-historical activity theorists identify **activity** as the appropriate unit of analysis for explaining learning and development. Activity is seen as "the point for inquiry and simultaneously the basic context in which learning and development occur" (Blanton *et al.*, 1998:263). The activities in which teachers as learners engage and the language and problem-solving that accompany them can potentially facilitate the development of new cognitions, perceptions, motives and values (Tharp *et al.*, 2000). Activity as unit of analysis plays an important role in the work of Engeström.

Engeström is one of several contemporary contributors in the field of CHAT. His innovative work has taken learning theory beyond the narrow confines of behaviourism and cognitivism with their focus on the individual learner isolated from any context in which learning might take place (Young, 2001). Engeström successfully applied his new developments in CHAT to analyses of modern work and adult learning, making his model very suitable for exploring teacher learning in the context of school development (Lompscher, 2006). What was particularly applicable to this study is that his research has shown that even in a workplace where pedagogy is not formally acknowledged, issues of learning are important, either implicitly or explicitly, in the promotion of what he refers to as "expansive learning" (Young, 2001).

Engeström explains the development of his conceptual tools through his explication of three generations of activity theory. The first generation activity theory model drew heavily from Vygotsky's concept of mediation. Vygotsky's well-known triangle brought together cultural artifacts/tools with human actions in order to dispense with the individual/social divide (Daniels, 2008). Figure 1.1 explains the first generation activity theory model as derived from Vygotsky's work.

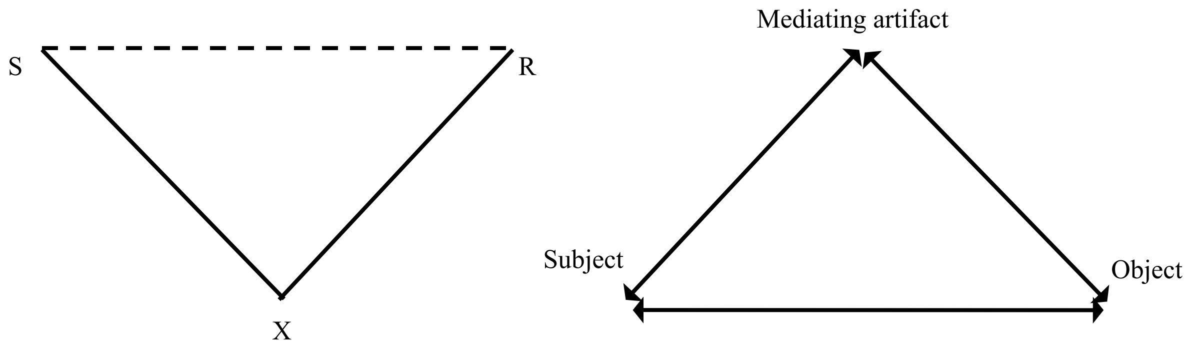

Figure 1.1: First generation activity theory model

According to Daniels (2008), Vygotsky derived his notion of mediation from the work of Marx. Marx explained that the three elements of the labour process are purposeful activity that is the work itself; the object on which that work is performed; and the instruments or tools of that work. During the first generation activity theory mediation is portrayed as abstracted form context and the individual was emphasised (Daniels, 2008).

Engeström's mediational triangle which extended Vygotsky's concept of mediation is characteristic of second-generation activity theory. Engeström emphasises firstly "the mediated character of human life and activity by material and ideal means, especially signs, as part of human culture and the artifacts of human activity," and secondly "the collective character of human activity realized by actions of the participating individuals" (Lompscher, 2006, p.47). Engeström and his colleagues present as a new unit of analysis "the concept of object-oriented, collective, and culturally mediated human activity, or activity system" (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999:9). Activity is thus "a collective, systemic formation that has a complex mediational structure" (Daniels, 2008:120). See Figure 1.2 in this respect.

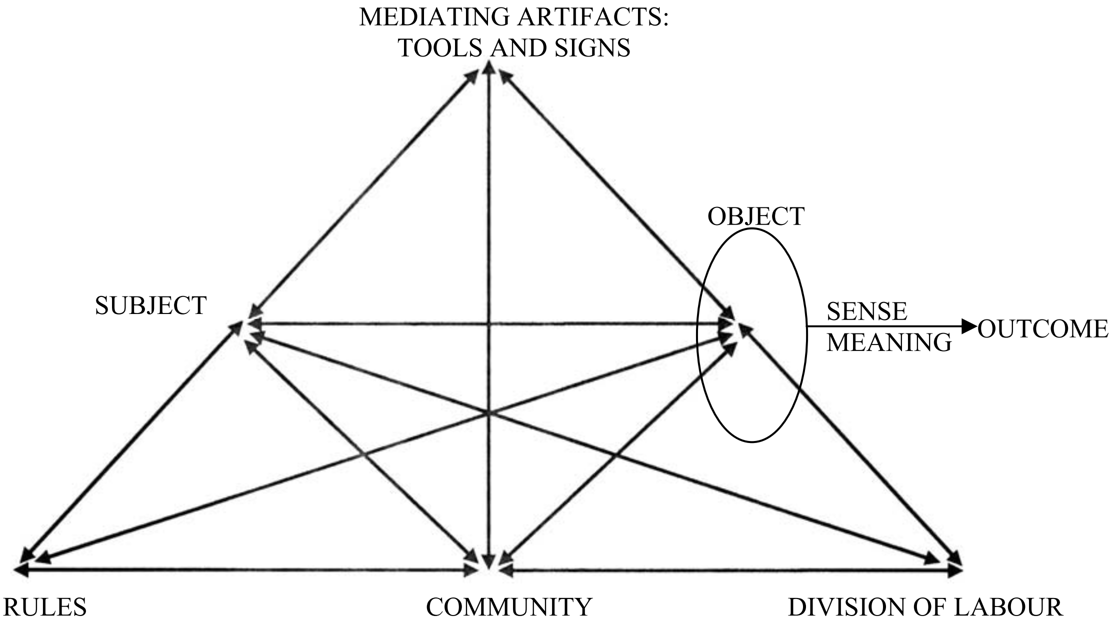

Figure 1.2: Second generation activity theory model

In CHAT the focus is on what subjects as participants do, the objects that motivate their activity, the tools employed in the activity, the community of which they are part, the rules that pattern their interactions and the division of labour they take in activity (Roth, Tobin, Elmesky, Carambo, McKnight & Beers, 2004). The Engeström model does not define an activity *per se* but is a template for facilitating the analysis of particular activities. These activities always form part of a collective work process. In the Engeström triangle the subject-object relationship is represented by the top part of the diagram. But the subject-object relationship is related to the larger cultural and historical context by the relationships represented by the other triangles. The subject-object relationship is modified by the cultural rules, norms or conventions that apply to this relationship and by the division of labour in which it is embedded. These rules might well include the tools considered appropriate to use and the way in which control of their use is distributed among the different categories of community members who are regularly involved in this and related actions. These relationships are not static but are continuously being constructed and reformulated in the course of their deployment in particular situations. This model enables and encourages an innovative approach as it allows for the possibility that rules may be changed or the division of labour may be modified or other semiotic tools may be valued in creating different activity systems; ones that can for instance encourage rather than constrain teacher learning (Wells, 1996).

Gronn (2000) explains that the relationships between the six components as indicated in Figure 1.2 are always mediated rather than direct. This would imply that the link between the actions of the subject (S) (individual or collective) and the object (O) of their work-oriented, purposive actions is not direct, but mediated through artifacts or tools (including symbols and linguistic systems) (I) which purport to represent experience, accumulated learning or solutions to previously encountered problems. Instead then of S>O the relationship is more accurately expressed as S>I>O. Likewise, that same subject-object relation occurs within a community (C) in the form of S>C>O; it is subject to various culturally derived rules (R), expressed as S>R>O, and it is embedded within a division of labour (DoL), or S>DoL>O.

Engeström, who is an important contributor to the third stage of CHAT's development, elaborated a broader concept of activity based on Vygotsky's and Leont'ev's ideas (Lompscher, 2006). The third generation activity theory is interested in the process of social transformation and includes the structures of the social world in analysis taking into account the complexity of social practice. This is depicted in Figure 1.3.

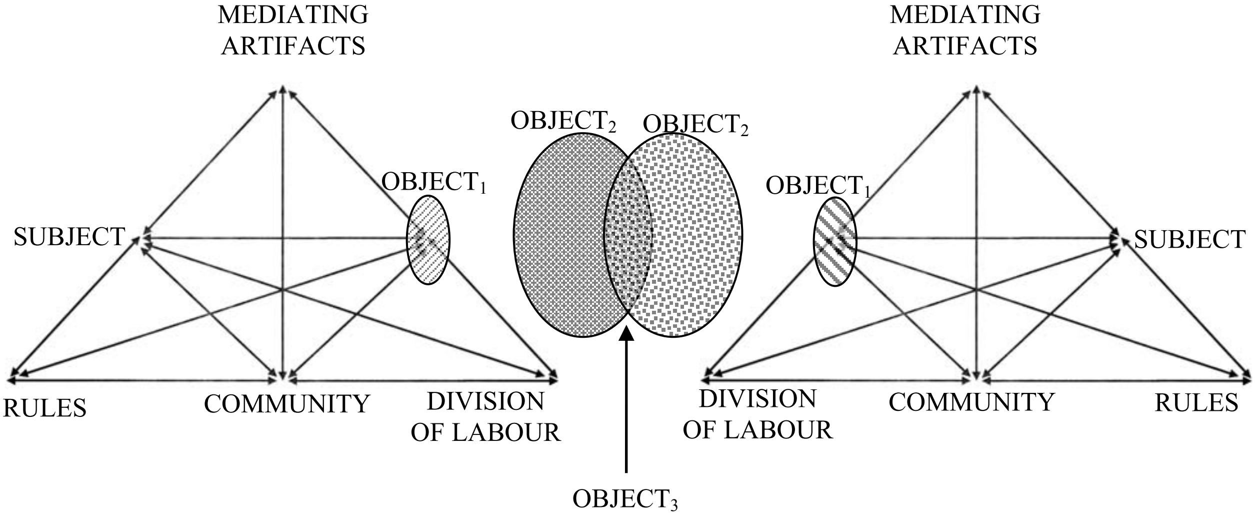

Figure 1.3: Third generation activity theory model

All activity systems are part of a network of activity systems that together make up human society. As long as individuals contribute to one activity system, they sustain not only its production (output) and its and their own reproduction, but also society as a whole in the sense that various interrelationships link the different activity systems that constitute society (Daniels, 2008; Roth & Lee, 2007). According to Engeström the third generation activity theory is intended to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogues, multiple perspectives, voices and networks of interacting activity systems (Daniels, 2004).

Engeström (2001) suggests five principles that are fundamental to activity theory. These are summarised by Daniels (2008:123-126). The prime unit of analysis is a collective, tool-mediated and object-oriented activity system in its network relations to other activity systems, whilst the second principle stresses the multi-voicedness of activity systems. An activity system is "a nexus of multiple points of view, traditions and interests" (Daniels, 2008:124). The division of labour in the activity system positions participants differently, participants bring their own unique histories into the activity system and the activity system itself carries history as engraved in its artifacts, rules and practices. Multi-voicedness acts as a source of tension and innovation and increases when more activity systems are implicated. Historicity is the third principle. Activity systems change over lengthy periods of time and their assets, problems and potentials can only be understood in terms of their own history.

Contradictions within an activity become "a guiding principle of empirical research" (Engeström, 2001:135). The fourth principle of activity theory is that contradictions, as sources of innovation, change and development, are fundamental to activity theory. Roth and Lee (2007:203) explain contradictions as follows:

> When inner contradictions are conscious, they become the primary driving forces that bring about change and development within and between activity systems. Generally overlooked is the fact that contradictions have to be historically accumulated inner contradictions, within the things themselves rather than more surface expressions of tensions, problems and breakdowns.

The fifth principle of activity theory is the possibility of expansive transformations in activity systems. Engeström (2001) explains that as the contradictions in an activity system intensify, individual participants can begin to question and digress from established norms and practices, which has the potential to trigger deliberate collective efforts of change.

The model is useful as a heuristic (Roth & Lee, 2007) that can be employed to highlight 'contradictions' in the sense of points where there are breakdowns or potential breakdowns (Pearson, 2007). Pearson (2007) recommends the model as having potential in the development of inclusive education within the context of a school. When viewing challenges (in the form of contradictions) within a school context through the lens of the Engeström model it can assist in clarifying the interrelationships between the six components, which in turn can promote potential solutions (Pearson, 2007). But, as explained before, CHAT is a theory under construction and researchers still need to unpack, among others, the role of dialogue, multiple perspectives and issues of power and control in dealing with interacting activity systems as networks (Roth & Lee, 2007).

According to Daniels (2007), concepts of discourse and identity are underdeveloped in CHAT. Engeström and Mettinen (1999) acknowledge that the notion of discursive practice needs to be developed in activity theory and that it is methodologically difficult to capture evidence about community, rules and division of labour within the activity system (Daniels, 2007). Daniels (2008:148) admits that "there is a need to extend the scope of the understanding of the 'social' and to develop research tools" that can explore "talk in context", as well as "the implications of the ways in which individuals take up positions and are positioned in practices".

Recent contributions of key writers who employ CHAT as general framework, among others Daniels (2007, 2008), Roth and Lee (2007) and Williams, Davis and Black (2007), suggest that several themes need further development within CHAT. According to Daniels (2007), who draws on the work of Bernstein, the concept of positioning is key to future development of notions of discourse and identity. With regard to positioning, the notion of 'voice' is important. Daniels (2008:96) argues that discourse is central to the shaping of "dispositions, identities and practices". Subject positioning, power, personal transformation and emotional experience have been underdeveloped in CHAT (Daniels & Warmington, 2007). From educational research Williams *et al.* (2007:106) offer the following research question for potential studies with CHAT as framework: "How does social positioning and power shape personal opportunities and 'constrain' or mediate self-positioning?" Roth and Lee (2007) foreground the following themes: motive or motivation, emotions and identity. Daniels (2008) further raises the baffling problem of resistance to change that arises when participants struggle to engage with processes of change, whilst Engeström's (2007) notes the reluctance of participants to proceed with the act of implementing new developments as possible themes for further elaboration.

The applicability of Engeström's conceptual tools to this study will be discussed in subsequent chapters. This investigation also tried to engage with some of the above-mentioned themes identified for further development.

1.4.2 Phase 2: Introducing the researcher

During the high tide of apartheid I spent some of my childhood years in a small town in the middle of the Karoo, a semi-desert area of the country. My father was the principal of one of the two schools in town: one a school for Whites only and the other one attended by the coloured children of the community. The two groups of children never met. I recall one particular incident clearly. I overheard an intense discussion between my parents about the most appropriate cup in which to serve tea to the principal of the school for coloureds who was supposed to meet with my father at our house for the first time to discuss a certain issue of mutual concern. At that time it was common practice in white households to reserve separate cups for coloured staff that served in houses or tended to gardens. Why can I recall this incident so vividly? I was still very young, but somehow found the discussion between my parents disturbing and perplexing. Could it be that despite my youth I sensed the injustice of the macro discourse articulated and enacted in that small micro level snapshot?

I offer this anecdote from my past to acknowledge that in terms of my biographical positioning I am historically and culturally situated and as such engaged with the different phases of the research process. I have come to understand that an objective stance is impossible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As researcher my humanness and knowledge inform and guide me, "and often subtleties, such as intuition, values, beliefs or *a priori* knowledge influence our understanding of the phenomena under investigation". In the research process we cannot "ignore the subjectivity of our own endeavours" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:60). The lenses that researchers use are thus subjective (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). No research is value-free, and the researcher has to grapple with the ethics and politics of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), since

> the pre-understandings (or prejudices) that we inherit from our historical and cultural backgrounds influence what we think is worth enquiring about, the questions we ask in research or practice, the type of questions that make sense to us and our interpretations of the findings (Thrift & Amundson, 2005:14).

According to Engeström, Engeström and Kerosuo (2003:286), studies of professional discourse offer opportunities to researchers to capture how history is made in situated discursive actions, and to understand that the actions of the researcher as human and imperfect participant of the discourse also become objects of data collection and critical analysis. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2001) concur that in academic collaboration the researcher is both an instrument of research and the focus of research, as her own thinking and practices are subject to scrutiny, implying that she is constantly challenged to think through her own practice as researcher. Self-reflexivity adds to the trustworthiness of research and by making known the researcher's social and cultural position in relation to the participants and contexts under study, "the researcher can demonstrate metacognitive awareness that heightens the intellectual rigor of the project" (Alsup, 2004:222).

Trustworthiness is enhanced by allowing the reader of the thesis a clear understanding of the positioning of the researcher/interventionist in the study. Henning *et al.* (2004:147) assert that "precision is all" and that "good craftsmanship, honest communication and action" need to be implemented to 'prove' the trustworthiness of the research findings. Validity as competence and craftsmanship; communication as validity and the pragmatic consequences of knowledge claims as validity are thus foregrounded. They explain validity in their own words as based on

> the trio of ideas, craftsmanship with precision, care and accountability, open communication throughout the research process and immersing the process in the conversations of the discourse community - as well as a good dose of pragmatic, ethical validity may help the research community to judge the value of an inquiry" (Henning *et al.*, 2004:151).

In the light of the above, I argue that trustworthiness can be added to the research report by openly communicating my own positioning at the beginning of the presentation of the study and also by declaring my intent to take this into account throughout the study. The issue of trustworthiness as explained by Henning *et al.* (2004) will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

In the context of this study, I also found it necessary to concur with Guitierrez (2002:319) that "avoiding the use of social categories to describe cultural processes and practices is not always an easy move. Although we move away from treating culture as static categories, the strategic use of social categories can be productive in some cases". I considered it appropriate to return to the social categories that were legislated during the apartheid dispensation in South Africa in order to position myself and the research participants historically and culturally. I grew up in South Africa as part of the privileged white minority, whilst the research participants were from mixed origin and commonly known as 'coloureds' during the previous political dispensation. I have witnessed, albeit second-hand and from a privileged position, the detrimental effect of exclusionary and discriminating processes characteristic of the apartheid era. Discriminatory policies and practices were, however, not restricted to race, as people were also excluded on grounds of gender, class and disability. Through a reductionist and deficit lens, difference in general was viewed as problematic. It was not easy to question the status quo. Conservatism was a powerful inhibitor of critical thinking and a questioning mind.

Nelson Mandela's release from prison, however, acted as a catalyst to transformation in the country. Since 1994 'transformation' has become an important buzzword within the South African context, affecting all the social systems in the country. In the spirit of the values of the democratic constitution of South Africa I would like to see all schools, also those in former Coloured communities, critically reflect on and change their respective cultures, policies and practices in order to become more inclusive (in the broad sense of the word) of all students. During a previous research inquiry into the democratic values of teachers and how these would influence their perception of inclusive education (Oswald, 2001; Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004), I also became interested in how deep and meaningful learning could possibly be facilitated on an individual and organisational level in order for teachers and schools to become more inclusive of all students. This study presented the opportunity to study these processes at first hand.

The Index for Inclusion suggests that a critical friend should be invited to facilitate the implementation process from the outside. The researcher can fulfill this role. As a critical friend the researcher needs to be independent of the school's power structures and thus have a neutral agenda and should find a balance between being a critic and being a friend. The researcher should be able to both reassure and challenge (Hick, 2005). A critical and challenging approach is necessary to question existing practices in the school, but the researcher as facilitator should also be able to assist in exploring existing support for learning and participation already at the school's disposal, as well as support necessary for change processes in the school to promote quality learning for all students.

International research work has confirmed that schools in many countries need outside support in the form of a critical friend to get started with the implementation of inclusive education. This is seen as especially true in schools in previously disadvantaged communities where principals and teachers have limited capacity to start the process without assistance and support (Booth & Black-Hawkins, 2005).

However, within the South African context with its unique political history, it would have been detrimental to the outcomes of the project to emphasise a critical approach without first gaining the trust and the respect of all the participants in the respective research schools. Being a white woman from a privileged background and affiliated with the local university, working within communities that have previously been disempowered by the apartheid system made a participatory and collaborative approach the only way to go.

During my work in the three original research schools, I realised that my status as interventionist and researcher presented a certain amount of tension regarding the issue of authentic collaboration, but I felt that this could be addressed by acknowledging that I was not an authority on the experiential knowledge of the teachers. They were the authorities on their own lived realities and their constructions of these realities. I had to pay careful attention to the meaning-making processes of the teachers as these were largely significant during processes of change at the workplace. Teachers generally make meaning and sense of the nationally developed inclusion education model through the beliefs, values and expectations that each bring to the work as they are all engaged in biographical projects that have been shaped by among others race, gender, class and language (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). I had to acknowledge this and work in flexible and creative ways whilst persevering with the work although it was emotionally taxing and did not always show the expected results.

1.4.3 Phases 3, 4 and 5: The design of this research into teacher learning for inclusion

As indicated before, the last three phases of the research process will be discussed more extensively in Chapter 4 and will thus only be mentioned briefly in this chapter. These phases include the research design chosen for the study, the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis, and the phase of data interpretation, verification, presentation and discussion. Figure 1.4 provides a schematic presentation of the research plan for this study.

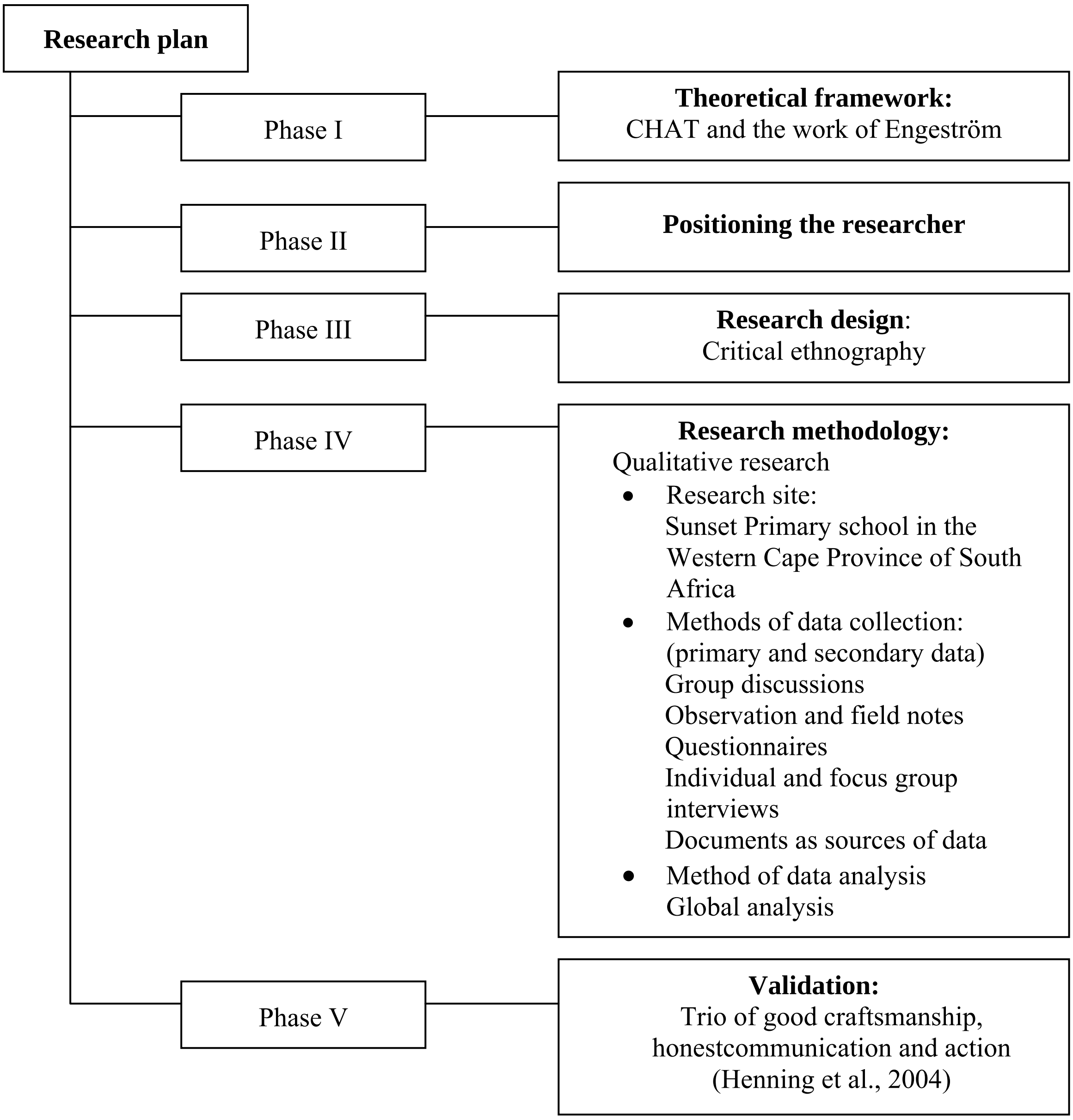
Research plan
Phase I
Theoretical framework:
CHAT and the work of Engeström
Phase II
Positioning the researcher
Phase III
Research design:
Critical ethnography
Phase IV
Research methodology:
Qualitative research
Research site:
Sunset Primary school in the Western Cape Province of South Africa
Methods of data collection:
(primary and secondary data)
Group discussions
Observation and field notes
Questionnaires
Individual and focus group interviews
Documents as sources of data
Method of data analysis
Global analysis
Phase V
Validation:
Trio of good craftsmanship, honestcommunication and action
(Henning et al., 2004)

Figure 1.4: Schematic presentation of the research plan

In order to study teacher learning *in situ*, to obtain meaningful insights into teacher learning as activity, I needed to take care in developing a research framework that would be appropriate to the research topic and its theoretical framework. As explained in Section 1.4.1 I considered CHAT to be an appropriate theoretical framework for this study.

Edwards (2002) argues that educational research is an engaged social science and as such should be relevant and resourceful. She asserts that meaning-making tools should assist in interpreting new settings, identifying possibilities for action in these situations and then supporting these actions, and emphasises that "[t]he separations of research and practice, knowledge and action, theory and practice are unnecessary and unhelpful" (Edwards, 2002:161). There should be stronger relationships between researchers and practitioners in schools and classrooms as there is much to gain by overlapping the communities of practice that are schools and university departments of education (Edwards, 2002). My work with the Index for Inclusion framework in the original three research schools took me close to them for a prolonged period of time.

Edwards (2002:165) further argues that as education researchers we need "to try to capture the complexities of educational practices and their contexts" in "being close to it". Vygotsky's own work was close to the field and driven by educational concerns. An ethnographic research genre in a way presented itself as the way to explore the meaning-making processes of educational practitioners in order "to be surprised by evidence as, in his [Vygotsky's] terms, he limped towards the truth, seeking to understand traces, influences and meanings (Edwards, 2002:166). I wanted to try and understand in order to capture the complexity of the lived experiences of members of the community of practice that was the research school of my choice.

Working in a historically disadvantaged school and paying close attention to the meaning-making processes of the teachers could perhaps assist in better understanding the complexity of their lived experiences and their engagement with change initiatives and subsequent learning processes. In South Africa the pessimism about teachers and change in the public domain tends to focus on what teachers as a collective cannot and do not do and teachers often take the blame for the failed implementation of innovations. Edwards (2002:165) argues that a close engagement with school communities can, for example, help to disrupt assumptions about "the motivations and actions of disadvantaged groups".

Teacher learning can be seen as involving "a recursive, reflexive questioning of ourselves and contexts in order to see more of the possibilities available" (Bateson 1972 in Edwards, 2002:162) and this was to a large extent the intent of the Index for Inclusion process that was implemented in the schools. Joining the Index for Inclusion process as a critical friend also implied working from a more critical stance once a relationship of trust had been established with the school members. Towards the termination of my fieldwork period in the research school chosen for this study, it still *seemed* to me as if the outcomes of the project in this particular school did not measure up to the effort that went into working collaboratively and intensively with the teachers in changing school and classroom cultures, policies and practices to become more inclusive. This largely initiated my choice of research site and also informed my decision to work from a more critical stance. A critical ethnographical investigation into teacher learning seemed the way to go in order to try to understand the affordances and constraints of teacher learning during the implementation of a change initiative in the school in the form of the Index for Inclusion. The choice of critical ethnography as research genre for this study is further defended in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

The selected research site was Sunset Primary School (a fictional name). Holliday (2007) sets certain criteria for the selection of a research setting for an ethnographic study: the setting should have a sense of boundedness with regard to time, place and culture; the setting should provide a variety of relevant, interconnected data such as people to interview, etc.; there should be sufficient richness in the sense of different instances, facets and viewpoints; the setting should be sufficiently small to be logistically and conceptually manageable; and there should be access for the researcher to take whatever role is necessary to collect data. All of the criteria were met in the choice of Sunset Primary School as research school.

Sunset Primary School is located in the geographical area of the Western Cape, one of the nine provinces of South Africa. The Western Cape has a population of approximately 4.5 million people and incorporates 10% of South Africa's total population. According to Swartz (2003 in Loebenstein, 2005), the population of the Western Cape has the highest level of education in the country, even though the majority of the adults in this province did not complete their secondary school education. The school is embedded in a historically disadvantaged rural community and in the aftermath of the apartheid system the majority of people in the community still suffer in harsh conditions of poverty, adult illiteracy, social breakdown and disease.

Strategies of inquiry also connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Various sources of data on Sunset Primary School were collected during the evaluation of the project and could be employed in this study (as secondary data) to explore possible indications of affordances and constraints with regard to teacher learning. Additional data (as primary data) was also collected and added to a multitude of data sources on the change initiative for inclusion at Sunset Primary School. A qualitative methodology was employed and data was generated through group discussions, observations and field notes, questionnaires (both open and closed), individual and focus group interviews and documents as sources of data.

Holliday (2007:90) calls all the data collected and used in the research study, the 'corpus of raw data'. Data collection is followed by a process of data analysis during which the researcher needs to make sense of the 'corpus of raw data' and discovers what it has to say with regard to the research questions. Critical ethnography as a research genre tolerates many methods of data analysis (Henning *et al.*, 2004). In most instances the interpretation of data is tailored to the nature of the material being examined and the questions asked of it. Data generated by the questionnaires in the initial stages of the research project at Sunset Primary School was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics, produced by SPSS 11, a computer software option available for use in quantitative data analysis. The statistics were only applied to determine mean responses in order to identify broad themes with regard to prevailing cultures, policies and practices at Sunset Primary School. This tied in with the choice of global analysis as a tool for data analysis and presentation for this study.

Global analysis, a tool used “for thematic, networked analyses”, as explained by Henning *et al.* (2004:109-114) was considered appropriate for the interpretation of the data sources employed in this study. Global analysis can include a whole range of analytic procedures which share the characteristic that data is read for broad patterns and themes that can be meaningfully linked into an integrated whole. According to Holliday (2007), data is more meaningful when it is interconnected in systems or patterns and when it provides the potential for thick description by revealing diverse and deeper aspects of the phenomenon under study. The idea is “to organise the data into a pattern that might not be clear in the data as presented in their ‘raw’ state, but that comes to life because of the interpretations and organisation of the researcher” (Henning *et al.*, 2004:110). The text is thoroughly studied and the researcher stays close to the data as suggested for qualitative data analysis and interpretation. It does not mean that the ‘truth’ value is compromised in any way. It is a process of tracing the meaning-making processes of participants or their pattern of actions as depicted in the data sources (Henning *et al.*, 2004).

Henning *et al.* (2004) explain that in global analysis the researcher writes the rationalised version of the data which often includes theoretical notions which can already contribute to a discussion and argument. According to Foley (2002:476), Engeström’s activity-theoretical ethnography holds to a more theoretical reflexivity that implies an abductive way of working with the data, as the “abductive ethnographer must tack back and forth mentally between her concrete field experience and her abstract theoretical explanations of that experience”. In CHAT the inductive process of data generation and analysis is thus replaced by an abductive process which implies a movement between inductive and deductive processes of knowledge creation. Engeström (1987, 2001) provides heuristic devices to map and represent “the taken-for-granted cultural and political practices observed” (Foley, 2002:477). The abstract meta-language allows for mapping the researcher’s and practitioner’s constructions of reality. However, these maps and heuristic devices are themselves human constructions and therefore tentative and provisional, but could still function as lenses to map cultural practices in the selected research school in this study (Foley, 2002).

In this study the heuristic devices provided by Engeström and others working within a CHAT perspective could be employed as analytical procedures within the flexible framework for data analysis and presentation as suggested by the version of global analysis presented by Henning *et al.* (2004). At the same time several other analytical procedures employed within global analysis became available to the researcher. The processes of data analysis and presentation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

An ethics of ethnography probes the question: What are the moral and ethical implications of conducting fieldwork? (Madison, 2005). I argue that all the widely accepted ethical principles that apply to all research in the social sciences should also be made applicable to ethnographic research.

Wassenaar (2006) highlights four ethical principles that are applied to determine whether research is ethical: autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons; nonmaleficence which points to the protection of research participants against harmful and negative influences; beneficence which asks of the researcher to maximise the benefits of the research for the research participants; and justice that requires that research participants should be treated with fairness and equity during all the stages of research. The practical implications of these four ethical principles within the context of this study will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

1.5 REVIEW OF KEY CONCEPTS

Although most of the concepts used in this study will be extensively addressed in the two literature chapters, for the sake of clarity a few key concepts are discussed at this stage.

1.5.1 Students

Despite the fact that current South African policy documents such as the Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001) prefer the term ‘learners’ when depicting school pupils, I chose to adopt the term ‘students’ for this study. As teachers as *learners* are foregrounded in this study I wanted to prevent any misunderstandings with regard to the two terms. Viewing adults and thus teachers as learners is not foreign to South African education documents as in the NCSNET/NCESS report (DoE, 1997:149) the term ‘learners’ is described as referring to “all learners, ranging from early childhood education through adult education”. This allows for teachers to be seen as learners within the framework provided by the notion of lifelong learning that is considered important within the South African educational context with its high rates of illiteracy and under-qualified and unqualified teachers.

1.5.2 Primary school

Within the formal schooling system in South Africa schools have traditionally been described as being either primary or secondary (high) schools. The primary school caters for students for the first seven years of their formal education whereas the secondary or high school caters for the last five years of formal schooling. A student’s school years are now incorporated within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a legislative mechanism that has been developed to record all types of formal school learning achievements within one of four phases. The General Education and Training Band (GET) covers the first nine years of compulsory schooling from Grades 1 to 9, and for students who are approximately within the age range of 7 to 15 years. The GET Band covers the following three phases:

- The Foundation Phase, which includes Grades 1, 2 and 3
- The Intermediate Phase, which includes Grades 4, 5 and 6
- The Senior Phase, which includes Grades 7, 8 and 9.

The Further Education and Training Band (FET) comprises of Grades 10, 11 and 12. The FET phase is not compulsory (Department of Education, 1997). This implies that there are two formal exit points for students. The first exit point occurs at the end of the General Education and Training Band when Grade 9 has been completed and the final one at the end of the FET Band and thus on completion of Grade 12.

This implies that Sunset Primary School accommodates students in the GET Band and only those in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and the first year of the Senior Phase.

1.5.3 Research participants

In this study the research participants will be identified by different terms. It is, however, important to appreciate that in all cases the agency of the participants will not be disavowed, but rather celebrated. From the literature it is clear that Engeström prefers to refer to the participants in his developmental work research (DWR) as “practitioners”, whereas in his triangle model the research participants, as subgroup whose agency is chosen as the point of view in the analysis, is identified as “subjects”. In both cases the agency of the research participants is acknowledged and accepted as integral to the researcher’s engagement with them.

In ethnographic research participants identified as key in the research study are most often referred to as “informants”. Delamont (2002:8) asserts that “the ethnographer calls them informants, rather than subjects”. Here the choice for the term ‘informants’ rather than ‘subjects’ is made to stress the agency of the research participants once again. Critical ethnography acknowledges the agency of research participants as well as the constraints imposed by various forms of social, cultural and political control, and wants to address these (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b).

Ethnography conducted from a cultural-materialistic perspective is seen as collaborative and dialectical in nature (Horner, 2004). Research participants are viewed as ‘collaborators’, suggesting that researchers meet participants on equal terms. This is also suggested by the Index for Inclusion framework which highlights collaborative inquiry as the chosen method for engaging with research participants.

In this report the term ‘participant’ (read research participant), will thus be used alternately with ‘practitioner’, ‘subject’, ‘informant’ and less often ‘collaborator’ or ‘partner’, but in all cases the agency of the people involved as participants in this study will be acknowledged and honoured.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

Chapter 1: Introducing the enquiry

This first chapter of the research report has briefly introduced the study. The situational context in which the research took place, as well as the problem statement, central research problem and related research questions, has been described. The research plan has been sketched with more emphasis on the theoretical framework of the study and the positioning of the interventionist/researcher in the study. The research design and methodology chosen for this study has only been discussed briefly and will be covered more extensively in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2: Literature review - Inclusive education under a magnifying glass

This chapter will focus upon the discourses that inform the movement to inclusive education, as well as inclusive education viewed from a global perspective and from the British context. A more thorough ‘image’ of the South African education scene will be presented with special reference to the country’s interpretation and implementation of inclusive education.

Chapter 3: Literature review: Index for Inclusion as tool and teacher learning

In this chapter the Index for Inclusion as artifact, tool and sign system will be presented. Innovative teacher learning will be discussed and both the discussion on the Index for Inclusion and innovative teacher learning will be framed within CHAT and more particular in the work done by Engeström on workplace learning.

Chapter 4: Designing and implementing an inquiry to capture teacher learning during a time of change

In this chapter details of the research design and methodology will be presented. The research setting will be described and the data generated and collected during the different phases of the Index for Inclusion process will be discussed in detail.

Chapter 5: Presenting the findings in themes and patterns, in an ethnographic story and in pen sketches

This chapter will show the process of working with the data and the data will also be presented in broad themes and patterns, an ethnographic narrative and pen sketches.

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings: implications for teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace

In this chapter the findings will be discussed and the implications of the findings for teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace will be highlighted. The strengths and limitations of the study will also be briefly discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION UNDER A MAGNIFYING GLASS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Henning *et al.* (2004), the literature review helps to contextualise a study, to argue a case or to identify a niche to be occupied by a particular research study. The literature can be presented in a number of ways depending on the purpose statement of the thesis. In this study cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) has been chosen as theoretical framework for the study. CHAT assumes that human action and development are shaped by social, cultural and historical factors. In order to understand and change a human practice such as teacher learning it is thus necessary to review its current status as well as its historical development (Daniels, 2004). In order to provide a macro-level context for this study, and to explore social, cultural and historical factors implicated in this study, this chapter provides a. broad overview on the different discourses informing the movement to inclusive education. The global context of inclusive education will be discussed, with particular attention given to the development of inclusive education in the United Kingdom, given that the Index for Inclusion is an artifact of the British context and culture. The historical development of inclusive education in South Africa will be explored by looking at education before 1994 and educational policy development and implementation after the election of the first democratic government in 1994. The current educational context will also receive attention with specific reference to the implementation of inclusive education. A discussion on research initiatives within the field of inclusive education in South Africa since 1995 will conclude the chapter.

2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS PEDAGOGY FOR DIVERSITY

Underlying the inclusion movement is the acknowledgement that human diversity is an inherent and necessary part of any society and that society has to find meaningful ways of responding to diversity (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000; Gilson & DePoy, 2002; Reid & Valle, 2004). Inclusion can be depicted as a never-ending journey of learning about how to live with difference and how to learn from difference (Mittler, 2000).

Inclusive education, as educational imperative based on inclusion as value or principle, is considered a complex, multidimensional and problematic concept, although the common denominator of approaches to inclusive education seems to be the recognition and valuing of human diversity within education systems (Mitchell, 2005). As inclusive education is currently depicted as a possible answer for responding to diversity in education, it is considered worthwhile to explore the underlying rationale for inclusive education. Buell, Hallam and McCormick (1999) explain that the rationale for inclusive education is multi-faceted and stems from legislative, ethical and empirical domains.

Thomas Kuhn in his often-quoted book *The structure of scientific revolutions* published in 1962 first introduced the term ‘paradigm shift’ when referring to great transformations in philosophy, beliefs, or assumptions about science, society or social problems. A paradigm can be defined as a framework, model or set of assumptions that can guide what we think about a social problem and how we design a solution to that problem (Kochhar, West & Taymans, 2000). Human diversity is often seen as a social ‘problem’ or challenge within the broad field of education and it seems as if inclusive education, as a possible way of addressing diversity in education, is the result of a paradigm shift brought about by new ways of responding to diversity and difference in wider society. Economic, political and social developments very often result in changes and shifts within education with the result that educational activity cannot be explored and examined in isolation. Education’s answer to human diversity is embedded in a complex reality, reflecting and mirroring continual changes and transformations in the wider society. It is also an active force that “give[s] legitimacy to economic and social forms and ideologies so intimately connected to it” (Vlachou, 1997:4). However, a shift in paradigms does not imply overnight changes, but rather entails gradual changes in attitudes, cultures, structures and practices. In practice one theory or paradigm rarely prevails exclusively, as vestiges of previous paradigms will still inform policies, processes and practices (Mitchell, 2005). According to Reid and Valle (2004) scholars in education are currently ‘embroiled’ in epistemological and, therefore, theory- and practice-changing debates and they acknowledge the fact that these debates also permeate the humanities and social sciences. They argue that as inclusive education is a process that still needs to be improved, no relevant role-player is absolved from the responsibility of finding meaningful ways of teaching each child within the mainstream of education.

Kochhar *et al.* (2000) list various transformations in systems of ideas in the wider society that have shaped the inclusion movement in education. However, education has also been shaped by shifts from within. *What are therefore the most important historical and philosophical forces within wider society, but also within education itself, that have shaped and are still shaping the inclusion movement*? To answer this question it is important to look at all the different discourses informing the inclusion debate. These discourses are interrelated and difficult to untangle but an effort will be made to ‘untangle’ them for the reader by presenting a ‘snapshot’ of what has happened over time and is still happening in education today as the result of a paradigm shift brought about by new ways of responding to diversity and difference in wider society.

2.3 DISCOURSES RELEVANT TO THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Before exploring the different discourses informing inclusion and inclusive education, it is important to define the term 'discourse' as applicable within the context of this study. Drawing on Gubrium and Holstein (2000), Baglieri and Knopf (2004:525) define 'discourse' not only as ideas or ideology, but also as the "working attitudes, modes of address, terms of reference and courses of action suffused into social practice". Burr (1995:48) finds it difficult to define discourse in a way that is watertight, as is the case with many abstract things, but still attempts the following definition:

> A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event (or person or class of persons), a particular way of representing them in a certain light.

A multitude of alternative versions of notions like 'inclusion' or 'inclusive education' are possible through language. This means that surrounding inclusion and inclusive education may be a variety of discourses, each with a different story to tell about the event and a different way of representing it to the world. Dyson (1999) contends that inclusion is not a monolithic concept and that the different discourses informing inclusion and inclusive education can result in certain crucial aspects of inclusion to be constructed differently across national contexts, but also within the different levels of a single education system, which can give rise to a variety of 'inclusions'. Dyson (2001b) identified four. I find his idea of 'inclusions' useful and explore them further in Section 2.4.1. I view inclusion (and inclusive education as educational imperative) as essentially akin to the cyclic and ever-evolving notion of action research which in this respect implies a continuous process of exploration for more meaningful ways of addressing diversity and difference. In agreement with Skrtic (1995) and Dyson (1999) I want to suggest a democratic process of constructing and deconstructing our responses to issues of difference and diversity to find ever more meaningful ways to include and not to exclude, both in wider society and within the education system.

2.3.1 From normalisation to inclusion

The principle of normalisation dominated social and educational policy for individuals with any form of disability for more than three decades until the end of the1980s. The principle of normalisation, which has generated much research and debate, has resulted from an important shift in what society believes about the potential abilities and rights of individuals with disabilities (Kochhar *et al.*, 2000; Culham & Nind, 2003). In Scandinavia Bank-Nikkelson developed one of the earliest models of normalisation and in the USA normalisation gained prominence through the 1970s. Although the philosophy of normalisation has seemingly been popular internationally, geographically different models have been developed. The Scandinavian model, to which both Bank-Nikkelson and Nirje contributed, adhered to a strong humanistic, egalitarian value base. Wolfensberger in the USA distanced himself from the egalitarian and human rights value base of the Scandinavian model and suggested a more ‘scientific’ stand, while emphasising social contact and integration into the mainstream of society without which ‘genuine’ normalisation, integration and equality would not be possible. He defined normalisation as “the use of culturally normative means to offer person's life conditions least as good as those of average citizens, and as much possible, to enhance or support their behavior, appearances, experiences, status and reputation” (Wolfensberger, 1972, cited in Kochhar *et al.*, 2000:51).

Normalisation resulted in a major paradigm shift in society’s response to individuals who are different from “the norm” and made a significant impact in the arenas of employment, education and training, social interaction in communities and independent living. The notion of normalisation has, however, been the subject of much debate, confusion and misunderstanding as it constructed the idea of ‘normality’. Normalisation was originally intended as a struggle against the discourse of the humanitarian ideology and for the rights of individuals with disabilities. The humanitarian ideology viewed individuals with disabilities as ‘vulnerable’ and in need of protection from the harsher realities of life and they were thus provided for in separate settings, like institutions. Within the humanitarian discourse the power of the professionals and specialists to make decisions on behalf of individuals with disabilities to the exclusion of their voices, were not questioned. The rights-based approach to normalisation views the minimising of difference as implying that, in a world of difference, the concept of normality does not have to exist and has no function, but this philosophy was not realised in practice, because as Vlachou (1997:23) argues, “the needs of the clients come last on the agenda of the ‘super system’s’ priorities within the process of normalisation, the focus has increasingly been on normalizing people”. The medical model (see Section 2.3.2) has legitimised the main functions of such a system by implying that the characteristics of the individual which set him apart from the ‘norm’ in the first place need to be fixed, treated, cured or remedied to be acceptable to the dominant system (Culham & Nind, 2003; Vlachou, 1997).

Culham and Nind (2003) and Vlachou (1997) criticise normalisation for making half-hearted attempts at changing the status quo and for the assimilationist stance taken by advocates of normalisation which burdens individuals, especially those with intellectual disabilities, to prove that they are ‘normal’ enough to be allowed into the mainstream of society. Difference is denied and is not portrayed as something to be valued, but rather as a deviance. Normality is seen as the antithesis of difference and individuals with disabilities need to aspire towards integration and a valued role in ‘normal’ society. The power dynamics in which professionals are viewed as the experts ‘holding the key’ to the possibility of acceptance and integration has been left unchallenged, as are the structures and systems of schools, higher education institutes and workplaces. In light of the above, critics of the normalisation principle are now looking for changing the theoretical lens through which both disability and difference are viewed. According to Culham and Nind (2003) inclusion is the answer as it chooses to confirm and celebrate diversity, and difference is seen as an ordinary and accepted part of life which does not call for any debate, whereas normalisation takes a more apologetic stand and seeks to deny difference. Vislie (2003) concurs with Culham and Nind (2003) that integration and inclusion have different focuses. According to Slee (2001a:173), "[i]nclusion is not a synonym for assimilation and normalization".

It is important here to explore the implications of the notion of normalisation for the educational context. The bold development of the 1960s and 1970s was greeted with a certain enthusiasm in education in both the USA and Europe. In the USA the notion of **mainstreaming** provided for students identified as handicapped to receive appropriate educational experiences in the context of the least restrictive environment, according to specified routes and channels. According to Kriegler (1996) this meant that accommodation in mainstream education was still contingent on labelling, services were seen as additional to education and not inherently part of it, while 'least restrictive environment' was a negative rather than a positive concept. Kriegler (1996:43) explains that mainstreaming can be seen as a "piecemeal response to a whole school issue" as it maintains a focus on the student with a disability as having the problem. The system is not challenged to change and is not prepared to provide these students with the necessary support in the mainstream school and classroom.

The **integration** movement was seen as a further means whereby social cohesion might be promoted and opportunities in the mainstream of education opened up for a wider range of children. The difference between mainstreaming and integration is not easily discernible as both these movements in education have been embedded in the Western European history of segregation of individuals with disabilities and both can be considered as ramifications of the notion of normalisation. According to Swart and Pettipher (2005), integration, unlike mainstreaming, relies on social and political discourse. Integration served as a descriptor of policy concern in the western countries in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1976 Public Law 94/142 (now the Individuals with Disabilities Act, IDEA) in the United States and the 1978 Warnock Report on which the 1981 Education Act in Britain was based, are examples of innovative policies and documents representative of this phase in education. Within the above-mentioned context integration sought to ensure the democratic right of every child to education and the equal membership of all students in the school community. But mixed motivations, ambivalences and confusions underpinned the integration movement and according to Dyson, Bailey, O'Brien, Rice and Zigmond (1997) these are especially apparent in the above-mentioned policies and document. Vlachou (1997:12) argues that within the integration movement "pedagogical principles, humanitarian ideologies, theories of normalization, sociopolitical and medical approaches to education are being used in a conflicting ways". Integration was never advocated as an explicit right and in both the UK and USA certain reservations opened the door for a process of assessment undertaken by experts from the fields of education, psychology and medicine. These processes led to the labelling, classification and categorisation of students, mostly in favour of placement in segregated settings. In the light of the movement towards inclusive education it is to note that the integration movement aimed to integrate students with diverse abilities into the existing school system and "endeavour to 'normalise', to help a child fit in to a pre-existing model of schooling" (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005:2). According to Armstrong *et al.* (2000), integration is inherently assimilationist, as it emphasises deficit, diagnosis and categorisation.

Despite these reservations the integration movement has led to some real achievements in certain countries such as Scandinavia and Italy. It would seem as if the integration movement has not fulfilled its promise (Swart & Pettipher, 2005), but as Booth (1983, cited in Dyson *et al.*, 1997) points out; every example of the successful integration of students with diverse abilities into mainstream placements proves that such integration is possible in principle.

It is hoped that **inclusive education** as a more radical approach will bring the fundamental changes to improve education's answer to human diversity. According to Sebba and Ainscow (1996) the fundamental distinction between the integration movement and inclusion can be determined by identifying the key features of inclusion. They argue that inclusion as manifested in schools is *not* about focusing on an individual or a small group of students for whom the curriculum is adapted or support assistants are made available, nor about how the individual students with diverse abilities are assimilated into existing forms of schooling. Inclusion is about a process whereby a school attempts to accommodate *all* students as individuals within an inclusive and supportive community. These authors regard inclusion and exclusion as related processes which have to be carefully considered when implementing inclusive education; and where the reconstruction of schools to become inclusive and the curriculum to reach out to *all* students as individuals, are emphasised. Inclusion thus assumes that all students are part of the mainstream school system from the very beginning. Loreman *et al.* (2005) argue that there should be no need for students to adapt to the structures and practices in a school as they are already an integral part of the school system.

Inclusive education was adopted at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education in Spain in 1994 as a strategy for addressing the learning needs of all disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded student groups (UNESCO, 1994). The message from the Salamanca Statement was straightforward: the focus is not to be on fitting the student into the school system, but on critiquing and changing the system itself or its relationship to social justice and equity in an attempt to accommodate the unique and diverse learning needs of all students (Ainscow, 2004). In this way the notion of inclusive education has been spread well beyond the developed world so that it is now presented as the 'global' model to provide for all students, also to be adopted by less affluent countries.

2.3.2 Discourses on disability

Reid and Valle's (2004) definition of a discourse as both the system of rules that defines what can be said within a particular discourse and the instrument through which people become positioned, but not determined, is worth mentioning here. Drawing on Foucault (1972) Reid and Valle (2004) emphasise that people are not determined by a discourse as they can resist, challenge or reformulate the discourse. This must be remembered when looking at the different discourses on disability with regard to the movement towards inclusive education.

With regard to the movement to inclusion and inclusive education, Fulcher (1989) identified four different discourses on disability: a medical, lay, charity and rights discourses. The medical, lay and charity discourses share a number of themes and have been the traditional discourses. A rights discourse is the more recent one, which challenges the more traditional discourses. Vlachou (1997) has expanded on these discourses.

Disability studies distinguish between two contesting frameworks: (1) the medical/biological/ pathological model, which the medical and rehabilitation establishments present as the normative way of perceiving disability, and (2) the socio-cultural and rights-based (political) models projected as radical alternatives to the medical model. The **medical discourse** has deficit and individualistic connotations. It links impairment and disability, thus deriving the meaning of disability from medical language (Fitch, 2002). It can also be viewed as a ramification of scientific determinism as it draws on a natural science discourse which grants it scientific status and neutrality (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004). Scientific knowledge has been projected as stable, objective, reliable and has created a false legitimacy for segregatory and discriminative practices (Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Fulcher (1989:27) argues that this "depoliticizes disability" and that it is viewed as "a technical issue, thus beyond the exercise of power". This approach has led to the disablement of individuals.

The individualistic connotations of the discourse suggest that individuals with disabilities have diseases and problems or incapacities which render them ineffective in dealing with 'ordinary' life issues. Professional experts are placed in charge of decision-making processes with regard to individuals with disabilities and so given power over them, effectively silencing their voices (Armstrong *et al.*, 2000). A theme of professionalism thus pervades the medical discourse and its associated discourses like psychology and education. The legacy of traditional paradigms still dominates the field insofar as disabilities are perceived as innate conditions of certain human beings and that those with disabilities are thus different than the norm; diversity is seen as problematic in school and the wider society; and where the norm is still at play in categorising individuals as gifted, learning disabled, or intellectually disabled; or where students with problematic behaviours are labelled emotionally handicapped or socially maladjusted (Brantlinger, 1997; Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999).

The **charity discourse** defines individuals with disabilities as in need of help and as objects of pity. According to the humanitarian ideology individuals with disabilities are set apart from the rest of the society by their disabilities and they can be shielded from the harsh realities of life within segregated settings. Protection is thus regarded as being synonymous with segregation from mainstream society (Fulcher, 1989). Humanitarian ideologies which are present in this discourse have "a high degree of stickability because of their connections with notions of 'care', 'love' and 'protection' which are necessary elements within a person's life" (Vlachou, 1997:13). This discourse also promotes professionalism and expects its clients to be grateful recipients. Again the voice of the individual with a disability is deflected and ignored as responses of pity and undervaluing are disempowering (Reid & Valle, 2004).

The **lay discourse** relates to prejudice, hate, ignorance, fear, resentment and even paternalistic tendencies (Naicker, 1999b). The modern preoccupation with the body as image informs this discourse which devalues and rejects deviations from the 'normal' physical appearance. These themes inform practices that are blatantly discriminatory (Fulcher, 1989; Vlachou, 1997).

The **rights discourse** on disability is overtly political in contrast to the politics of a professional discourse on disability. It emphasises themes such as self-determination, self-advocacy (Kochhar *et al.*, 2000), independence and wants of individuals with disabilities, rather than needs. The notion of equality and membership replace themes of dependence and help as is the case in the previous three discourses and its strategy is one of confrontation and demand. The discourse on rights is seen as the most effective strategy to achieve full membership of a society for those presently excluded from this position (Fulcher, 1989) and indisputably played a central role in the movement to legitimise inclusion in the wider social arena and inclusive education as an important educational initiative. This discourse will be expanded on in section 2.3.3. Although the disability movement has traditionally been concerned with the rights of adults, it is now also taking up the cause of children with disabilities and is campaigning for inclusive education. World-wide disabilities groups, who continue to campaign for the rights of those with disabilities and against discriminatory practices, have localised the debate on inclusion firmly as fundamentally a human rights issue (Mittler, 2000).

Social constructionism, as a possible fifth discourse on disability, is placed within a postmodern approach in the social sciences. It views all concepts as human constructions and not as copies of a pre-existing reality (Burr, 1995). Fitch (2002) argues that the meaning of disability is not primarily located within the individual but is socially constructed within societal structures and discourses. Since the early 1980s the social sciences have witnessed the gradual emergence of alternative approaches to the study of human beings as exemplified under a variety of approaches such as ‘critical psychology’, ‘discourse analysis’, ‘deconstruction’ and ‘poststructuralism”, which according to Burr (1995:2), show a kind of “family resemblance”. Burr (1995) contends that what these approaches offer are radical and critical alternatives to traditional views in the social sciences and are now often referred to as social constructionism. The terms ‘social constructionism’ and ‘social constructivism’ are often used interchangeably, but Gergen (1985) recommends using, constructionism, as constructivism is usually used when referred to Piagetian theory and might thus cause confusion.

Social constructionism is about interpreting the social world as a kind of language, as a system of meanings and practices that construct reality. The social constructionist framework does not view language as neutral and transparent; its view is rather that language helps to construct reality and is concerned with broader patterns of social meaning encoded in language and that language should therefore be the object of study. The way in which people interact with the world is structured by the ruling discourses of the time and context of the relevant people (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Zeeman, Poggenpoel, Myburgh & Van der Linde, 2002). Social constructionism suggests that there are dominant ideas that have powerful consequences (Dallos & Urry, 1999) and that these ideas and discourses need to be deconstructed.

Disability can thus be viewed as constructed by factors and forces in the external, disabling environment within which socially erected and maintained barriers exacerbate an individual’s incapacity to function. Gilson and DePoy (2002:156) explain that “disability is seen as inequity in how environment responds and interprets human diversity, rather than as a deficit to be cured, remediated, or fixed”. Disability can also be examined as a minority culture that would include looking at disability, race and gender as interactive factors that form barriers to human rights and social justice. This would locate the disability discourse within the larger discussion of oppression experienced by marginalised cultural groups (Gilson & DePoy, 2002).

Critical and radical disability narratives as integrally part of the ‘family’ of social constructionism, view disability as a social construct and “see disability as occurring within shifting political, economical and social contexts, often highly marginalizing and discriminating in natures” (Biklen, 2000:337). Elkind (1997) points out that difference is acknowledged as integral to the human race, and difference in individuals, cultures, ethnic groups and races cannot be dissolved into a common amalgam. Fitch (2002) argues that discourses which have historically legitimised segregation and inequality for people with disability have in effect done it for all marginalised groups. According to Slee (2001b:386) inclusion has to deal with “cultural politics” and the “politics of identity” and with “difference and representation” as they are played out on the “broader social stage”. Discourses on disability parallel and intersect with those on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and class (Fitch, 2002; Keary, 1998; Slee, 2001b; Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

The transformative approach to redress misrecognitions, stigmatisation and cultural oppression as propagated by Fitch (2002) aims to transform discourses and the underlying structures that generate them. His positive theory of transformative valuing aims to combat the traditional approach to disability and difference: "It seeks to challenge, to blur, to reimagine, and to redescribe social structures, discourses, and binary distinctions (such as normal and abnormal, male and female, gay and straight, able and disabled, and special and regular) (Fitch, 2002:471, 472). A transformative theory of social valuing emphasises an alternative language and perspective on the 'facts' and 'problem' of difference and wants to work towards making visible the power dimensions in constructing difference as deviance and the legalisation of exclusion.

To place the above-mentioned discussion within educational context, it is worthwhile to pursue Fitch's (2002) transformative theory of social valuing further as he adopts it to various educational settings. Social valuing is essentially about feelings of mutual respect, tolerance and fairness, but is not phased into the existing educational system without blurring, reimagining, and redescribing the social structures, discourses, and binary distinctions within the system. He contends that despite the progressive Regular Education Initiative (REI) in the United States which intended a merger and reconstruction of special and mainstream education to realise the inclusion ideal in education, this has not happened. Keary (1998) concurs with this view and emphasises that the inclusive movement should acknowledge the meanings, understandings and experiences that a range of social and cultural groups bring to the social construction of disability. Fitch (2002) also argues that for a pedagogy based on the norms of social valuing within the educational realm, there should be a closer alliance between movements for inclusive and multicultural education and that disability studies in teacher preparation programmes should be infused throughout critical multicultural curricula. A critical and social reconstructionist vision of multicultural education rejects an assimilationist stance and is concerned with making power dominance visible. Sapon-Shevin and Zollers (1999) also believe that it is possible to link the two agendas when disability is viewed as socially constructed within oppressive political, cultural, social and economic demands and limitations. Critical disability studies in education can enhance the understanding of broad diversity issues.

Slee (2001a) confirms the strong opinions of researchers in the USA that special education seldom places issues of race and culture on their agenda for educational inclusion and that it concentrates solely on the inclusion of students with disabilities. Educational sociologists on the other hand remain silent on disability when arguing for the representation of diversity in education. Those students who are perceived to be unfairly treated by dominant social groupings are sharing the same disadvantage and restriction of human rights. Within a social constructionist framework, issues of race, culture and disability are “important determinants of the shared experiences that bind people together in single, identifiable communities of concern” (Gilson & DePoy, 2002:156). Slee (2001a) contends that teacher training programmes should familiarise students with the idea of inclusive education as cultural politics and need to explore new forms of knowledge on identity and difference. Students need to be invited to consider the pathologies of schools in disabling students. Inclusive schooling is concerned with the educational experiences of all students and a project of critical thinking and radical reconstruction: “Critical thinking needs imagination where students and teachers practice anticipating a new social reality.” Inclusion is not assimilation or normalisation, but “is politically steadfast and aggressive” (Slee, 2001a:173).

2.3.3 Democracy and social justice

As previously indicated, the rights discourse as identified by Fulcher (1989) within the field of disability studies, but also by Vlachou (1997), Rioux (1998; 1999) plays a central role in the movement to legitimise inclusion in the wider social arena and inclusive education as an important educational initiative. In the shaping of an inclusive education system for the future, there should be greater reliance on ideals about equity, human rights, social justice and opportunity for all (Thomas & Glenny, 2002). In line with the Salamanca Statement, the development of arguments for inclusive education is based on the notions of human rights or the more general notions of social justice, equality and equity. Membership and participation on equal terms in all social institutions (e.g. mainstream schools) is viewed as a necessary feature of social justice and hence as an indisputable right in all democratic societies (Dyson *et al.*, 1997).

The movement to inclusive education is based partly on the critical analysis of such issues as equity, social justice and cohesion in society as a whole and wants to critique the understanding of relations of power within our knowledge of others and otherness to ensure that social equality and inclusion is furthered (Gale & Densmore, 2002). Slee (2001b) suggests that we ought to commence with an interrogation of the formation of mainstream and special schooling as a first step towards a different educational settlement – the inclusive or democratised school. Skrtic (2005) argues that the practices and discourses of special education need to be reconstructed using interpretations that promote values of democracy, community, participation and inclusion. His view is that strong participatory democracy is the best defence against all forms of injustice and discrimination.

In my opinion the work of both Green (1999) and Young (2000) on deep democracy can contribute to informing the notion of a truly inclusive school community and to exploring the relationship between democracy and social justice. Green (1999) argues in favour of human diversity as a basic unalterable fact of daily life and suggests that we currently experience a deeper and more extensive level of daily exposure to the significance of diversity. Drawing on John Dewey’s democratic humanist tradition and transformative ideal, Green (1999) argues for deeply democratic communities and emphasises the interdependence of all members in such a community. In these communities differences should not be allowed to limit individuals' opportunities. Democracy as a criterion for the adequacy of social institutions requires positive contribution to the growth of all of the diverse individuals that make up the society. Social constructions like poverty, class status, race, gender and race should not continue to operate as barriers to individual opportunity, but democratic communities should actively foster the development of diverse individual potentialities. According to Green (1999) Dewey challenges the so-called 'natural' differences such as status, birth, wealth and gender as a system of unjustifiable, externally structured social arrangements that shape individual lives and personalities in ways that adversely limit the growth of those on the downside of differences. These harmful structures and the particular kinds of differences they have created must be eliminated if deep democracy is to be realised. Dewey's ideal of deep democracy thus implies deep, continuing diversity and involves ongoing life-guiding communication among and about differing values in a give-and-take approach that shapes institutions as well as individual choices. He argues that effective education needs experiences of transformative reciprocity amidst diversity. All role-players in education need to be challenged to overcome personal and cultural limitations in ways that lead to fuller individual development and to cooperative discovery of ways to create conditions for mutual flourishing (Green, 1999).

Discrimination on any grounds is inconsistent with the principles of deep democracy and leads to counterproductive reasoning that differences are deficiencies (King, 2001). Deep democracy can be understood as "a realistically imaginative philosophical expansion of the implications of the democratic ideal into the habits of heart and mind and a shared way of life" (Green, 1999:xiv). It carries the inherent potential for a formidable protest against forms of discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping as it would equip people to expect, to understand and to value diversity and change, while preserving and projecting democratically humane values (Green, 1999).

Young (2000) also calls for a widening and deepening of democracy beyond the superficial trappings that many societies endorse in order to practise democracy as a means of promoting social justice. She argues that one norm often invoked by those seeking to widen and deepen democratic practices is that of inclusion. Calls for inclusion arise from experiences of exclusion. Inclusive democratic practice moves beyond and above membership to the notion of active participation and. requires openness to a plurality of modes of communication. Inclusive democracy is that of a heterogeneous public engaged in transforming institutions. She further argues that if inclusion in decision-making is a core of the democratic ideal, then, to the extent that such exclusions exist, democratic societies do not live up to their promise. Cultural intolerance, racism, sexism, economic exploitation and deprivation, and other social and economic inequalities [such as disability] help to account for these exclusions.

Inclusive education is concerned with issues of social justice, but it is important to examine the assumptions and ideological position on which our analysis of social justice is grounded. Gale (2000, 2001), who coined the notion of recognitive justice bases the work that he has done in schools on the earlier work of Young (1990) and on that of Fraser (1995). He argues that inclusion and inclusive education need "to be conceived within a recognitive view of social justice" (Gale, 2001:261) and he locates his argument within the broader account of different issues of social justice in education. He suggests that a critical theory of social justice is necessary within the movement towards inclusive settings for all students, because not only distributive patterns within schools but also the processes that produce and reproduce these patterns need to be deconstructed (Gale, 2000). Recognitive justice has an expanded understanding of social justice that includes a positive regard for differences and human diversity and emphasises that social democratic processes should honour and work towards the achievement of this. Recognitive justice aims to deliver to all their due where the notion of 'due' entails the development and fostering of positive self-identity, self-development and self-determination (Gale, 2000). Embedded in recognitive social justice is the assumption that those who have traditionally been 'othered' by school systems can and have the right to participate and to make significant contributions of their own choosing to school communities and societies (Gale, 2001).

The isolation and rejection of students with different learning needs is an important form of social injustice (Ballard, 2003). An emphasis on needs and deficiencies in special education detracts from a proper consideration of the rights of those who are being educated. Forms of injustice can arise from non-recognition and disrespect in the way that segregative systems handle the existing inequalities between students. Existing inequalities can be compounded by the denial of opportunities to do the same as other children, to share the same spaces and to speak the same language. Reducing inequality is thus about more than the provision of money and better resources; it is about rendering the chance to participate and share in the common wealth of the schools and their culture (Thomas & Glenny, 2002).

From the above discussion it becomes clear that inclusive education is at root a matter of politics, of values, of equality and rights and participation which is essential to human dignity. Several writers (Kenworthy & Whittaker, 2000; Corbett, 2001; Thomas & Glenny, 2002; Sandkull, 2005) make a strong appeal that those who promote inclusive education must be convinced of its rights-based foundation and be prepared to assert it plainly and publicly if there is to be genuine progress towards more equality for all students.

2.3.4 Other discourses

Dyson (1999) identifies four discourses, the rights and ethics discourse; the efficacy discourse; the political discourse; and the pragmatic discourse within the inclusion debate as represented in the literature and argue that certain crucial aspects of inclusion are constructed somewhat differently by these discourses. The **rights and ethics discourse** endorses the discourse on democracy and social justice as rationale for inclusion as discussed in section 2.3.4. The **efficacy discourse** runs alongside the rights and ethics discourse with an emphasis on inclusion and inclusive education bringing greater social benefits in the sense of being more effective educationally and being more cost-efficient than sustaining a separate special education system, as argued in the Salamanca Statement. This discourse is particularly critical of special education which is regarded as inefficient and not delivering on its promises of better results for students with learning difficulties. The rights and ethics discourse and the efficacy discourse can be seen as primarily concerned with the rationale for inclusion, whereas the political and pragmatic discourse refers to a second dimension along which the discourses of inclusive education can be categorised; the realisation dimension. The **political discourse** criticises special education structures that are sustained by a range of vested interests against which a struggle is warranted "in order to bring inclusive education in being" (Dyson *et al.*, 1997:41). It is in effect a struggle against exclusionary structures and practices. The **pragmatic discourse** is not concerned with any form of resistance, but with what inclusive education looks like in practice and how to make it happen. The successful implementation of inclusive education is integral to this discourse. Inclusive schools as organisations are seen as different from non-inclusive schools, and an inclusive pedagogy that resulted in guides, handbooks and commentaries with a series of recommendations is an important emphasis of this discourse.

Another interesting discourse within the inclusion debate is the one on changing terminologies. Mittler (2000) asks if it is advisable to continue to talk about 'special educational needs' (SEN) in the context of promoting inclusive education, as the term is associated with special settings, segregation and discrimination. Especially in light of the broader definition of inclusive education the emphasis on 'special' gets a whole new meaning when, for instance, referring to children living in poverty. In this case the education system has failed the children and not the other way round, as implied by the notion of 'special'. Booth (2000) contends that the emphasis on seeing educational difficulties as due to the 'special educational needs' of children is itself a barrier to inclusion. The Warnock Report (1978), which introduced the idea of 'needs' in the UK to replace the emphasis on defects and deficits, was greeted with enthusiasm at the time by role-players in the educational field, but the term still sends out signals of unworthiness and inadequacy as located within the child and not the system. The idea of SEN has survived for so long because it was not easy to find a meaningful substitute. Mittler (2000) feels that another word needs to be found that avoids labelling children. The words 'additional' and 'individual needs' have been used alternatively and Mittler (2000) decided to use the word 'exceptional' until a better word or phrase was found. He cited the distinction that Norwich (1996) drew between individual, exceptional and common needs as motivation for using the word 'exceptional'. According to Norwich individual needs arise from characteristics unique to the child and different from all others, exceptional needs arise from characteristics shared by some such as visual impairment or high musical abilities and common needs arise from characteristics shared by all.

Internationally and nationally (in South Africa) education planners, policy makers and practitioners have always identified and categorised students through notions of 'normality'. 'Normal' students were able to cope in the mainstream education system without additional support or intervention, whereas certain students were identified as having special needs and in need of support with their learning process. The practice of identifying and categorising students informed the development of a separate system of education. The category of 'special needs' has become a catch-all phrase for all those students who are perceived as not 'fitting into' the mainstream system. According to Howell (2000; 2007) the word 'special' relates more to their relationship to the mainstream education system than to what is required to enable them to participate effectively in the learning process. Armstrong (2005:1) voices a strong opinion with regard to the discriminating power of the term 'special educational needs':

> For many children the significance of special educational needs lies in its rationalisation of their educational failure, and frequently social marginalisation, within the ordinary school system. It is a concept that is also embedded in the trinity of social class, gender and race whilst obfuscating the intersection and operation of these factors as signifiers of exclusion. As many writers have previously argued, it is only by deconstructing these wider social relationships that insight is offered into the role of special educational needs as a discourse of power and its abuses.

In South Africa the NCSNET/NCESS Commission's Report published in 1997 (DoE, 1997) suggested that the phrase 'barriers to learning and development' should replace that of 'special educational needs', acknowledging that barriers can also be located within the systems surrounding the child. They moved away from the language of the medical model of disability in favour of the language of human rights and the social model of disability and indicated that

> barriers can be located within the student, within the centre of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. These barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when students 'drop out' of the system or when the excluded become visible. However, barriers may also arise during the learning process and are seen as transitory in nature. These may require different interventions or strategies to prevent them from causing learning breakdown or excluding students from the system. The key to preventing barriers from occurring is the effective monitoring and meeting of the different needs among the student population and within the system as a whole (DoE, 1997:11).

The phrase 'barriers to learning and development' has been adopted by the Department of Education and is currently used in the more recent policy and work documents made available by the Department of Education. Booth (2000) suggests that the notion of barriers to learning and participation, which is a version of the South African one, can productively replace the term ‘special educational needs’. According to Booth (2000:92) barriers to learning and participation can occur at all levels of the system:

> Within classrooms the analysis of the barriers to learning and participation always involves an exploration of the teaching and learning environment. The process of overcoming or minimizing barriers to learning and participation requires the identification of human resources, in staff, students, parents and other members of the community, as well as the material resources that can be mobilized , at all points in the system, to support inclusion.

The notion of ‘barriers to learning and participation’ as explored by Booth (2000) has also been employed in the Index for Inclusion, explaining the use of the term from a social model perspective. In South Africa the term ‘barriers to learning and development’, is now widely used, both at policy level and in practice, but it is debatable whether all role-players understand and recognise the implications of this important change in terminology for practice at many levels in the education system.

The discussion of the different discourses within the debate on inclusion and inclusive education was intended to lend some clarity to the field, but also to open up the possibility of genuine debate to ensure that the field remains dynamic and ever-evolving. Inclusive education will now be explored from an international perspective before the movement to inclusive education within the South African context is discussed.

2.4 AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Across the world, both economically richer and economically poorer countries acknowledge inclusion as an important initiative in the development of their education system. International organisations such as UNESCO have been active in promoting the inclusion agenda. The Salamanca Statement of 1994 (UNESCO, 1994) provided a framework of values, principles and practices for policy makers and practitioners at a global level to guide the way forward with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. Thus it can be tempting to see inclusive education as a global agenda, but Artiles and Dyson (2005) make an interesting observation with regard to the tension between global and local initiatives in education: it seems that movements in education become international when and because different national systems begin to show similar features at the same time, but whenever these similarities are explored in more detail, the local forms and practices that characterise different national contexts become apparent.

It is, however, necessary that different voices from different countries are acknowledged in order to appreciate the issues in particular contexts along with their unique and also overlapping nuances as this can be empowering to all parties in conversation (Armstrong *et al.*, 2000). According to Coulby

(2005), one of the possible benefits of globalisation may be the expansion of intercultural and international approaches to education. Globalisation within education can be seen in a positive light insofar as an effort is made to define rights and obligations across the world and when one country can learn from the other, especially where it can benefit students vulnerable to exclusion from places of learning, but not when legitimate local differences are overlooked (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). Recent studies of inclusive education across cultural and national boundaries attest to complexities in comparative educational research (Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Daniels & Garner, 1999; Armstrong *et al.*, 2000). Booth (2000) contends that a comparative perspective challenges own assumptions and parochial concepts and makes the strange familiar and the familiar strange, but this requires a real effort.

Currently, it is an indisputable fact that “a range of different countries, with different education systems, different educational, social and cultural traditions and different definitions of ‘special educational needs’ seem to agree on inclusion as the way forward” (Dyson, 2001b:1). The efforts of the more affluent Western countries, where special education is as well resourced as mainstream education, towards a more inclusive education system will, however, significantly differ from those of poorer countries where special education has never been fully developed and where mainstream education is itself lacking in resources (Artiles & Dyson, 2005).

In this section of the discussion inclusive education will be explored as a global issue, as well as particular to the British context. As argued before, the movement to inclusive education in England is included in order to provide a macro-level niche for the development of the Index for Inclusion as a British artifact. According to the Human Development Index (HDI) England can be classified as a country with a high human development ranking, whilst South Africa is ranked as a medium development country. The HDI is a composite and comparative indicator of socio-economic development and comprises three factors: life expectancy, per capita income and level of education. It is measured on a scale of 0 to 1. An HDI below 0.5 indicates a low level of development, whereas an HDI above 0.5 indicates a higher level of development. The HDI divides countries into three groups: those with high human development, those with medium and those with low human development, and offers a powerful alternative to income as a summary measure of human well-being in a country (Human Development Report 2005). With regard to the 2005 Human Development Index the United Kingdom (England and Wales) has a high human development ranking of 0.939, whereas South Africa scores 0.658.

2.4.1 The global context of inclusive education

The work done by the United Nations within the social and humanitarian field is underpinned by a strong rights perspective which was first obvious in its Charter and in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recently the commitment to human rights was confirmed at the World Summit on Children in 2002 (Mittler, 2005).

The scope of the United Nations initiatives operates at different levels. The first was that of legally binding international treaties with mechanisms for public monitoring and accountability. One of these treaties, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (published in 1989), has particular relevance to this discussion. Mittler (2005) suggests that the impact of this treaty illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in international treaties. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) addresses the rights of children in general, but also refers to children with disabilities specifically. It was signed by all the countries in the world, with the exception of the United States of America and Somalia. Four principles underlie the CRC: non-discrimination on any grounds, also disability; the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard and to participate. Several of the Articles of the CRC have implications for children with disabilities. Article 23 indicates that children with disabilities should be allowed to enjoy a full and decent life; have the right to special care subject to available resources; have the right to relevant support free of charge whenever possible and taking into account the financial resources of the parents; and that information on preventative health care and on the medical, psychological and functional treatment of children with disabilities should be made available by all countries involved. Drawing on Quinn and Degener's (2002) critique of the CRC, Mittler (2005) indicates that as access for children with disabilities has not been set out as a right or a general entitlement based on need, the CRC treats children with disabilities less favourably than other groups of children and the medical model rather than the social model of disability underlies the approach as reflected in categorising disability as a health issue. Despite the fact that by 1992 this convention had formal commitment by over 107 countries and states, 35 of which were signatories of the convention (Dyson, 1999), the CRC stands in stark contrast to the reality of the worldwide exclusion of children from education. The CRC insists on both universal access to education and the right to an education of good quality. In addition, it stresses that consideration of what is in a child's best interest has to consider the diverse abilities of all children (Sandkull, 2005). The 2003 UNICEF annual report on the state of children worldwide indicates that 113 million children never attend schools and that another 150 million children drop out of school before they can read or write (Mittler, 2005). The majority of these children are girls and children with disabilities (Sandkull, 2005). In this way children are deprived of their basic human rights, especially the right to education. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education identifies discrimination as a key barrier to fulfilling the right to education that occurs in and through the education system. Sandkull (2005) argues that children should be seen as holders of the right to education, which implies not only the right to have access *to* education, but also that human rights must also be applied *in* education and promoted *through* education. This also raises questions with regard to the impact of international treaties (Mittler, 2005).

The United Nations has further issued a range of universal and specific Declarations on Human Rights which are not legally binding but which have acted as catalysts for the development of policies at national level and as frameworks for advocacy and lobbying. These declarations have promoted greater awareness of specifically the rights of students with disabilities and include the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971) and the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975). The latter was followed by a series of global programmes such as the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) and the Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992) (Dyson, 1999; Mittler, 2005). Since these initiatives were not legally binding and not internationally accountable, their impact was not strong. The most influential of these declarations was, however, the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, issued in 1993, despite limited impact in certain non-Western countries. The 22 Rules are entrenched in the social model of disability and concerned with empowering people with disabilities and with developing accessible communities for them by removing barriers to their participation. The Rules made an impact on different levels within the international community: they influenced the United Nations to adopt the human rights perspective on disability and they influenced many national governments to draw up new legislation on disability issues. Moreover, organisations of people with disabilities are now more centrally placed in countries in order to impact on policy development more powerfully (Mittler, 2005).

The third set of initiatives of the United Nations was the programmes initiated by different UN agencies, such as the contributions made by UNESCO in the field of inclusive education and Education for All (EFA) (Mittler, 2005). UNESCO is undoubtedly the key UN agency that has stimulated global awareness and actively promoted national development in the field of inclusive education. The work done by UNESCO can be summarised as that of information dissemination, consultancies and teacher development (Mittler, 2000). UNESCO’s contribution will receive further attention at a later stage in this discussion.

In my opinion Dyson’s (2001b) exploration of different ‘inclusions’ can also contribute to this discussion on inclusive education as ‘global denominator’ (Vislie, 2003). The first variety of inclusion is that of **inclusion-as-placement**, which has a long history in the form of the integration movement where the main issue on the agenda of the international and national governments (mostly in the Western world) was how to promote the right of individuals with disabilities to appropriate education until the end of the 1980s (Vislie, 2003). This variety of inclusion has as a main concern the best place of education for students with disabilities and other ‘special needs’. The emphasis here is on providing access to students with disabilities and other ‘special needs’ to their local mainstream schools and classrooms. Such access is regarded as a matter of human rights as part of the development of a society in which people with disabilities enjoy the same human rights as other citizens. In this case the target group is students with disabilities and those with 'special needs' who have the right of membership in mainstream schools and classrooms with the vision of an inclusive society as bottom line. The implications for schools will entail that the rights of these students are acknowledged and that the necessary support and adaptations are provided to ensure access.

The second variety of inclusion is that of **inclusion-as-education-for-all.** According to Dyson (2001b) this variety of inclusion has been promoted by UNESCO and is most fully articulated in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) where the term 'inclusive education' received recognition at a global level for the first time. A policy vision for a wider world context needed a new name to avoid giving the wrong signals to important partners in the process. The less affluent and non-Western countries would have experienced problems with integration as a descriptor for the new actions as the notion of integration was embedded in the Western history of the segregation of persons with a disability (Vislie, 2003). This variety of inclusion moves away from an emphasis on the rights of children with disabilities and is concerned with the universal principle of appropriate education for all (Dyson, 2001b). Mittler (2005) indicates that the Education for All initiative has several landmarks, of which the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 was the first. This conference was organised by UNICEF, UNESCO, the UN Development Programme and the World Bank (Mittler, 2000). The declaration on Education for All (EFA) was adopted at this a major United Nations conference attended by delegates from 155 countries and various NGOs, all concerned with children (Goldstein, 2004). At this conference it was agreed to aim for certain targets with regard to realising the principle of education for all. More targets were added in 1995 at the World Summits on Social Development in Denmark and on Women in Beijing, which were reviewed and reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 (Goldstein, 2004). According to Mittler (2005) earlier EFA initiatives still adhered to the medical model of disability, whereas the latest initiatives have adopted the social model of disability.

The second landmark of the EFA initiative, and undoubtedly the most influential up until now, was the Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action that was issued by UNESCO in 1994 as a result of the Salamanca Conference, which took place in Spain in the same year and was attended by representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organisations. It is widely acknowledged that Salamanca resulted in inclusion as 'a global descriptor' as the international community formally adopted a new policy and a new term which strongly affected international discourse in the educational field (Dyson, 1999; Vislie, 2003). The Salamanca Framework is employed in many countries, both Western and non-Western to review their educational policies to bring them in line with the principles of inclusive education as envisaged in the Salamanca Framework. The Framework proposes that developing schools with an inclusive orientation is the most effective means of improving the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system in a country (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). It defines the scope of inclusion within education in the following way (UNESCO, 1994:59):

> The guiding principle that informs this framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

The Framework thus requires the restructuring of educational institutions to accommodate all those children previously marginalised and excluded from the mainstream of education, hence the notion of an inclusive school (UNESCO, 1994). The Framework states the following with regard to the inclusive school (UNESCO, 1994:59, 60):

> The challenge confronting the inclusive school is that of developing a child-centred pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. The merit of such schools is not only that they are capable of providing quality education to all children; their establishment is a crucial step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating welcoming communities and in developing an inclusive society.

According to Dyson (2001b) three arguments are implicated in the Framework: the first is a social argument emphasising that inclusive education leads to a more inclusive society; the second is an educational argument that inclusive schools are more effective in educational terms; and the third is a 'resourcing' argument, indicating inclusive schools as efficient and cost-effective and the best means to realise the EFA principle. The Salamanca Statement has thus succeeded in reminding governments that children experiencing difficulties and those with disabilities should be included within the EFA initiative and that they are to be seen as part of a much larger group of children who were excluded from inclusion in schools (Mittler, 2000). The EFA initiative is based on the conviction of education as a human right, as the key to sustainable development and peace and in effect the means for effective participation in societies and economies affected by globalisation. This initiative stemmed from UNESCO's concern with developing education in poorer countries. The serious decline in access to basic education in these countries is also a reason for promoting the principle of EFA. Both the Salamanca Statement and the Framework thus adhere to the broad definition of inclusive education where schools are expected to be able to accommodate all students; not only guaranteeing the rights of students with disabilities, but the rights of all students facing possible exclusion from education on any possible grounds.

The third landmark of the EFA initiative was the World Education Forum of 2000 with its publication The Dakar Framework for Action also issued in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000; Mittler, 2005). The World Education Forum reaffirmed education as a fundamental human right and underlined the importance of rights-based government actions in implementing Education for All (EFA) activities at the national level in order to comply with the agreed principles and standards spelt out in the international human rights instruments. Reforming the education system is often necessary so that it fully promotes, protects and fosters human rights standards in content as well as in process. These attempts go hand in hand with the principles of inclusive education. EFA Goal number 6 states that activities should improve all aspects of the quality of education, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all. The strategy to realise this goal asserts that safe, healthy, protective, inclusive and equitable resourced educational environments should be created with clearly defined levels of achievement for all (Sandkull, 2005).

This Forum took place 10 years after the Jomtien Conference to review the progress that has been made with regard to the targets set to realise the vision of Education for All and to reaffirm this vision. Progress reports of participating countries indicated that, despite significant progress in many countries, more than 113 million children still did not have access to basic education, 880 million adults were illiterate, gender discrimination continued and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills did not meet the Jomtien targets (UNESCO, 2000). It seems as if the failure of some countries can be attributed to a lack of political will. Certain non-Western countries, however, have made progress by deliberately investing in education, with the aim of promoting inclusive education (Mittler, 2005). By signing the relevant international conventions and treaties each national state has a legal obligation to provide, promote and protect the right to education. Sandkull (2005) contends that the obligations derived from the right to education are categorised so as to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all children in meaningful ways. The principle of availability of education implies compulsory and free education for all children and parental freedom to choose the best education for their children; the principle of accessibility of education emphasises the non-exclusion of children from education on any grounds, with the added responsibility of eliminating gender and racial discrimination in education by ensuring equal enjoyment of all human rights in practice; the principle of acceptability implies the improvement of the quality of education by ensuring that the entire education system conforms to all human rights and setting minimum standards for education, including the contents in textbooks and curricula, methods of teaching, school discipline, health and safety and professional requirements for teachers; and adaptability as principle wants to emphasise the design and implementation of education for children excluded from formal schooling and to adapt education to serve the best interests of each child, especially regarding children with special needs, or minority and indigenous children.

The following six goals were set by more than 160 countries at the World Education Forum in Dakar to be realised by 2015: (1) wider access to early childhood care and education; (2) universal primary education; (3) improved youth and adult learning opportunities; (4) a 50% improvement in adult literacy rates; (5) gender equality; and (6) an improvement in all aspects of quality of education (UNESCO, 2000). A yearly report is compiled and the progress is measured by relying on the achievement of numerical targets. According to Goldstein (2004:13) the pursuing of EFA targets may be demoralising to certain less affluent countries not likely to achieve these targets and may "allow the imposition from outside of systemic reforms under the heading of 'remedies' to put these countries 'on track'". He recommends that the emphasis should be on allowing each educational system to develop its own criteria and targets which will allow space for a locally contextualised perspective. This would "offer more potential for improvement", rather than relying on "yardsticks implemented from a global perspective" (Goldstein, 2004:13). This is an interesting argument, but to my mind it is debatable from a global perspective.

The third variety of inclusion as identified by Dyson (2001b) is that of **inclusion-as-participation,** which extends the concern with whether and where students are educated to how fully they are allowed and invited to participate in educational processes. Here the emphasis on the inclusion of all students vulnerable to exclusion is maintained, but the notion of belonging within an inclusive school community is added. The expectation is that all students need to be included in mainstream schools and classrooms and that they should be invited to participate and learn in these settings. Schools need to be restructured and recultured rather than relying on the provision of support to certain identified students. Inclusion-as-participation is essentially a matter of values, of a certain approach to education and to students rather than a specific set of educational techniques. The concern is thus with creating a particular kind of inclusive institutional culture. The Index for Inclusion is a good example of work done within this variety of inclusion.

The last variety of inclusion is that of **social inclusion**. According to Dyson (2001b) social inclusion, as opposed to social exclusion, has been foregrounded in debates on poverty and disadvantage across the European Union. It is argued that social exclusion denies people their rights and human dignity and "leads in conjunction with social and economic instability, to the marginalization and deepening inequalities, which threaten the stability of democracy" (Edwards, Armstrong & Miller, 2001:418). It seems as if social inclusion is about rights, but also about obligations, as an active partnership is envisaged in which different groups, in return for their rights, makes a positive contribution to society. Being included within this variety of inclusion means to be employed, having an acceptable standard of living and opportunities for improvement in job and incomes. With regard to education, social inclusion as perspective implies a world class education system and to identify those individuals and groups of students who are at risk of educational failure and to provide intensive support for them to close the gaps between them and their peers. This variety of inclusion goes beyond presence and participation to encompass attainment. Attainment in education is necessary to thrive in the labour market and to help shape society. Schools should thus have strategies for raising the attainments of low-achieving individuals and groups (Dyson, 2001b.).

Mittler (2005) recognises the challenge for both the UN and national governments to turn rights into reality, but feels that, despite the slow progress towards inclusive education, conditions currently seem more favourable for a determined effort to achieve these goals at an international level. Fletcher (2005:282) argues that there is not sufficient authority vested within the UN to change national practices and policies and that "patterns of habit and attitudes adhered to for centuries will not be easily abandoned in response to legislative mandates". The UN needs more authority and a meaningful executive function to serve the common good of all without any self-interest. At least it seems as if many governments around the world are making education a greater priority, realising that children is their most precious asset and that "education is the key to a better society, not just for today's children but for future generations" (Mittler, 2000:171).

With regard to a global perspective on inclusion Dyson (2001b.) argues that despite the diverse interpretation of inclusion, the following commonalities of this notion can be identified: a commitment to building a more just society; a commitment to building a more equitable education system; and a conviction that extending the responsiveness of mainstream schools to learner diversity offers a means of realising these commitments. However, he feels that it is imperative that every country should find its own contextualised version of inclusion which will ensure a more inclusive education system that will address these commitments in a unique way.

2.4.2 Inclusive education in England

Under the 1944 Education Act in England the identification and provision for students with disabilities became the responsibility of the local education authority (LEA) and this is still the case (Ainscow, Farrell & Tweddle, 2000). The Act made provision for education that was funded and approved by the state for all children regardless of their characteristics. It was expected that mainstream schools would make some provision for students experiencing learning difficulties usually through special classes or remedial groups, and placement in special schools was only allowed after a thorough process of assessment by independent medical and psychological professionals. Placement in special schools was thus seen as the last resort (Dyson *et al.*, 1997).

Skidmore (2002) draws on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of mind to anchor his critique of special education practices in Britain. Like Vygotsky, he questions the view of students' educability based on the result of an essentially fixed cognitive ability supported by the intelligence quotient (IQ) theory. The idea of intelligence as fixed and innate and "distributed among the population in a normal curve carries with it a ready-made explanation for the manifest phenomenon of educational failure, *viz.* that the root cause lies in an underlying lack of ability on the part of the student" (Skidmore, 2002:121).

The acceptance of individual pathology results in special education and remedial classes. The remedial model allows for students to be withdrawn from the mainstream system to receive intensive separate teaching in basic skills. Their return to mainstream classrooms is dependent on the successful mastering of the necessary basic skills. According to Skidmore (2002) research in Britain indicates that many students remain in the remedial system throughout their school years, exposed to an impoverished curriculum. The remedial approach also deflects attention from the selective nature of the mainstream system. He suggests that patterns of selection and segregation in education impoverish the individual development of students and diminish the understanding of human difference.

The Warnock Report published in 1978 and the subsequent 1981 Education Act were seen as supportive of the integration movement in both England and Wales (Dyson *et al.*, 1997), but in reality subscribed to welfarism in the sense of help and support offered to students deemed ‘in need’. A framework for Special Education Needs (SEN) was established in the Education Act 1981 which continues to underpin special education in England: ‘special educational needs’ as a concept was introduced to replace categorization by ‘handicap’ (Norwich, 2002) and were defined very generally as ‘difficulty in learning’. A large group of students were deemed to have these ‘needs’ and many of them would be accommodated in mainstream education. ‘Special educational needs’ were to be assessed by professionals on an individual basis and the assessment would assist the LEAs to provide for these needs, and provision could equally be made in mainstream and in special schools (Dyson *et al.*, 1997). The underpinnings of the welfare, medical and psychological models are evident in the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act (Dyson, 2005). The education system as informed by the above legislation remained the same for two decades despite a few attempts at reform in the form of the 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1993 Education Act with its accompanying *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (Dyson *et al.*, 1997). The full title of the Code of Practice reflected a within-child model and the individual education plan (IEP) programme that it described were based on a similar assumption. A strong categorical element was also present. However, the essence of the Code of Practice also reflected a social model perspective with an emphasis on changes in the system in order to accommodate children with ‘special educational needs’ in mainstream schools (Mittler, 2000). Booth (2000) is not as positive about the Code of Practice and about the fact that it proposed minimum revision. To his mind the Code of Practice needed to be transformed to reflect an inclusive philosophy. The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995 and the ‘new’ Labour government elected in 1997 appointed a Disability Rights commission in April 2000 (Mittler, 2000).

The ‘new’ Labour government brought the education system in line with the international movement towards inclusive education in 1997. This was a notable move as the idea of inclusion and inclusive education was a relatively new trend in the English education system and it was rare for English governments to adhere to international declarations, especially in the field of education (Dyson, 1999). Despite the fact that the policy of inclusion has become a central part of government policy since 1997, the radical ideas about social justice have largely been lost within the technical approaches to inclusive education that frame policy applications in the narrower terms of 'school improvement', diversity of provision for different needs and academic achievement (Armstrong, 2005). Some new legislation and initiatives followed, such as Curriculum 2000 which marked a watershed, as the new National Curriculum, which was the result of a thorough process of consultation, was based on a set of explicit values. It carried a detailed statement on inclusion and a new emphasis on citizenship and personal, social and health education (Mittler, 2000). The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act in 2001 extended protections against discrimination on the grounds of disability and strengthened the rights of parents to choose a mainstream school for their child. Ofsted, the national schools inspectorate, issued guidance on how to determine the inclusiveness of schools. LEAs received guidance from the state on how to fund inclusive provision in their areas and schools were assisted in interpreting the new legislation. The post-welfarist approach to education in England since 1997 favours social inclusion as a variety of inclusion, as previously described in section 2.3.1, and has shifted the focus to educational attainment and achievement. There is a causal relationship between social exclusion/inclusion and educational success. Education is seen as the means to economic competitiveness. Consequently, social exclusion is combated (Alexiadou, 2002). Government policy, particularly in education, is largely driven by the need for global competitiveness (Ozga, 1999, cited in Alexiadou, 2002). Competition and choice, monetary pressures and incentives are thus central to the organisation of the education system in England and have increasingly come to inform the values on which it is based. This market-driven approach to education leaves little room for the consideration of social justice or for positions or practices that could be interpreted as being based on sentimentality (Armstrong, 2003).

Educational policies strongly emphasise the principle of market economics, measuring the quality of education by the successful raising of standards (Armstrong, 2003). The education system has thus become standards-driven, and highly accountable, but with an additional but related concern for the fate of those who have traditionally failed for a variety of reasons (Dyson, 2005). Although the two concepts 'raising standards' and 'social inclusion' seem to be in opposition to each other in many ways, they dominate educational reform initiatives (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004). Thus an individualised, competitive attitude that is not compatible with an emphasis on community values, cooperation, and social learning that is integral to inclusive education, is reinforced (Armstrong *et al.*, 2000). 'Excellence for the many' is therefore the motto for education and excluded and marginalised students are seen as the problem. The pressure on schools to reject or avoid attracting non-productive students is great, since it is argued that students that are disabled will lower the standards as they will not be able to keep up and will be a burden to the teachers who will be distracted from the proper task of teaching the other students. In positioning excluded groups of students as the problem and "focusing debate and policy-making on how they should be managed, attention is diverted from existing 'inequalities and conflicts of interest' in 'mainstream' society" (Armstrong, 2003:248). There seems to be an inherent conflict in what the government is trying to accomplish by "raising standards in terms of narrow performance criteria within a market framework, and the political and moral imperative of cultural transformation of education as a process of achieving greater equity and participation" (Armstrong, 2003:248).

When talking about inclusion in the light of this discourse, the task of schools is not simply to make students with 'special educational needs' feel welcome, but also to find ways to raise their attainments along with all the other students who are vulnerable to social exclusion. When schools are inspected for inclusiveness, their ability to raise the attainment of all 'at risk' students is at play (Dyson, 2005). Social inclusion focuses more on educational outcomes and, particularly, on the re-engagement of marginalised groups with learning, with no specific emphasis on the place of learning (Dyson, 2001a). In the light of the English government's emphasis on social exclusion, schools in England focus more on "changing attitudes to schooling in areas of social disadvantage, for instance, or finding ways of reducing truancy, or improving the writing skills of boys" and not so much on the "presence and participation" of students with "special educational needs" (Dyson, 2001a:28). Social inclusion is more about a focus on acquiring skills to survive in a competitive labour market and active engagement with a stakeholder democracy. Emphasis is not on individuals and cultural change in schools, but on intensive training and support targeted at areas and groups rather than at individuals to enable everybody with basic skills to survive in a competitive environment (Dyson, 2001a).

Wedell (2005), who detects a much greater degree of questioning about the education system in England, states that there is currently worldwide agreement that education systems have to recognise and accommodate diverse student needs effectively. A positive trend is discernible on the ground where groups of teachers are actively advocating for inclusive education in response to the harshness of competitive education policies with little emphasis on inclusive school communities (Booth, 2000). It seems as if there is "a marginal turn away from the culture of target-setting and an even modest acknowledgement that there might be more to education than attainment" (Dyson, 2005:83). There are various indications of this revised approach, such as the title of the recent special needs policy paper issued by the Department for Education and Skills in 2004: *Removing Barriers to Achievement;* the appointment of teaching assistants to support classroom teachers; the Minister of State's exhortation to teachers to develop 'personalised learning' to encourage a more responsive approach to teaching; and the increasing awareness that the curriculum has to be reconceptualised (Wedell, 2005).

Against this backdrop Dyson (2005) argues that inclusion is not a simple event, but that it usually enters an arena that is characterised by complexities and ambiguities which result from deep-seated dilemmas. Underpinning the dilemmas are fundamental social processes – in the case of England they seem to be fundamental economic processes. Alexiadou (2002) and Armstrong (2003) maintain that what is needed is a critical examination and re-evaluation of the premises on which the education system is based and of all areas of social, personal and political life, while Wedell (2005) calls for a more flexible school system as the rigidities of the current school system are not practical for the implementation of inclusive education. There is, however, an increasing concern that the system is no longer adequate for students in general and thus needs to be changed. Wedell (2005) recommends that the aim should be to meet individual student needs in relation to a relevant curriculum. Schools should be able to devise a flexible approach to grouping that will meet the objectives of inclusion to ensure the effective progress of individual students. Consequently, "[t]he overriding principle of valuing the individual pupil would ensure that stigma is no longer associated with the varieties of groupings, since they will be applied to all pupils, not just to those labelled as having special needs" (Wedell, 2005:10).

This discussion on the development of inclusive education in England provides the macro-level backdrop to the creation of the Index for Inclusion. When the Index for Inclusion was first published in 2000 for use in England, only the Department of Education and Employment distributed it to all primary and secondary schools in the country in order to support the implementation of inclusive education. The Index for Inclusion has now been adapted for use in 25 countries (Booth, 2005; Rustemier & Booth, 2005).

2.5 A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.5.1 Introduction

As previously indicated, South Africa is in the medium human development ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI). It also holds an intermediate position with regard to the mean distance from meeting the EFA goals as indicated in the EFA Global Monitoring Report of 2005. Its ranking on the HDI has been dropping steadily from 2000, due to the devastation of the HIV and Aids pandemic that has caused life expectancy to fall dramatically. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report of 2005 South Africa shows an achievement rate of 0.839 with regard to meeting the EFA goals. According to the South Africa Survey for 2004/2005 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2005) South Africa spends 18.1% of its total government expenditure on education and in this compares favourably with more affluent countries and other less affluent countries. Despite the fact that schools are accessible to the majority of South African children, the country is not getting value for money from its education system as the skills produced are expensive and their quality low (Taylor, 2006).

Since 1994 education reform was introduced in South Africa in order to restructure and transform a fragmented, unequal and authoritarian education system into a more inclusive and democratic one.

The unified and non-racial National Education Department undertook to change the education system by instituting new policies and legislation (Lomofsky & Green, 2004), guided by the values and principles underlying the Bill of Rights included in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1996 (RSA, 1996a). The launching of White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in 2001 committed the Ministry of Education of South Africa to an inclusive education and training system (DoE, 2001). The movement to an inclusive education and training system in South Africa, however, makes for an interesting exploration of an education system that shifted from a segregated and traditional education paradigm to an inclusionary education system built on the celebration of human rights.

2.5.2 Education in South Africa before 1994

The institutionalisation of apartheid after 1948 had a significant impact on education. Education was part of the apparatus used by the state to ensure that apartheid continued in South Africa (Naicker, 1999b). The apartheid government categorised and classified people in terms of race and four major races were identified: White, Indian, Coloured and Black. The racial classification of South Africans had an impact on every aspect of their lives. Education legislation and policy entrenched racial segregation and inequality and education and educational support services were provided along racial lines with massive inequalities evident (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000). Nineteen separate education departments, governed by specific legislation and fragmented along racial lines, reinforced the divisions in the education system (Naicker, 2005). These inequalities developed because of the unfair, inadequate and inappropriate provision of education created by the political and economic priorities of the apartheid system. They also had their source in the ways in which differences in learning needs were perceived, and in educational practices which isolated and evaluated those students who were regarded as different from the norm (Howell, 2000; 2007). Special education was fragmented not only by apartheid laws but also by legislation and policy that separated mainstream students from those categorised as having ‘special needs’. These students were accommodated in a second education system apart from the mainstream education system, which led to exclusionary practices, negative stereotyping and marginalisation of students with ‘special needs’ (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000). The history of provision for students with ‘special needs’ in South Africa reflects many of the inequalities and divisions that existed within society as a whole (Howell, 2000).

South African teachers were repressed and had very limited professional autonomy before 1994. Under the apartheid government, teachers’ work was strictly controlled through a system of inspection. The inspection system was punitive rather than supportive and developmental. The accountability system undermined teachers’ autonomy and they came to rely on the agency of the state to direct them in doing their work. Consequently teachers lost confidence in their own ability to participate in democratic processes. Because teacher education was underpinned by a fundamental pedagogy that instilled passiveness and obedience to authority, they also expected the same from the students in their classrooms. Critical and independent thinking was not valued (Wits Education Policy Unit, 2005).

The quality of education during the apartheid era was generally unacceptable, and resistance against the inferior 'black education' was integral to the freedom struggle in education. Resistance to apartheid education led to mass protest demonstrations in the 1980s (Chisholm, 1999). These pressures brought about efforts to upgrade the quality of education for the deprived groups, but it soon became evident that the only answer would be a transformation of the total education system.

Educational thinking in South Africa has generally been strongly influenced by international trends. In the early 1960s the dominant American model was followed and categories for physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities were created. Children were placed in special schools that were segregated along racial lines and provided mostly for white children. The medical model, which located the deficit in the child and employed mainly remedial and curative interventions, was dominant in South Africa. In the early 1980s the De Lange Commission adhered to the philosophy of the British Warnock Report and moved towards the broader focus of 'special educational needs' (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). In influential reports, published even before the new democratic government came into power, changes in education – and especially in special education thinking – became noticeable. These reports include the Educational renewal strategy in 1991, the Report of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) in 1992, the Report on Support Services , also in 1992, the Report on students with special educational needs in 1994 and the ANC's A policy framework for education and training in 1994 (Du Toit, 1996).

According to Howell (2000) the changes envisaged for South Africa have been significantly influenced by the international shift towards Education for All (EFA). The following principles by which the NEPI Document was guided were given particular significance in the Report on Support Services: the protection of human rights, values and social justice; a unitary education system; non-discrimination, non-racism and non-sexism; democracy; the redress of educational inequalities; and a cost-effective education system (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). The NEPI Document employed a broad definition of 'special needs', which included a diverse range of students who experienced learning breakdown or were excluded from the education system. It was estimated that there were approximately 4 174 197 children of school-going age with 'special needs' in South Africa in 1990, of which 3 844 295 were black students, for whom there were almost no support services (Howell, 2000). The disparities and imbalances in the separate special education system become clear through the following statistics as indicated in the NEPI Document of 1992. By 1990 the white education department had 89 special schools representing 37.1% of the total number of special schools, whilst the students made up only 9.7% of the total number of students. There were 71 special schools for black students, which constituted 29.6% of special schools, whilst the students represented 79.1% of the total number of students. There were 60 special schools for Indians (25% of all special schools), whereas the students made up only 8.7% of the total number of students. The Coloured communities had 20 special schools (8.3% of special schools), whilst they constituted only 2.4% of the student population. Compounding these problems was the legacy of 15 years in which schools had been a site of resistance to the apartheid government. The culture of resistance left a legacy of severely dysfunctional schools (Fleisch, 2002).

In 1994 the new government inherited a legacy in which there were two parallel systems of education with a deep chasm between the two. There was the dominant mainstream education system which was itself fragmented and divided along racial lines, "as well as a peripheral and racially divided system of specialised education" (Howell, 2000:112). According to Hay and Malindi (2005), South Africa's dual education system varied considerably in quality, with some parts comparable to the established dual systems of more affluent countries such as the United Kingdom, whereas other parts of the system could be compared to the developing dual education systems of countries such as Namibia. There was, however, nowhere a total absence of special schools, even though they were thinly spread in especially the black education department.

2.5.3 Educational policy development since 1994

The ANC plan to transform the education system had four objectives: administrative restructuring, equity and redress, democratic governance and curriculum reform (Fleisch, 2002). A number of key policies and legislation with a strong human rights emphasis have been developed since 1994 with the potential to address the inequalities of the past and to create equal opportunities for all students The policy development process has a broad approach to restructure the education system as a whole, but specific initiatives with regard to students with 'special needs' have also been produced (Howell, 2000). The challenge to establish a single education system was achieved within the first year of democracy as the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995 set up a framework for an integrated education and training system (Naicker, 2005).

In 1995 the South African Federal Council on Disability set up a task team on education that wanted to see change in an outdated and stagnant system of specialised education and services. Surprisingly, up until that stage none of the first trends towards mainstreaming/inclusion had as yet surfaced in South Africa (Schoeman, 2000). The task team aligned itself with the key principles of the Salamanca Statement and issued a statement in favour of an inclusive education system. According to Schoeman (2000), this was remarkable for its time as most people were opposed to inclusion in any form.

The principles of the NEPI Document informed White Paper 1 on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa published in 1995 as the first policy document on education and training published by South Africa's new democratic government (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). A Draft White Paper on Education and Training was initially published in 1994 for consultation and received good media coverage and response from relevant individuals, organisations and institutions (Du Toit, 1996). The White Paper on Education and Training of 1995 introduced the following important key initiatives:

- The Culture of Teaching, Learning and Services (COLTS) with the aim to restore the culture of teaching and learning, which was seriously eroded in schools, and also respect for diversity;
- The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which was established to give recognition to prior knowledge and the concept of lifelong learning and to build a just, equitable and quality education system;
- An outcomes-based curriculum which was designed to respond to student diversity, which became policy in South Africa in 1997;
- The New Language Policy, which recognises 12 official languages, of which one is sign language.

White Paper 1 of 1995 further states the intention to explore a holistic, integrated and inclusive approach to educational support services (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). This White paper provided the basis for the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b). This Act declared the intention of amending the National Policy for General Education Affairs Act of 1984 and the necessity to adopt legislation to facilitate the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one that serves the needs and interests of all the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights. The Minister promised to determine national educational policy in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and this Act and to adhere to the basic principles of democracy, equity, inclusion, accountability and also transparency. White Paper 2, The organization, governance and funding of schools, was also issued in 1996 (DoE, 1996).

The Constitution of South Africa is grounded in principles of democracy, equity, non-discrimination and a respect for the human rights of all and sets a constitutionally binding framework for all national and provincial legislative action in the field of education (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999). The Constitution focuses on three basic rights, namely the right to equality, the right to human dignity, and the right to education. These rights were often violated during the apartheid era in South Africa. The right to education appears in section 29, which states that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education. Furthermore, everyone has the right to further and higher education, which the state has to make progressively available and accessible. Education documents since 1996 and even before, entrenched the following principles as enshrined in the Constitution: education as a basic human right, quality education for all students, equity and redress of the imbalances of the past, the right of choice, curriculum entitlement and the rights of parents (Green, 2001; Hay & Malindi, 2005; Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000).

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996c) embodies the principles of the Constitution and recognises student diversity and quality education within a single system of education. The Act removes all previous legislation dealing with education and makes provision for a single system of education (Howell, 2000; Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004). According to this Act (RSA, 1996c:1) the newly established national education system will

> redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all students and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all students, parents and educators.

This Act determined the compulsory school-going age as between seven and 15 years of age and stipulated that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) must be established at each school, allowing for greater autonomy in school governance and funding at the local level. The main stakeholders are the principal, teachers, parents and community members, all of whom need to engage in capacity-building programmes. The SGB must have representation for students with ‘special educational needs’ and parents are allowed the right of choice of an appropriate school for their children (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). Sign language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school and corporal punishment is abolished. No person at a school may administer corporal punishment to a student and any person committing such an act is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault. In this way the rights of students have also been acknowledged.

During 1997 the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy was issued by the Ministerial Office of the Deputy President. The White Paper adopted a social model of disability and the need to restructure society to ensure full participation for all was acknowledged. The White Paper resulted in concrete steps being taken to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as any other citizen of the Republic of South Africa. An Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP) was duly established in the President’s office with satellite offices to be developed in each province (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). The White Paper determines that all South Africans should have equal access to educational and social opportunities and that education should be made available in as ‘normal’ an environment as possible to all persons with disabilities (Muthukrishna, 2001).

The disparities and lack of provision for a large majority of South Africans made research necessary in order to provide an education system that could benefit all students. With this in mind the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) in 1996 to do a needs analysis of all aspects of ‘special needs and support services’ and to make recommendations in this regard. The intention of the Minister of Education to appoint such a working group had already been announced in the White Paper on Education and Training in 1995 (DoE, 1995). The Report on the findings and recommendations of these two bodies made a significant contribution to educational policy development for students with diverse learning needs in South Africa.

The following principles guided the work of the NCSNET/NCESS Commission: democratic and transparent processes were upheld; a participatory approach to the involvement of the public was endorsed, attempting to involve relevant stakeholders in the fullest manner possible; and there was a strong commitment to explore an indigenous response to the local needs of students. The work of the two amalgamated bodies was conducted in a fully democratic and participatory way with the emphasis on a problem-centred approach to the challenges presented by the unique South African context. The NCSNET/NCESS Commission consulted widely with key stakeholders in education and workshops and public hearings took place in all the provinces (DoE, 1997; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000; Naicker, 1999b).

In line with international concerns and shifts in thinking, the NCSNET/NCESS Commission carefully explored what is meant by ‘special needs’ and the extent to which the categorisation of students in this way is useful in meeting different learning needs. They noted that within this group of students with ‘special educational needs’ a vast range of learning needs existed and that these students were the ones vulnerable to learning breakdown and exclusion. Different learning needs may arise from a range of factors, including physical, intellectual or sensory impairments, psycho-social disturbances, cognitive differences, specific life experiences or economic deprivation (DoE, 1997).

The NCSNET/NCESS Commission acknowledged that a dynamic relationship exists between the student, the centre of learning, the broader education system and the social, political and economic context of which they are a part. Problems and difficulties may thus arise in the school, the system as a whole, the broader society, the family or community, or within the students themselves. Where these problems are not addressed successfully, learning breakdown and exclusion occur. In the past, the education system was unable to meet the full range of learning needs in the student population. The NCSNET/NCESS Commission argued that those factors which prevent the system from meeting the full range of learning needs can be conceptualised as barriers to learning and development. The following key barriers were identified as important to be addressed within the South African education system: socio-economic barriers; factors that place students at risk, such as violence and crime, HIV and Aids and substance abuse; an inflexible curriculum; language and communication (since in many cases teaching and learning occurs in a language which is not students' first language); inaccessible and unsafe built environments; a lack of enabling and protective legislation; a lack of parental recognition and involvement; disability; a lack of human resources development; and problems in the provision and organisation of education due to vast imbalances and disparities in education provision with regard to the different bands of education, rural/urban contexts and different provinces. It seemed that despite the system of compulsory education, many students – to a great extent those with disabilities who had been excluded from mainstream schools – remained outside formal education. Street children also made up a large part of the student population that was excluded from formal schooling (DoE, 1997; Howell, 2000; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000).

The NCSNET/NCESS Report *Quality Education for All: Overcoming barriers to learning,* published in 1997, recommended that all students should have access to a single education system that could accommodate student diversity in meaningful ways. It also emphasised their right to participate in mainstream economic and social life and contended that no student should be prevented from participating in the education system on any grounds. Mainstream teachers should be trained to identify and address barriers to learning in classrooms and schools (DoE, 1997).

The Report further recommended an ongoing campaign to raise public awareness and to address discriminatory attitudes within the education and broader society. It proposed a move away from an 'individual change' to a 'systems change' approach, thus moving away from supporting the individual student to supporting the system to be more responsive to student diversity through a structured community-based, preventative and developmental approach. Development programmes for teachers and other human resources were seen as important and in order to facilitate a welcoming and supportive ethos for learning and teaching, all aspects of a school as centre of learning should be developed. All schools were expected to develop a policy of inclusion, respect for humanity and on-going anti-discrimination and human rights programmes. It was further emphasised that the development and provision of a flexible curriculum that could respond to the diverse learning needs of the student population and on-going assessment and intervention, as well as partnerships with parents, should be promoted. (Outcomes-based education is recognised as a potential tool for achieving this.) The development and implementation of a practical plan to move towards the vision of an inclusive education and training system was seen as essential. This implied that adequate financial and other resources needed to be provided to implement this vision (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

According to Naicker (1999a) the introduction of the outcomes-based education (OBE) curriculum in 1997 preceded the work of the NCSNET/NCESS Commission. It was the most influential in transforming the education system in South Africa as the implementation of transformational OBE requires a major reorganisation of any education system (see section 2.4.1.1). Schoeman (2000) argues that the national implementation of outcomes-based education, albeit not equally successful everywhere, does indicate the prerequisites for effective inclusion, namely cooperative learning, flexible models of assessment and student-centred pedagogy. By accommodating diverse learning needs, OBE is inclusive by nature (Lomofsky & Green, 2004). The outcomes-based curriculum rests on the assumptions that all students can be successful in the learning process, but not at the same time and in the same way; successful learning can result in more successful learning experiences; schools can and should create the space and possibility for success; and teachers should have high expectations of all students. A continuous assessment policy forms an integral part of outcomes-based education (Naicker, 1999a). OBE emphasises the teacher's contribution in curriculum development and highlights the need for teachers to develop their competence in identifying and responding to local needs in order to provide a flexible programme to accommodate diverse learning needs (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999).

Further Education and Training (FET) was legislated in the Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998 which was further elaborated on in White Paper 4 in 1998 as well as in the National Strategy for Further Education and Training, 1999-2001**.** Inclusion is also promoted at the secondary level and in technical colleges**.** The Higher Education Act was passed in 1997 and White Paper 3 provided for a unified national system of higher education. The Council on Higher Education will act as a quality assurance mechanism. The National Plan for Higher Education followed in 2001 (Naicker, 2005). From the above discussion the phenomenal spate of policy change is evident and reflects the government's desire to restructure and transform the education system in line with international developments and a human rights perspective.

On 30 August 1999 the Consultative Paper No. 1 on Special Education: *Building an inclusive education and training system: First steps* was released by the Department of Education to the public for comment and advice. This Paper was widely criticised for its conservative approach to the recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS Commission. In this regard Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000) argue that the Consultative Paper retained the language of the traditional, medical, deficit model that locates learning and other difficulties within the individual student. This reflected serious contradictions in terms of the paradigm shift necessary for the establishment of an inclusive education and training system in South Africa. A draft White Paper: Special Education: *Building an inclusive education and training system* was released in March 2000 and in 2001 White Paper 6 of 2001*: Building an inclusive education and training system* was published as the most recent policy document in the movement to inclusive education. In the introduction to White Paper 6, Professor Kader Asmal, then Minister of Education, emphasised the importance of the White Paper and the Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development in post-apartheid policy development and policy making that started in 1994 (DoE, 2001:4). The findings and recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS Report were seriously considered and informed this important White Paper which provides a framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system in South Africa (DoE, 2001; Lomofsky & Green, 2004; Swart & Pettipher, 2005). According to Schoeman (2000) it was not an easy process to convince all stakeholders that inclusive educational policy is not an addition to the process of transformation in all South African schools but is the means by which such transformation can be accomplished.

White Paper 6 outlines the Ministry of Education's commitment to providing educational opportunities for all students who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development and as a result have been denied access to education, or who experienced learning breakdown and dropped out of the learning process. The education system's failure to accommodate a range of diverse learning needs at any time or place is acknowledged. The key barriers to learning and development as indicated in the NCSNET/NCESS Report are recognised as those that need to be addressed in order to prevent further learning breakdown and exclusion. The aim of the policy document is to address the inequalities of the apartheid education system. It also challenges fundamental assumptions about teaching and learning that give rise to discrimination against particular groups of students, such as those with disabilities, who are recognised as having been the most vulnerable in the past. White Paper 6 estimates that approximately 280 000 students with disabilities were outside the education system in 2001. Of particular importance is the declaration that, in order to provide for the full range of diverse learning needs in schools and classrooms, a realistic framework for systemic change with strategies towards gradually building the capacity to respond to such diversity is necessary (Howell & Lazarus, 2003). The White Paper also emphasises the contribution that a transformed education and training system can make in establishing a caring and humane South African society (DoE, 2001).

In White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:6, 7) an inclusive education and training system is defined as:

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all students;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in students, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases;
- Broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures;

- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all students;
- Maximising the participation of all students in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.

From the above it is evident that the document adheres to the broad definition of inclusive education, acknowledging that all students can experience barriers to learning at some time or other and that support should be made available to accommodate a range of diverse learning needs. The policy document further views inclusion as being about recognising and respecting student diversity; supporting all students, teachers and the system as a whole in order to address the full range of learning needs; focusing on teaching and learning actions with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will benefit all students; focusing on identifying and minimising barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs; and making support available in the classroom (DoE, 2001).

This framework outlined in the policy document provides for a realistic and effective process of implementation. White Paper 6 suggests a 20-year plan to transform the education system into an inclusive education and training system. In this time short-term, medium-term and long-term steps will be included with the intention of ensuring sufficient human resources development to equip teachers with the necessary competencies to accommodate student diversity in a meaningful way. Human resources development for classroom teachers is considered important as teachers are recognised as the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system. Management and governance development plans are also emphasised in order to realise the ideal of inclusive settings of learning and teaching. Schools will have to be made accessible through the development of physical and material resources, and intersectoral collaboration at all levels is stressed. All existing legislation and policies will be reviewed so that these will be consistent with policy proposals as set out in White Paper 6 (Lomofsky & Green, 2004).

The importance of student and teacher support also receives attention in the policy document. A community-based support approach is emphasised and education support services will be strengthened with a focus on the development of district support teams, education support teams and a new support role for special schools as resource centres, incorporated in district support teams to support mainstream and full-service schools. The provision of support will be based on a continuum of the intensity of support needed to overcome barriers to learning and development. Students who require low-intensity support will receive this in mainstream schools; students who require moderate-intensity learning support will receive it in full-service schools; and high-intensity support will be provided in special schools. The quality of special schools will be raised to enable them to support students with high-intensity support and to act as resource centres for district support teams (Lomofsky & Green, 2004).

A small number of mainstream primary schools (approximately 500 out of 20 000, beginning with the 30 school districts that are part of the national District Development Programme) will be identified to be converted into full-service schools which will be able to cater for student diversity in more appropriate ways. The purpose of selecting only a few schools as full-service schools is to ensure rigorous development and research to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the plan for creating inclusive schools. Within mainstream education management teams, governing bodies and professional staff will be introduced to inclusive education. The early identification of disabilities and intervention in the Foundation Phase is also mentioned as a priority (DoE, 2001).

The implementation of national advocacy and information programmes in all the provinces is deemed necessary to facilitate a shift in thinking about 'special needs and support' towards what support for the establishment of an inclusive education and training system will entail. The provision of appropriate and adequate funding support, focusing on addressing particularly the education needs of the most vulnerable students and schools, has been identified as a priority in the short and medium term (DoE, 2001; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). A rights model of education in the South African context as propagated in educational policy moves away from a medical model of difference and institutional discrimination towards creating possibilities, not only in terms of race, but also with regard to ability, interest, intelligence and style (Naicker, 2005). The emphasis on the successful accommodation of student diversity is also centrally placed within the new curriculum and implies that the 'policy stage' is set for a clear move towards inclusive outcomes education based on a rights model with its own theory, assumptions, models practices and tools.

Teacher education in South Africa is a complex phenomenon, mostly due to the educational policies and practices of the apartheid government. The National Teacher Education Audit published in 1995 declared that the quality of teacher education was generally poor, despite pockets of excellence and innovation. Teachers were not prepared for the realities of South African schools (Le Roux, 1996; Oswald, 2007). The South African Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment Report (DoE, 2000) declared that the previous system of teacher education had not succeeded in empowering all teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. Therefore a large proportion of unqualified and under-qualified teachers remain in the system. This is especially applicable to teachers in the previously disadvantaged school communities, who had no opportunities for self-development (Oswald, 2007).

With regard to teacher training policy, the Norms and Standards for Educators as gazetted on 4 February 2000 provide "the clearest policy direction" (Welch, 2002) for a curriculum framework for teacher development. It is an attempt of the Department of Education (2000) to ensure that qualified, committed and competent teachers are working towards quality education for all. Teachers in South Africa are expected to show foundational, practical and reflective competence in seven different roles: (1) learning mediator; (2) leader, administrator and manager; (3) learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist, (4) interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; (5) scholar, researcher and lifelong learner (6) assessor; (7) community, citizenship and pastoral role. These seven roles highlight the multidimensional responsibility of the teacher (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006), and include competencies related to a critical and inclusive handling of diversity.

With regard to teachers' role as mediator of learning, the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000b:13) state that

> the educator will mediate learning in manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning; construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualized and inspirational; communicate effectively showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others.

The more recent National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2006) affirms the principles of the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000b) and thus validates the importance of effectively addressing the diverse learning needs of students. Professional development for teachers is recognised as a life-long journey with pre-service education as just the beginning. The continuing development of new knowledge, skills, perspectives, as well as the ability to plan and develop learning programmes with diverse learning needs in mind, is considered indispensable for teachers within the transforming South African education system (Oswald, 2007).

The pressure within teacher education to address diversity has been only one of the many pressing issues around transformation in education. A further impact on teacher education has been the process of national curriculum change. There have been far-reaching curriculum changes related to the introduction of outcomes-based education (OBE) and the revision of the national curriculum on the basis of values of human rights, social justice and inclusivity (Hemson, 2006). The introduction of a new outcomes-based curriculum and inclusive education heightened the need for quality teacher training (Oswald, 2007).

2.5.4 Educational policy implementation since 1994

The South African Constitution and Bill of Rights and subsequent educational policy directives make the transformation of South African society and the education system an imperative. During the apartheid era education was a site of contestation but it is now expected to transform both itself and society at large. It is seen as a vehicle for improving employability, democratic citizenship and a better life (Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998). According to Mitter (2004), the role of education in the outcome of transformational processes in society should not be underestimated. The place of education systems in transformation processes will go beyond mere supportive functions and will include both contributive and anticipative functions in which all persons involved in educational decisions and actions at grassroots level will play a role during the transformation of the system. During the first phase of transformation in particular, educational policy at macro-level would not make any worthwhile impact on micro-level as education systems are slow to change and it is not possible to effortlessly transform an old and especially conservative education system (Mitter, 2004). Whilst policy making is important, policy alone will not be able to bring about the system-wide transformation that is necessary. New policies and new curricula will not work magic as the context and agency of role-players need to be acknowledged and accommodated (Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998). It is also important that the introduction of each policy initiative should be contextualised within the change processes of other initiatives to transform the education system and other government and spheres of society (Kholofelo, 1998).

The educational policy framework has in mind the transformation of the education system from one that was controlling, rigid, hierarchical, bureaucratic, conservative, centralised, disempowering with a lack of ownership, fragmented, closed and discriminatory, to one that is transformative, democratic, visionary, flexible, collegial, decentralised, empowering with stakeholder ownership, open and inclusive. Democracy is emphasised as constituting different voices and experiences contributing through dialogue or participation in communities of inquiry to creating a shared vision for education (Morrow, 2002; Powell, 2002). Education is regarded as central to democracy and nation building and is an important prerequisite for meaningful access to economic, social and political life. The dialogue or the practice of discussion (inquiry) as propagated by Morrow (2002) is viewed as central to a process of transformation that comes into play in building inclusive and democratic school communities (Powell, 2002). For Morrow (2002), the fostering of communities of inquiry is at the heart of democratic education for both teachers and students. This implies a fundamental shift for the education system akin to the strength of a paradigm shift and foregrounds the importance of policy implementation on a systematic and system-wide scale (Welton, 2001). The South African case of system-wide educational change is important as it provides insights into how educational transformation happens in the context of high levels of economic and political inequality, as well as into a national change process that is framed by complex and conflicting ideas of democracy (Fleisch, 2002).

Several challenges face policy implementation within the South African context (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001) of which the challenge of transforming a country and also by implication its education system, while simultaneously dealing with global economic adjustment, is only the first one to consider (Fleisch, 2002). South Africa does not have the luxury of time as globalisation forces every nation to compete for scarce goods and services. Because of the great economic and social difficulties that South Africa experiences, it is imperative for the country to address the many disparities that persist in the country as quickly and effectively as possible in the process of nation building. Equal education is promised in policy directives, but ideology alone cannot transform the practice of education (Powell, 2002).

Globalisation is often discussed with regard to the economic and technological domains, but it is its cultural consequences that hold special challenges to the democratic values as propagated by educational policy in South Africa (Porteus, 2002). Morrow (2002) contends that present-day forms of globalisation are drenched with instrumental rationality. Instrumental rationality holds the fundamental assumption that science will enable us to overcome all problems (Morrow, 2002) and supports values such as global capitalism, namely materialism, individuality and competition, with the "more aggressive constructs of masculinity" as part of the package that becomes an integral part of our private and communal lives (Porteus, 2002:223). Globalisation tends to polarise social structures as the so-called "flexibility of the global economy does not purport to link up everybody from everywhere, but rather connect everything that is valuable according to dominant values and interests, while disconnecting everything that is not valuable or that becomes devalued" (Porteus, 2002:223). According to Morrow (2002:18) the South African society is currently geared towards "greed and competitive individualism, where market forces seem to override all other social ties" and it shows "worrying signs of the perpetuation of the historical divisions that should have been overcome in a democratic society". As South Africa deepens its participation in the global economy, tensions between equity and growth persist and increase the distinct possibility of growth winning out over equity (Sayed, 2003). This again poses a potential threat to the values underlying the notion of schools as inclusive and democratic communities as implicitly propagated in recent educational policy (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004).

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996c) has laid the foundation for a structure of central dominance with the national parliament responsible for the educational budget, but within this centralised framework the nine provincial departments of education, as well as local school governing bodies composed of parents, teachers and students in the case of high schools are allowed significant powers of self-rule (Mitter, 2004). Welton (2001) argues that while there is a great deal of activity at national, provincial and local level to transform the educational system, the work is too fragmented, uneven and in overall terms, too weak to realise deep-rooted educational change. The implementation of educational policy in South Africa is doomed to failure without a realistic system-wide strategy for implementation including a major programme of reskilling, re-empowerment and support. In the absence of these processes policy statements may seem to be merely symbolically attractive (Welton, 2001; Jansen, 2001).

Jansen (2001) feels that it is necessary to distinguish between policy formulation goals and implementation goals as educational policy for educational change only becomes a reality when it is implemented at school and classroom level (Smit, 2001; O'Sullivan 2002). In the case of the implementation of educational policy, the national and provincial departments of education as bureaucratic offices work more narrowly with the practitioners at grassroots level. State bureaucracies are however complex institutions that shape and influence the legislative agendas handed to them with the result that policy is continually designed through implementation which is particularly true with regard to complex policies without a sound framework of implementation. Likewise, schools have cultures and agency that are critical in the implementation of legislative and bureaucratic innovations. Even well-planned legislation cannot foresee all the potential problems and challenges that will arise during the implementation phase (Fleisch, 2002). Drawing on Bowe, Balls and Gold (1992:22) Smit (2001:68) argues that

> practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own and they have vested interests in the meaning of policy. Policies will be interpreted differently as the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests which make up the arena differ. The simple point is that policy will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous etc.

Welton (2001) reports that senior education managers feel they are largely still responding to crises, working in a top-down organisational culture, and that they enforce regulations. They have received little training for their new roles. He contends that "[t]he pressure felt by teachers, head teachers, senior education managers and others is leading to grassroots cynicism and, in some areas, an apparent rejection of the transformation policies as simply jargon – a symbolic rather than a practical reality" and that in certain cases the gap between policy and practice at local level is such that "there is a danger that the transformation policies will be seen as foreign implants subject to a process of 'tissue rejection'" (Welton, 2001:180).

There is also an increasing recognition that successful policy changes require structures, role-players and processes that are both responsive to change and innovation and capable of working with these changes (Sayed, 2002). An essential characteristic of the South African education system during apartheid was a conservative stance. Vestiges of conservatism are still apparent in the need for control and resistance to change and innovation, the authoritarian nature of leadership, the concentration on administrations and routine administrative work, the concentration on the transmission of knowledge, sexism in educational leadership and the conservative values and beliefs of the larger school community (Welton, 2001; Williams, 2001). New management and teaching approaches are based on democratic, inclusive and participative relationships, reflective practice, experimenting and risk-taking. This implies that administrators, managers and teachers will have to willingly "step out of their old skins, and venture into a new world without any certainty of protection or success" (Welton, 2001:178).

School principals have mainly welcomed changes but profess to inadequate training in skills to lead processes of innovation, change and conflict management. Faced with the scope of their roles as agents of change it seems as if not only principals, but also teachers, senior education managers and directors suffer from innovation overload. In the absence of meaningful training and a practical theory of educational change school principals are referring back to experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired in a previous education dispensation. The new management paradigm is characterised by a move away from authoritarian control to democratic practices implying participation between stakeholders, transparency and flatter structures. However, transformation towards such a system has been inhibited by the mystification of both management and teaching which should rather be regarded as everyday practical processes of supporting the learning of all students (Asmal & James, 2002; Welton, 2001). Sayed (2001) argues that educational policy reflects a tension between strong centralised control and decentralising forces in education which has significant implications for education management in South Africa. A key condition for the successful devolution of power to schools is the extent to which school communities will be able to cope with managing the school. The notion of the self-managing school implies a change in role for principals; from that of leading teachers to that of financial and entrepreneurial managers (Fleisch, 2002, Sayed, 2001, Welton, 2001). A major concern in this respect is the high level of administrative and financial management skills required for self-managing schools. Such skills are not at the disposal of certain schools as they do not have access to knowledgeable staff or parents or the equipment to handle administrative functions effectively – with disturbing results (Fleisch, 2002). The task of educational development in South Africa is vast and it is estimated that in order to run the transformed education system more than half a million people need reskilling (Welton, 2001).

With new policies in place after 1994 the education system unintentionally took on certain characteristics of a market system with "open enrolment, parent choice, per capita spending, devolved budgets and compulsory school fees" (Fleisch, 2002:87). Since education in township schools has come to be considered inferior, a mass exodus of children from historically black schools to historically White, Indian and Coloured schools or to better resourced private and semi-private schools has taken place although the language of instruction (LoI) in these schools differed from their home language. Parents chose to enrol their children in schools far from their homes, often despite financial hardships due to higher school fees and transport, because they wanted them to benefit from schools with a more positive learning and teaching culture (Fleisch, 2002; Muthukrishna, 2001). This has left the public school sector impoverished. While national language policy strongly recommends that the home language be used in the classroom up to at least the end of the third grade, parents are given the final authority over the language of choice and school. The governing body of a school can also decide the language of instruction in a school without necessarily accommodating all the students in the school (Taylor, 2006). A school effectiveness study conducted in 2005 by Van den Berg, Burger and Yu in the Western Cape Province and reported on by Taylor (2006) confirmed language as the most powerful influence on learning after poverty. Children are severely disadvantaged when the language of instruction (LoI) differs from their home language. Black children, constituting the majority of students in South African schools, fall primarily in the groups of students who were previously denied the sharing of school space.

A distinguishing factor of the education system in South Africa is the very high degree of inequality among schools. This is a legacy of the past and one which the present government finds difficult to turn around. Massive inequalities still exist between former advantaged schools for white students and formerly disadvantaged schools, especially those in rural areas where poverty in all its manifestations is the principal feature of the communities in which these schools are situated (Engelbrecht, 2006; Taylor, 2006). In schools in poorer communities the following circumstances in schools and their communities impact on the morale and motivation of principals and teachers: poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, large classes of often more than 50, social problems that put students at risk, problems with teacher commitment, lack of parental involvement and large numbers of over-age students (Muthukishna, 2000). Despite a more equitable allocation of resources across schools, the overall output of the school system still varies considerably (Engelbrecht, 2006). This inequality has been confirmed by the differences in scores in mathematics and language tests between high and low socio-economic status (SES) schools in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) comparative study (Taylor, 2006). It has foregrounded the inability of the new education policies to promote equity, redress and social development.

The new national curriculum, Curriculum 2005, was considered the most significant curriculum reform in South African education in the last century. According to Dostal, Cloete and Jaros (2004) having a vision of an educational initiative is, however, not the same as having an implementable plan. Implementing a comprehensive and radically different education initiative such as outcomes-based education without designing an implementation plan and preparing the system for change could be disastrous and threaten the stability of the system. Such a situation could lead to breakdown even before the system can be changed. A system needs to be meaningfully prepared and supported during the implementation of the initiative. Successful transformation is difficult to achieve by means of a quick intervention that has been designed from the top down. The more effort is made during the implementation phase the more lasting the benefits and achievements of the transformation will be. It is also very important that transformation is associated with a change in mindsets within the system and its stakeholders. Dostal *et al.* (2004) argue that outcomes-based education can bring about improvements in South African classrooms, but only when the implementation process is successful.

Implementation of Curriculum 2005 was, however, attempted before an implementation plan had been designed to guide the implementation process. Consequently, the system was not prepared for the change. As early as 1998 Jansen warned that with the implementation of outcomes-based education the reality of what happens in South African schools and the kinds of teachers in these schools was not considered. When schools function well, the organisational environment makes implementing new approaches to teaching and learning possible, but as long as schools remain dysfunctional quality teaching and learning is a myth. According to Enslin and Pendlebury (1998:263) "[t]he so-called breakdown in culture of teaching and learning is one of apartheid's more obstinate legacies, originating in the struggle students waged against apartheid from 1976 onwards". Taylor (2001) argues that the stronger the emphasis on student-centredness in a curriculum – a central characteristic of outcomes-based education – and the lower the SES of its recipients, the less likely it is to achieve the goal of social equity. He further contends that Curriculum 2005 is an example of a radical constructivist approach with a complex system of programme and phase organisers and learning outcomes which are under-specified in knowledge content. He maintains that this constructivist curriculum approach is making things worse in schools across the country.

Poverty remains the most devastating problem in certain South African schools. Children come from illiterate or semi-literate homes with no access to a knowledge base necessary to support their learning process and many of the teachers in these schools are first-generation literates with inadequate knowledge resources. In better resourced schools Curriculum 2005 was implemented more effectively as teachers in these schools have strong frameworks of tacit knowledge allowing them to fill the gaps left in the specification of content (Taylor, 2001). In South Africa examination results are still highly regarded, especially at Grade 12 level, and many of the malpractices that resulted from this practice still exist in spite of outcomes-based education. Although a form of continuous assessment is used in schools and classrooms, quarterly examinations are still a common occurrence at many schools and teacher-centred approaches are widely in use. Practices such as these have become some of the main barriers preventing the successful implementation of Curriculum 2005 (Williams, 2001).

Due to the serious problems with the implementation of Curriculum 2005, a Ministerial Review Committee was appointed in 2000 which recommended a major revision of the curriculum to make it more accessible to teachers and students (Chisholm, 2003). Findings of the review team indicated problems with among others a skewed and complicated structure and design; a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy; inadequate and inappropriate training of teachers; learning support materials inconsistent in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms; policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms; a shortage of personnel and resources to implement and support Curriculum 2005; and inadequate recognition of curriculum as the core business of education departments (Chisholm, 2003; Muthukrishna, 2002). The Revised National Curriculum Statement was produced and became policy in 2002 (Chisholm, 2003). The outcomes-based approach has been retained, but the obvious implication is that the curriculum should be structured to bring out the frame of school knowledge, with the everyday knowledge of students employed to motivate, introduce and give personal ownership to the formal concepts. The revised curriculum aims to foreground the systematic development of conceptual knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each learning area and subject (Taylor, 2001). The aftermath of the unsuccessful implementation of Curriculum 2005 is still very evident in schools and in conversations with teachers. The process has negatively impacted on teachers' morale, commitment and trust and it is difficult to implement new education policies due to the lack of resources and lack of institutional capacity (both in administrative systems and in suitably trained teachers) (Engelbrecht, 2006).

A report prepared for the Education Labour Relations Council by Chisholm, Hoadley, Kivulu, Brookes, Prinsloo, Kgobe, Mosai, Narsee and Rule (2005), on the workload of teachers, indicates that teachers in the vast majority of schools, whatever their historical or environmental context, regard their workload as having increased notably in the last five years. What is especially worrying is that the study provides unmistakable evidence of a significant erosion of instructional times in the majority of schools due to administrative responsibilities which the teachers attribute to the following factors: the assessment, planning, preparation, recording and reporting requirements of outcomes-based education; the number of learning areas and especially those for which there are no readily available resources; class sizes and related issues of overcrowding, staff shortages and inadequate number of classrooms; the Integrated Quality Management System which increases workload; policy aimed at including students with barriers; and numerous other departmental requirements that add to workload (Chisholm *et al.*, 2005:x). The major casualty of policy overload and class size is the time devoted to teaching and it seems as if those schools which are most in need of improvement are least able to meet the external requirements.

The scenario as described above was prevailing when White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, building an inclusive education and training system was published in 2001 as the initiative of the National Department of Education to provide a framework for systemic change for the development of inclusive education. The reluctance of teachers to engage with yet another innovation in education was – and still is – understandable. Teachers, however, have to learn to meet the needs of all students despite the fact that it might add significantly to the complexity of their work. The ratification of diversity within the previous South African education system had the effect of legitimising exclusionary practices, affirming the status and power of professionals and special education and creating the belief amongst teachers that teaching students with disabilities was not within their ability.

This deficit view, together with the specialist culture that developed around it, still impacts on current attitudes towards disability and difference in the present education system, and it seems difficult to eradicate it (Engelbrecht, 2006).

Naicker (2005) contends that the shift from special education to an inclusive outcomes-based education system entails a paradigm shift from one set of theories, assumptions, models, practices and tools to another. He claims that ideological constraints currently emerge as a major barrier among policy developers and practitioners. His view is that South African educationists need to engage critically with conservative philosophies with their roots in special education thinking. They should understand the implications of these philosophies for their practice before the implementation of inclusive education will become viable in schools and classrooms. He argues further that the medical model with its belief that problems are located within students is still alive and well within education in South Africa and is supported by psychological theory and practices. This results in psychometric testing, pathologising, categorising and being involved in exclusionary practices, which poses a threat to the successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. In a less affluent country such as South Africa where unemployment, poverty and financial constraints are constant realities, it can be expected that the provision of quality education for all would be a challenging task. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) argue that the problem of massive poverty remains a central barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. Basic resources such as toilets, sanitation, safe buildings and access to electricity and water are still lacking in many schools in rural areas in particular, and these shortcomings present considerable barriers to learning and participation.

With regard to current understandings of exclusion and inclusion, Sayed, Soudien and Carrim (2003:232) contend that policy text in many countries and also in South Africa tends to define the individual and groups in “essentialised terms, failing to engage with the complexities of their identities”. Catch-all terms such as ‘race’, ‘gender’, ‘culture’, ‘language’ and ‘disability’ are used but they fail to deal with the many different ways in these individuals and groups participate in both the public and private domain. This can lead to certain struggles being prioritised whilst other marginalised voices are silenced. Central as the movement towards racial equality may be in educational reforms in South Africa, the question needs to be asked whether these reforms will also address the inequities that stem from class, gender and (of importance for this study) from disability and whether they therefore meet the criterion of social justice. Educational exclusion is part of a range of social exclusionary processes (in any society) which need to be addressed. Educational inclusion asks for a collective will to bring about transformation at every level of society, as well as political will at an institutional and classroom level to create truly inclusive spaces. How one addresses the differences and the different kinds of inequalities evident in schools and classrooms is a highly strategic matter which is complicated by a high level of diversity in South African schools, and which teachers find difficult to address. The creation of physical space is not necessarily synonymous with inclusion as inclusion is about addressing barriers to both learning and participation. Approaches to educational inclusion require a thorough understanding of the context in which students are included, the terms and conditions of their inclusion, if participation is truly invited and welcomed and "a preparedness to look critically at the policy makers who set these terms and the actors who implement these policies" (Sayed *et al.*, 2003:242).

A recent study undertaken by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) to explore the government's inclusive education and training policy indicated that the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is challenged by several factors at both national and provincial level (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007). Poor funding of the inclusive initiative is an important reason for the non-implementation of inclusive policies. The development of human resources is another major area where needs are unmet. In addition, there is little evidence of active advocacy and information campaigns in the provinces to win over the hearts and minds of role-players as suggested in White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001). The driving force for the implementation of inclusive education, the district-based support teams, is in some instances non-existent. The most concerning finding is that consensus is absent on the scope of the implementation of inclusive education, which is still the responsibility of special needs education directorates and not that of the mainstream sector of education. The IDASA report emphasises that inclusive education should not be driven by special needs education directorates but needs to be "elevated to transversal status similar to outcomes-based education" without delay to ensure the progress of the inclusive project in South Africa (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007:3). This will entail a complete overhaul of the education system and a way to address current fragmentation and inconsistencies.

Despite the above-mentioned barriers to the implementation of inclusive education, pockets of excellence are to be found in practice. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) list examples of individual students with disabilities who are successfully included in mainstream schools; various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have projects to promote inclusive education; initiatives at the macro-level that are undertaken by the national and provincial education departments in partnership with foreign funding organisations that are conducting pilot projects for inclusive education, and many higher education institutions in South Africa that have incorporated the theory and practice of inclusion into their pre- and in-service training programmes for teachers and other relevant professionals, like counsellors and psychologists.

Various documents have been published since the advent of White Paper 6 to support the actual implementation of inclusive education in schools and classrooms. Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education with regard to the role of district-based support teams, full-service schools and special schools as resource centres, a Working Document on

Guidelines for inclusive learning programmes and a document, the Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support, were published during 2005 alone (DoE, 2005a,b,c,d,e). It is thus evident that inclusive education is considered the way forward for South Africa, albeit at policy level. Hopefully several initiatives to support the actual implementation of inclusive education will bring the country nearer to realising the EFA goals in 2015. The coordination of these initiatives should, however, receive more attention to ensure sustainable progress towards goals agreed on by all.

2.5.5 Research on inclusive education in South Africa

Research on inclusive education was being conducted in South Africa well before the advent of Education White Paper 6 in 2001. According to Engelbrecht (2006) small groups of academics have been involved in both funded and unfunded projects on inclusive education since as early as 1995. These projects initially targeted the role of teachers in the development of inclusive education. In an early comparative study on the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, pre-service teachers in the Western Cape province showed higher levels of discomfort in contact with individuals with disabilities than their Australian counterparts, indicating that pre-service teacher programmes which comprise units of study on the inclusion of students with disabilities should offer as many opportunities as possible to meet and interact with a range of individuals with disabilities (Forlin & Engelbrecht, 1998). In research on primary school teachers' inadequate knowledge, skills and training in accommodating students with diverse learning needs in mainstream classes, a lack of educational and teacher support and insufficient facilities and resources were identified as barriers to the implementation of inclusive education (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000; Davies & Green, 1998; Oswald, Ackermann & Engelbrecht, 2000; Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2002).

Three studies on the stress areas of South African in-service teachers in implementing inclusive education indicated that teachers did indeed experience stress when including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but that appropriate and quality pre-service and in-service programmes and the necessary support would enable teachers to deal more effectively with student diversity (Engelbrecht, Swart & Eloff, 2001; Eloff, Engelbrecht & Swart, 2002; Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff & Swart, 2003). As a result of this research it was posited that by addressing the specific stressors associated with inclusion, teachers will attain an enhanced sense of efficacy and be more enthusiastic about participating in inclusive classrooms. In inclusive school communities, responding to and supporting student diversity should be a shared responsibility of teachers, support providers, parents, peers and community members, which necessitates expanding the traditional roles of all these stakeholders.

A later study amongst high school teachers in South Africa found that teachers experienced difficulty in making the shift from more conservative theories and practices to embracing democratic and inclusive values and attitudes that are fundamental to the successful implementation of inclusive education. They emphasised appropriate training and support, smaller classes and participation in decision-making processes as a precondition for inclusion (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004). An ethnographical inquiry into students' experiences of inclusion and exclusion in a primary school in Finland and in one in South Africa, Väyrynen (2003) found that in both incidences the transformation towards an inclusive school seemed to stagnate at the point of the rigidity of teaching and learning practices. A culture of meaningful participation was absent and especially the voices of the students were silent despite clear evidence of the potential of students as important stakeholders when implementing inclusive education in a school.

Two studies (Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff, Pettipher & Oswald, 2004; Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart, Kitching & Eloff, 2005) conducted with parents of children with disabilities indicated that in spite of enabling legislation and the desires of parents, the development of inclusive educational practices in South Africa does not always reflect the values of equity and human rights. Unequal power distribution in the relationship between parents and teachers and the failure to establish collaborative and empowering relationships poses a major barrier. However, parents who had had positive experiences of inclusive education indicated that this disparity could be overcome by shared understandings of the importance of communication, commitment, and mutual trust and respect.

External funding agencies, such as DANIDA (DoE, 2002) and SCOPE (Engelbrecht, 2003) funded in-service training programmes in several provinces in the country. In all cases, a cascade model was decided on, in which a relatively small number of professionals (1-2 representatives from every school in the projects) were trained, who then had to disseminate (or 'cascade') their newly developed competencies and knowledge to their colleagues in their specific schools. Evaluation reports (DoE, 2002; Engelbrecht, 2003) indicate that although the training programmes did contribute to the development of the skills of individual teachers who attended the programmes, the 'message' of the training workshops became diluted as it passed down the cascade with the result that in many instances recipients of the message at the lower levels were less enthusiastic and skilled than those who received the initial training. It seems that short workshops away from teachers' place of work do not provide the answer to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Research suggests that the focus of capacity building for the development of an inclusive education and training system should be on developing the self-sufficiency of teachers within the context of the school where they are presently working. School-based professional development integrated with institutional development seems to coincide with the current international approach of developing schools as inclusive school communities.

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter (Chapter 2) inclusive education has been put under a magnifying glass. The discourses that inform the movement to inclusive education have been explored. Inclusive education has also been viewed from a global perspective as well as from within the British context. A more thorough ‘image’ of the South African education scene has been presented with special reference to the country’s interpretation and implementation of inclusive education. In the next chapter the literature review will be continued, and it will provide a closer look at CHAT, the Index for Inclusion and teacher learning.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: INDEX FOR INCLUSION AS A TOOL FOR TEACHER LEARNING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present the Index for Inclusion as a tool to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education in schools and I discuss previous research studies that have employed the Index for Inclusion to facilitate change processes in schools in order to become more inclusive. I draw on the literature in the broad fields of inclusive education and teacher learning and I situate my discussion within the framework of cultural-historical theory (CHAT) and especially the work done by Engeström. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on innovative teacher learning.

3.2 THE ENGESTRÖM MODEL AS APPLICABLE TO THIS STUDY

Inclusive education is presented as a possible answer to diversity in the education system. But the implementation of inclusive education involves complexity and uncertainty and simple solutions are elusive (Pearson, 2007). To meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body successfully, schools will have to accept change and innovation as part of the process to create and sustain inclusive schools and classrooms. Change affects the total school system and all school members. **Structural changes** require strategies, structures and procedures that are able to reconstruct education in such a way that the structures and practices that maintain the status quo are transformed (Slee, 1996; Howell, 2007). Peters (2002) argues that when inclusive education is approached as a socio-political value as is the case in South Africa, members of schools are not only asked to make structural changes, but they also need to understand on a deeper level why these changes are necessary. This understanding implies that school culture becomes a central concern, which brings the **reculturing** of schools as an integral part of the implementation of inclusive education sharply into focus.

With the above in mind, inclusive education invites schools to transform into inclusive learning communities. In such schools learning thus becomes a core business and individual and collective learning are both seen as necessary for change (Swart & Pettipher, 2007). Teacher learning for inclusive education cannot be understood as a merely technical process but asks for personal change, relating to the ratification of inclusive values in practice (Howes *et al*., 2005). Learning for inclusive education has to be approached as an ongoing collaborative process where there is a shared purpose, a collective focus on student learning, trust and respect, and reflective dialogue (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005).

Teacher learning should not be steered towards reproductive outcomes but teachers should learn collaboratively, creatively and innovatively as there are never easy answers when addressing a multitude of learner abilities and needs in inclusive classrooms (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). Teachers are central to the transformation of schools and for them to successfully become part of the change initiative in their schools they need to be offered expanded and enriched opportunities for learning. On the other hand, implementing a more inclusive approach in schools can serve as a powerful incentive for teacher learning (Stanovich & Jordan, 2002).

In light of the social origins of learning as an fundamental principle of CHAT, it is important for this study exploring teacher learning during a process of transformation "to trace the influences of shared experiences and sustained reflection on the transformation of learning communities engaged in collaborative work" when employing a cultural tool (the Index for Inclusion) to introduce and inform transformative practice (Artiles *et al.*, 2000:82). Yamagata-Lynch (2003) contends that CHAT is useful for understanding teacher professional development because it allows researchers to capture and analyse the complexities and dynamics of how teachers learn within the workplace. Teacher learning for change in school settings has the potential to be complex and to reveal "multi-layered realities of these contexts when disrupted by inclusion" (Ware, 2003:161).

The Engeström model is specifically "interested in the process of social transformation and includes the structure of the social world in analysis, taking into account the conflictual nature of social practice" (Daniels, 2004:189). Engeström emphasises that mediated activity is the catalyst not only for change in those participating in the activity system, but also for the environment (Engeström, 1987; 1999b).

In this study teacher learning as an activity is explored within the context of the school. Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), Van Vlaenderen (2001) argues that activity is embedded in and structured by a social-cultural-historical context as people's (teachers') actions occur in the context of the activities of the other people with whom they share their lives and by implication also their professional life. To understand intellectual processes such as teacher learning, "it is critical to examine the activity as a whole and not its component parts as the parts alone cannot account for the psychological structure of a person's performance" (Van Vlaenderen, 2001:150). The activity provides the dialectical 'crossing point' between the individual or group (teachers) and the situational context (school as embedded in its context).

The notion of **activity** cannot be equated with short events with definite beginnings and ends, but should be seen as an evolving, complex structure of both mediated and collective human agency (Roth

& Lee, 2007). Based on the work of Engeström, an activity system can be defined as a unit of analysis that fulfils the following demands: it is representative of the complexity of the whole; it can be analysed within its contextuality; being culturally mediated, it is specific to human beings; and it is dynamic (Foot, 2001). Engeström and Miettinen (1999:10) explain the **activity system** from the viewpoint of the researcher as follows:

> [An] activity system as a unit of analysis calls for complementarity of the system view and the participant's view. The analyst constructs the activity system as if looking at it from above. At the same time, the analyst must select a participant (or better yet, multiple different members) of the local activity, through whose eyes and interpretations the activity is constructed. This dialect between the systemic and subjective-partisan views brings the researcher into a dialogical relationship with the local activity under investigation. The study of an activity system becomes a collective, multivoiced construction of its past, present, and future zones of development.

As explained in Chapter 1, the Engeström model introduces six important dimensions or components, including the dynamics among them: subject, object (the goal of the activity system), rules (norms), division of labour, community and tools (Engeström, 1987). The **teachers** as participants in this study can be identified as **subjects** and thus the subgroup whose agency is chosen as the point of view in the analysis. Their learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion is the focus point of this study. The **learning goals** for the teachers can be assigned to the dimension **object**, the implicit and explicit rules that structure social interaction within the school to the dimension **rules (or norms).** Relationships in the activity system are driven by rules, which can be understood as principles of control. Discourse rules are thus significant within the activity system as rules can both afford or constrain teacher learning (Hardman, 2005). The prescribed roles of the teachers and the rest of the members within the school belong to the dimension **division of labour.** The division of labour refers to both the horizontal division of tasks between the members of the community and to the vertical division of power and status. Due to the division of labour, there are different positions for the school members. The multi-voicedness of an activity system needs to be highlighted. An activity system is always a heterogeneous community with multiple points of view, traditions and interests. The **community** comprises multiple individuals and/or subgroups who share the same general object. In this study the group of participants constituting the dimension community would be all the students, the management team of school, the governing body, the parent body and the community in which the school is embedded. The Index for Inclusion can be assigned to the dimension **tool** and is therefore instrumental to teacher learning. See Figure 3.1 for an exposition of the Engeström model as applicable to this study. My role as researcher/interventionist can also be identified under the dimension tool.

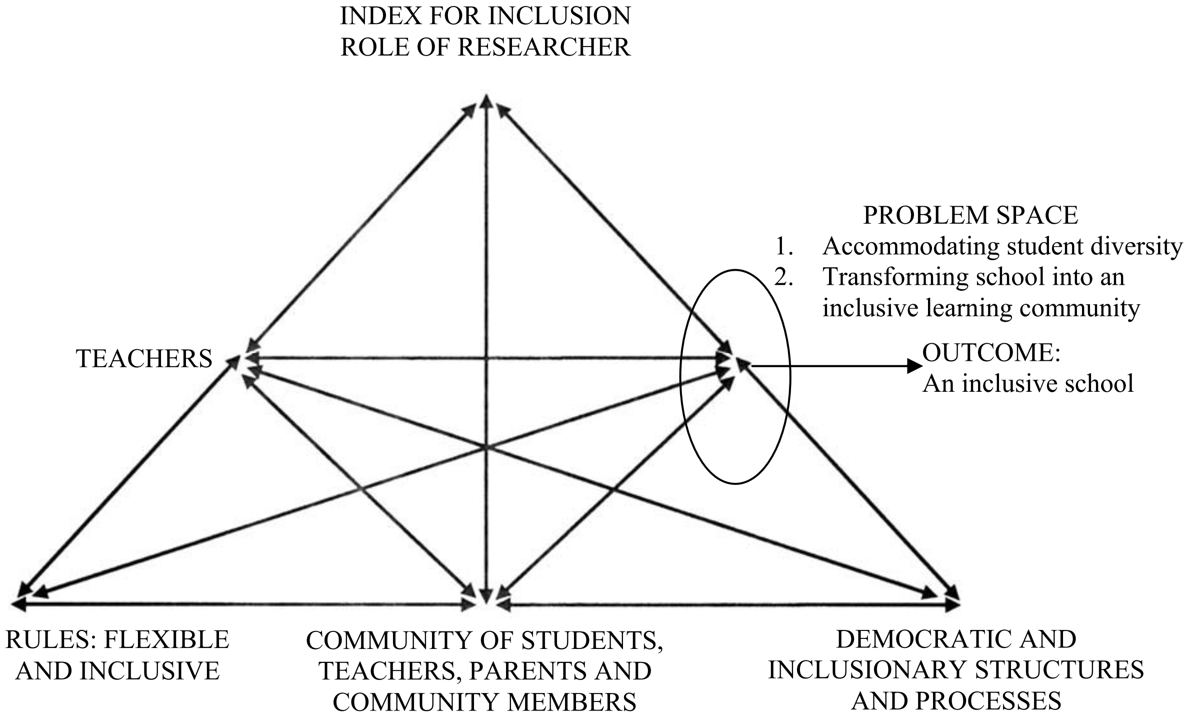
INDEX FOR INCLUSION
ROLE OF RESEARCHER
PROBLEM SPACE
1. Accommodating student diversity
2. Transforming school into an inclusive learning community
TEACHERS
OUTCOME:
An inclusive school
RULES: FLEXIBLE AND INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIONARY STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Figure 3.1: The Engeström model as applicable to this study

Engeström uses Marx's idea of contradiction (misfit between the components of the activity system) to explain change in an activity system. Contradictions are not the same as problems or conflicts, but are structural tensions that have been accumulated structurally over time within and between systems (Engeström, 2001). Engeström (1987, 1999b) explains that an activity system is connected to other activity systems through all its components and when innovations from other activity systems are introduced in one of the components, secondary contradictions are formed that can be a major source of change and development. Here, for instance, the implementation of change initiatives enshrined in new education policies and legislation since the advent of democracy in South Africa can serve as examples of innovation from other activity systems causing major contradictions in schools.

Darling-Hammond (1998) emphasises, however, that it is advisable to accept change as a constant for educational systems. Teachers need to continue learning how to diversify to engage each of their students in whatever ways are necessary to encourage their learning. Change efforts (whether self-motivated or initiated by policy innovations) can cause contradictions that generate disturbances, but can simultaneously produce innovative attempts to change the activity system, as contradictions need to be addressed in order for the system to reach equilibrium (Engeström, 2001). The collective activity system creates and imports innovations to solve problems and to return equilibrium (Blanton *et al.*, 1998).

An activity system is, however, also a heterogeneous entity with disparate voices and perspectives represented in the system with the implication that not all members will necessarily react to change initiatives in the same way. It may happen that when contradictions of an activity system are aggravated, some individual member may begin to ask questions that may result in deliberate and collaborative change (Engeström, 2001).

Historicity is assigned an important position in CHAT. History itself needs to be studied as the local history of the activity and its objects and as the history of the theoretical ideas and tools that have shaped the activity. All the teachers and other school members have their own diverse histories, whilst the activity system as entity carries numerous layers of history imprinted in its artifacts, rules and socially accepted behaviour (Engeström, 2001).

Transforming the object into an outcome by engaging it through mediating tools such as the Index for Inclusion can motivate the existence of an activity. In this case it would be teacher learning within the context of the school. The object is the "problem space" at which the activity is directed and which is transformed into outcomes with the help of external and internal tools (mediating instruments and signs) (Engeström, 1993:67 in Artiles *et al*., 2000:85). In the model the object is represented as an oval indicating that "the object-oriented actions are always, explicitly or implicitly, characterised by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense-making and potential for change" (Daniels, 2004:189).

In line with depicting the implementation of inclusive education as a journey, the Engeström model (1987) presents innovation as a continuous process which gives rise to expansive learning. Expansive learning occurs during the expansion of the subjects' action possibilities to respond in increasingly enriched ways in pursuit of meaningful objects in activity (Daniels, 2004; Roth & Lee, 2007). Activity theorists suggest that when one wants to track shifts in an activity system, one should focus on the extent to which the objects change as activity systems change when their objects change (Hardman, 2005).

In this study teacher learning is thus embedded in a process of qualitative transformation of the entire activity system, the school community, since inclusive education also invites schools to transform into inclusive learning communities. Such transformation can be triggered by the introduction of a new tool, such as the Index for Inclusion (Daniels, 2004; Engeström, 2001). The Index for Inclusion process is the tool used to mediate activity aimed at transforming the object into outcomes. The 'problem space' in this research study is teachers' attitudes and practices that need to change as a result of certain learning goals as mediated by the Index for Inclusion process.

Teacher learning is placed at the heart of the Index for Inclusion process. The Index for Inclusion has in mind an unending process of collaborative learning in schools with as **outcome** the continuous transformation of the school and classroom cultures, policies and practices in order to increase the participation of all students in caring and inclusive learning communities to ensure quality learning for all. Teacher learning in this inquiry is thus directed at changing the cultures, policies and practices in the school and classroom with the outcome of addressing the diverse learning abilities of their student body more effectively to ensure access, participation and quality learning for all students (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

3.3 THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION AS A CULTURAL ARTIFACT, TOOL AND SIGN

3.3.1 Mediation in the context of this study

Mediation is a central theme in the work of Vygotsky. Human work such as teaching appears from the beginning as a process mediated by tools (in the broad sense) and at the same time mediated socially (Leont'ev, 1981 in Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). Human life and activity are thus characterised by mediation through material and ideal (conceptual) means, especially signs, as part of human culture and the artifacts of human activity. Language, scientific methods and models and other forms of cultural artifacts are just as much tools as are computers and telephones (Foot, 2001).

Exploring mediation with regard to the Index for Inclusion, I argue that the Index for Inclusion is a **cultural artifact** created through the activities of its developers (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), and is employed as **tool** within the context of this study to mediate teacher learning for inclusive education. From the perspective of CHAT the development of inclusive education can be seen as embedded in unique social, historical and cultural contexts, implying that the implementation of inclusive education will differ between countries. Artiles and Dyson (2005) warn that there is no perfect model for inclusion that can be exported to all countries of the world. Care should therefore be taken when transferring the Index for Inclusion, a cultural artifact from the British context, for use in other countries such as South Africa, despite the fact that the Index for Inclusion has been employed in quite a few countries with positive effect.

The Index for Inclusion is an artifact of the particular context and culture of its developers and therefore not a neutral framework. As explained previously, artifacts carry all the social practices, cognitive activities and codes for how they were used by their developers, mediating a connection between the current user(s) and the original developers (Blanton *et al.*, 1998).

According to Artiles and Dyson (2005) the Index for Inclusion can be considered for use in South African schools as a tool if the emphasis falls on **learning** rather than **transfer.** They acknowledge that employing the Index for Inclusion as a tool to mediate the implementation of inclusive education in schools in South Africa could cause "interruptions, contradictions or disruptions to the taken-for-granted reproductions of established practice" (Artiles & Dyson, 2005:58-59). Cultural artifacts from other countries can act as a powerful means of questioning the status quo and opening up new possibilities for seeing and doing. This is true at both a national and a local school level. The Index for Inclusion should thus be used as a "catalyst rather than a template" (Artiles & Dyson, 2005:58), while respecting local solutions to complex local and cultural problems.

Apart from identifying the Index for Inclusion as either a cultural artifact or tool, according to Vygotskian theory, it can also be identified as a **sign.** Vygotsky (1978) argues that there is a fundamental difference between a sign and a tool, despite the fact that both are associated with the concept of mediated activity. The difference between the two concepts can be found in the different ways that they position human behaviour. The tool's function is to orchestrate the subject's influence on the object of the activity. It is externally positioned and must lead to changes in objects. The Index for Inclusion can thus be identified as a tool orchestrating human external activity directed at the object of teacher learning for inclusive education. The use of a tool such as the Index for Inclusion can be equated with Wertsch's (2007) idea of explicit mediation deduced from Vygotskian theory. In the case of explicit mediation a tool that is obvious and non-transitory is deliberately introduced into a stream of activity by an external agent such as a researcher or facilitator who can help re-organise an activity in some way (Wertsch, 2007).

In explicit mediation, tools such as the Index for Inclusion are thus introduced from the outside and it is only when the activities mediated by the tool are internalised or appropriated through a process of qualitative transformations that the **sign** system (in this case of the Index for Inclusion) is adopted by individuals. But teachers have agency and they can thus choose to appropriate or reject the sign system provided by the Index for Inclusion. Through a process of internalisation or 'ingrowing' the sign system of the Index for Inclusion can be transformed "into personally meaningful experience" (Frawley in Lantolf, 2003:350). It is thus a question of the social nature of teachers becoming their psychological nature as well (Luria, 1979 in Lantolf, 2003). External activity can continue for a long time before turning inward and becoming a function of the individual or group. Signs are incorporated into a new system with its own laws. In this way signs mediate higher mental processes (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 2007).

To explain the process of 'ingrowing' still further, it can be seen as teachers having to become fluent users of the Index for Inclusion as an internal sign system that informs their attitudes, behaviour and practices in the classroom and school. When encountering a new tool such as the Index for Inclusion, the first stages of acquaintance will typically involve social interaction and negotiation between the researcher or expert with regard to the tool and the novices, who will be the teachers in the research school. It is by participating in social interaction that interpretations of the tool are first proposed and worked out and, therefore, become available to be appropriated or internalised into a sign system by the teachers. According to Blanton *et al*. (1998) signs are aimed inward, producing 'internal' effects on both individuals and social groups. For individuals the effects can be self-regulation and the regulation of others; for social groups the effects can be shared thinking, negotiated meaning and practices. Table 3.1 presents a summary of the Index for Inclusion as cultural artifact, tool and sign.

Table 3.1: The Index for Inclusion as mediating artifact, tool and sign

Index for Inclusion as cultural artifact	Cultural artifact of a group of researchers in Britain developed for the implementation of inclusive education.
Index for Inclusion as tool	Through explicit mediation the Index for Inclusion is introduced as a tool to mediate teacher learning for the implementation of inclusive education in a South African school.
Index for Inclusion as sign	The Index for Inclusion is thus introduced from the outside and it is only when the activities mediated by the tool are internalised through a process of qualitative transformations that the sign system of the Index for Inclusion is adopted by the teachers.

All actions are mediated by tools, but in the Engeström model the relations between the subject and object are also mediated by the other components: community, rules and division of labour. Barab and his colleagues (2004:28) draw on Garrison (2001) to explain that the components of activity systems should not be seen as static and existing in isolation but "as reciprocally interacting with and reciprocally constituted through interactions with the other components that constitute the activity system as a whole". They therefore prefer the notion of components 'transacting' and not only interacting with each other, as the key concept in transaction is the interdependency and interconnection of components.

Following from the above argument it is important to note that inclusive education invites a school community to transform into an inclusive learning community to facilitate learning for inclusion on a continuous basis. In this sense the school as inclusive learning community thus also becomes a tool that mediates the transaction between the subject and the object. Consequently **the community** does not only occupy the bottom of the Engeström model, but also becomes a component that reaches across multiple components as it simultaneously functions as tool, object and outcome. This implies that the Index for Inclusion can be seen as a tool to mediate the transformation of the school (problem space and thus **object**) into an inclusive learning community as **outcome** to support teacher learning for inclusion. School members should thus learn how to form inclusive learning communities in order to learn how to facilitate inclusion in their school and classrooms.

Culture can also be seen as a powerful mediator of actions and emotions in a school. Within CHAT culture is seen as a social creation and in the process of creation, signs and tools are produced and used and other tools employed to both demonstrate and communicate the culture (Lantolf, 2003; Moloi &

Henning, 2007). By definition school culture is thus a cohesive system of shared motives, values, beliefs, (group) identities and interpretations of meanings of significant events and rules and prescribed roles resulting from the common experiences of individuals in the school community over time (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Moloi & Henning, 2007). Derived from the above it can be taken for granted that the culture of a school impacts upon how teachers see their work and, indeed, their students. In the course of realising the object of an activity, teachers as subjects also produce and reproduce their identities as members of the community in which they are discourse participants (Moloi & Henning, 2007; Roth & Tobin, 2004).

Writing from an Education for All agenda, Kozleski, Artiles, Fletcher and Engelbrecht (2009) highlight the regulative, interpretive and instrumental aspects of culture in school communities. Applied to this study, the regulative aspect of culture emphasises the rules, codes, principles and roles that regulate a school community's culture. People occupy different positions within school communities that give them access to more *or* less power over others (Kozleski *et al.*, 2009). The role of power is vital to an understanding of culture.

The interpretive aspect of culture can help researchers to understand how teachers and other members in school communities make meaning from their work. Teachers are apprenticed to ways of interpreting the world in their schools and other cultural communities. Culture is located in people's personal understandings of the world; that is, in values, beliefs, knowledge and emotions used as cultural filters to interpret events. They use their group's ways of interpreting the world to decode and interpret not only the world, but also their work and workplaces (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). The interpretive aspect of culture wants to draw the researcher's attention to the meaning-making processes of teachers as these are largely significant during processes of change at the workplace. By exploring teachers' beliefs, values and expectations the researcher will come closer to understanding teachers' reactions to the implementation of new initiatives such as inclusive education (Artiles & Dyson, 2005).

The instrumental aspect of culture highlights human agency. People can both apply the regulative rules of their cultural communities and improvise or use their own cultural toolkits in creative ways (Kozleski *et al.*, 2009). Over and above focusing on the regulative aspects of inclusion programmes, teachers' assumptions or beliefs about inclusion affect the ways in which they engage with inclusive programmes. CHAT analyses of inclusion projects need to document how teachers participate in inclusive practices whilst using their personal cultural toolkits in their attempts to act out the vision of inclusion that is central to the Index for Inclusion, and at the same time cope with the immediate demands of the tasks they are trying to accomplish (Artiles & Dyson, 2005).

Language (with discourse) is indisputably a central mediating tool in mediating productive joint activity (Blanton *et al.*, 1998). Engeström (1999d) claims that together with language as an essential tool in CHAT, mediation by subject-subject relations should also play a part. According to Panofsky (2003) CHAT should pay more attention to the ways that interpersonal relations mediate learning, also teacher learning. Kozulin (2003) differentiates between human and symbolic mediation. He explains that approaches focusing on the human mediator ask different questions than those focusing on symbolic tools**.** In the context of this study, a focus on the human mediator will try to answer the question: "What kind of involvement by the researcher/collaborator will be effective in enhancing teacher learning?" With regard to symbolic tools the question to answer will read: "What changes in the teachers' performance can be brought about by the introduction of the Index for Inclusion process in schools?" The tools supporting teacher learning in this study are thus not only the Index for Inclusion and the inclusive learning community, but include those individuals (such as the researcher/collaborator) with whom the teachers as learners 'transact' (Barab *et al.*, 2004) during the Index for Inclusion process. Both the interventionist stance of the developmental work research undertaken by Engeström and the Index for Inclusion process require of the researcher as human mediator to be researcher and intervening participant-being engaged in forming new forms of practice jointly with the community members at the same time as researching their formation (Barab *et al.*, 2004). Mediating teacher learning during the Index for Inclusion process will require the researcher to enter the discourse community of teachers in such a way as to collapse the I-them distinctions (Barab *et al.*, 2004). Human mediation will be explored further when the suggested way of working with the Index for Inclusion is discussed.

3.3.2 Positioning the Index for Inclusion

3.3.2.1 Tracing the genesis of the Index for Inclusion

Mittler (2000) positions the Index for Inclusion as a travelling companion for schools that are interested in exploring a more inclusive approach to schooling. Tracing the genesis of the Index for Inclusion (considered important when working within CHAT), it seems that two historically generated bodies of knowledge, namely existing research evidence indicating more successful strategies to facilitate the participation of students who were at risk of exclusion and marginalisation, and evidence from school improvement research, can be identified as theoretical underpinnings. Previous research thus informed the development of the Index for Inclusion (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004; Vislie, 2003). It was developed at the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) in collaboration with the University of Manchester and the Christ Church University College, Canterbury (Carrington & Robinson, 2006; Mittler, 2000).

Ainscow (1998) points out that the Index project builds on earlier work done by researchers in Australia (Centre, Ward & Ferguson, 1991) and North America (Eichinger, Meyer & D'Aquanni, 1996). Both these research projects encourage moving from an emphasis on the medical model looking for 'problems' in individual students towards a deeper exploration of the processes by which a particular school includes and excludes students (Ainscow, 1999:148). Ainscow (1998; 1999) claims that the work undertaken in developing the Index for Inclusion is nearer to its American forerunner, Programme Quality Indicators (PQI). The PQI was developed as a checklist to be employed by schools as needs assessment that can help to establish how closely their practices resemble what is known about quality inclusive schooling (Ainscow, 1998:71). The PQI works from a strong value position and specifically emphasises the inclusion of students with disabilities. This posed an immediate problem for the developers of the British Index for Inclusion as they had to determine which values to incorporate into the Index for Inclusion. They put together a group of teachers, parents, school governors and representatives of disability groups with extensive experience of attempts to develop more inclusive ways of working. Researchers from three universities (Cambridge, Manchester, The Open University) joined the team. During 1996 and 1997 the group collaborated to produce a pilot version of the Index which was piloted in several primary and secondary schools in Britain. This phase of development was followed by a detailed process of research conducted in four school districts during the school year 1998-1999 (Ainscow, 1998; 1999). The Department for Education and Employment in the United Kingdom supported the piloting of the project and assisting in distributing the Index for Inclusion to 26 000 primary, secondary and special schools and all local education authorities in the country (Vislie, 2003).

The 2000 Index represents the product of three years of pilot work and development in 25 schools across England (Rustemier & Booth, 2005). The Index for Inclusion is thus the result of a process of intensive collaborative inquiry. It differs from its Australian and American counterparts on three important points: (1) The focus is not only on students 'with special needs', but on all students in a school community; (2) the British Index focuses on participation and development in schools and not only on measurement such as the American PQI; and (3) all the strategies for carrying out the review and development are determined within the school (Ainscow, 1998; 1999).

The Index for Inclusion was first published in 2000 and revised in 2002. Work undertaken with the Index for Inclusion in this study employed the 2002 revised version of the framework as explained before. According to Booth (2005), a book is currently put together on the research done with the Index for Inclusion in various countries.

3.3.2.2 Describing the Index for Inclusion

Vislie (2003) reports that the Index for Inclusion has gained a degree of international attention as an instrument to move practice towards more inclusive schools. Booth and Ainscow (2002) describe the Index for Inclusion as tool as a comprehensive document that offers schools a supportive and collaborative process of self-review, planning and implementation to further inclusive school development, drawing on the views and resources of the school management team, teachers, students and parents or caregivers, as well as members of the community in which the school is embedded. It is a framework to support a value-based approach to school review and development.

The Index for Inclusion does not offer a blueprint but claims to be both flexible and context-friendly and involves a process of systemic self-review within three interconnected and overlapping dimensions of school life: school culture, policy and practice. It wants to instigate a process of planning and collaboration in schools in order for them to take over their own development to ensure that it is in accordance with their own values and context and is sustained over time (Rustemier & Booth, 2005). It aims to facilitate a process of deep and challenging exploration of the school's present position with a view to embark on a journey towards becoming an inclusive school. Fundamental to the Index for Inclusion is the creation of a school culture that encourages a preoccupation with the development of ways of working that attempt to reduce barriers to the learning and participation of all students The Index for Inclusion is concerned with minimising all barriers to learning and participation for whoever experience them and wherever they are located within the cultures, policies and practices of a school (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Rustemier & Booth, 2005).

The Index for Inclusion encourages staff to share and build on existing knowledge about what impedes learning and participation of their students. It assists them in a detailed examination of the possibilities for increasing learning and participation in all aspects of their school for all their students. This is not an additional initiative for schools, but rather a systematic way of engaging in school development planning, setting priorities for change, implementing developments and reviewing progress. There is an emphasis on mobilising under-used resources within staff, students, school management teams, parents and other members of the school communities. The Index for Inclusion is concerned with school improvement to allow for school attainments for all students and can be employed by primary and high schools alike (Vaughan, 2002).

There are four elements to the Index for Inclusion: (1) key concepts that will be discussed in Section 3.3.2.3; (2) a review framework that encompasses the three dimensions and sections and help to structure the approach to evaluate and develop the school; (3) review materials that comprise of indicators and questions to make a detailed review of all aspects of a school possible; and (4) an inclusive way of working with the Index for Inclusion.

The three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion are indicated in Figure 3.2. These dimensions with the sections under each dimension provide the planning framework of the Index for Inclusion as indicated in Table 3.2.

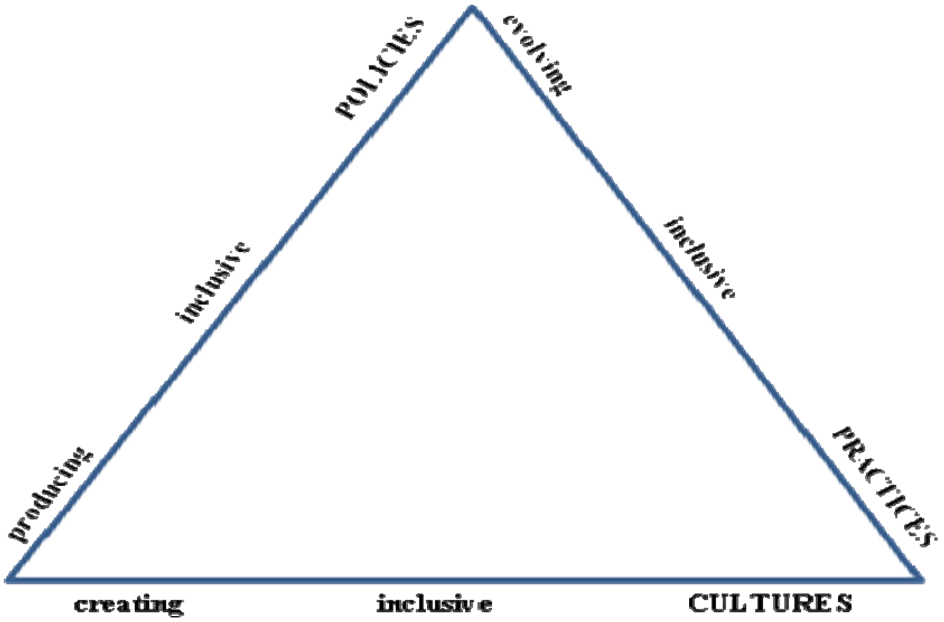

Figure 3.2: The three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002)

In Table 3.2 the planning framework for the Index for Inclusion is indicated. The Index for Inclusion materials guide the exploration of the school along the three dimensions which cover all aspects of school life, from collaboration and values, to induction and learning support policies, to classroom practices and resource planning.

Table 3.2: Index for Inclusion planning framework (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Rustemier & Booth, 2005)

Planning Framework

Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures
- Building community
- Establishing inclusive values

Dimension B: Producing inclusive policies
- Developing the school for all
- Organising support for diversity

Dimension C: Evolving inclusive practices
- Orchestrating learning
- Mobilising resources

The dimensions have been chosen to direct thinking about school change and represent relatively distinct areas of school activity. The Index materials contain a branching tree structure allowing progressively more detailed examination of all aspects of the school. The three dimensions are expressed in terms of 45 indicators and the meaning of each of these is clarified by just short of 500 of questions (Rustemier & Booth, 2005). The review materials make a detailed review of all aspects of a school possible. The indicators are statements of inclusive aspiration against which existing arrangements in a school can be compared in order to set priorities for development. Together the dimensions, indicators and questions provide a progressively more detailed map to guide the exploration of the current position of a school and to plot future possibilities (Booth & Ainscow, 2000). See Table 3.4 in this respect.

Table 3.3: Review materials of the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Rustemier & Booth, 2005)

Dimensions and sections	**Indicators**	**Questions**
Structuring how you think about your plan to change the school.	Helping you to focus on the changes that need to be considered.	Supporting a review of the fine detail of the school so that challenging issues are addressed.

3.3.2.3 Discussing the Index for Inclusion as a sign system

The Index for Inclusion is grounded in a particular sign system or what the Index for Inclusion refers to as “developing a language for inclusion” as explained in the key concepts that are presented in the 2002 publication (Booth & Ainscow, 2002:20). In this section these concepts will be explored against the backdrop of the broader inclusive education discourse. The discussion will also draw on discourses within CHAT.

- **Inclusion in education**

The Index for Inclusion identifies certain characteristics of inclusion as key to implementing inclusive education in a school. Booth and Ainscow (2002) argue that inclusion in a school starts once the Index for Inclusion process is initiated, but it involves continuous change and is an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students which is never fully realised. This resonates with the Engeström model that accepts transformation and innovation as part of societal life and is interested in investigating precisely this phenomenon (Engeström, 1987; 1999; Lompscher, 2006).

More specifically, inclusion in education is depicted in the Index for Inclusion as about valuing all students and staff of a school equally; increasing the participation of all students and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools; reducing barriers to learning and participation of all students, not only those categorised as ‘having special needs’; viewing the differences between students as resources to support learning rather than as problems to overcome; learning from attempts to overcome barriers to learning and participation of particular students to make changes that can benefit all students; improving schools for both staff and students; restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools in order to respond to the diversity of students in the locality; emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as increasing achievement; fostering sustainable relationships between schools and their communities; and recognising that inclusion in education is but one aspect of inclusion in society (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

The Index for Inclusion adheres to the broadened formulation of inclusion which supports and welcomes diversity among *all* students. It presumes that the aim of inclusive education is to eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of certain attitudes and responses of a school community to student diversity based on criteria such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability/disability. Authentic participation for all students is when they learn alongside others, learn collaboratively in shared learning experiences and are actively engaged in quality learning. More deeply, participation means having your voice heard, being recognised, accepted and valued for who you are and what you bring to the learning environment (Ainscow & Kaplan, 2005; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). It is evident that inclusion in education recognises and celebrates diversity and the development of inclusive teaching and learning approaches respect and build on these differences. It is evident from this that to realise inclusion as a value in education will call for deep changes in what goes on in classrooms, staffrooms, playgrounds as well as in relationships with parents and caregivers.

It is also assumed that the work done in identifying and addressing the difficulties of one student may benefit more students, as indicated by Ainscow, Howes, Farrell and Frankham (2003:231): “Pupils who do not fit into existing arrangements can be seen as offering ‘surprises’, that is feedback that invites further improvisation. All of this implies a more positive view of difference …” In this way student differences are seen as a rich resource for initiating teacher learning (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

The view on inclusion in education contained in the Index for Inclusion is aligned with that of Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001), the South African Ministry of Education’s commitment to inclusive education and to provide equal educational opportunities for *all* students.

- **The inclusive school**

According to Ainscow (2007), the Index for Inclusion presents the most detailed explanation of what an inclusive school should look like (Ainscow, 2007), while simultaneously emphasising that there is in reality no such thing as an inclusive school. A school is forever in a process of becoming more inclusive. It is probably in light of this that Booth and Ainscow (2002) accentuate that an inclusive school is one that is not stuck, but on the move.

The ideal of an inclusive school is depicted in the three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion triangle (see Figure 3.2). Booth and Ainscow (2002) deliberately place the dimension ‘creating inclusive cultures’ along the base of the Index for Inclusion triangle to fore-ground the fact that not enough attention is given to the potential for school cultures to both afford or constrain teaching and learning. The dimension of ‘creating inclusive cultures’ has two sections of which one is ‘building community’ and the other ‘establishing shared values’. In describing the inclusive school the notion of the inclusive school as a community is thus invoked and the notion of shared values in which all newcomers are apprenticed is emphasised.

Sergiovanni (1992) first advocates the idea of schools as learning communities rather than organisations. For him the factors such as size and especially purpose make it difficult to apply the notion of organisations to schools. He aligns the metaphor of a school as a learning community with a kind of connectedness among members of a closely knit group such as a family. In his view, communities are defined by their centres of shared values, beliefs and sentiments which act as glue for a particular community. Schools are defined as **learning communities** where students, staff and other members of the school community see learning as both an attitude and activity, as well as a way of life; as **collegial communities** where school members are connected to pursue common goals based on interdependence and mutual obligation; as **caring communities** where members are committed to each other and relationships are moral in character; as **inclusive communities** where differences are respected; and as **inquiring communities** where collective inquiry and reflective practice are promoted (Sergiovanni, 2000).

Stainback and Stainback (1992) explore the idea of an inclusive school community where all students belong; where classrooms and schools operate as supportive communities meeting unique student needs; where the interdependence of all school members within the inclusive school community is recognised; and where collaboration is identified as a core element. Sands *et al.* (2000:5) describe schools as flexible organisations grounded in democratic principles and constructs of social justice embodying the concepts of “community, collaboration, democracy and diversity, unlike the traditional hierarchical, authority-based models so often observed in schools”. These schools emphasise a sense of belonging and active and meaningful participation for both teachers and students. Inclusive school communities are rooted in the philosophy that all children can learn and belong in the mainstream of school and community life. Creating inclusive school communities requires consideration of the rights of every learner, the restructuring and reculturing of schools, as well as making the necessary changes in existing school practices. Shared responsibility and decision-making processes, the consequent creation of alliances and affiliations among all school members and support professionals and the provision of mutual emotional and technical support is emphasised.

Although I agree with the notion of employing the metaphor of community to portray an inclusive school, I do think that our legacy of apartheid and the high level of heterogeneity in the South African society have such a significant impact on work done in inclusive education that it is necessary to take note of the article by Artiles and Kozleski (2007) that considers inclusive education from a critical-transformative perspective. They question the work done in inclusive education on whole-school approaches based on the notion of communities of learning that emphasises a social practice paradigm of learning as also suggested for the Index for Inclusion process. They argue that among others, the cultural-historical side of inclusive education and the nature of community and participation are ignored in inclusion literature. Inclusive education focuses more often on students with 'special needs' and disabilities, neglecting fundamental questions about the cultural history of education and its link to larger ideological struggles that have shaped a disparity in access and opportunities for various groups in society. They claim that although inclusive education is defined as being concerned with increasing access, participation and achievement of all students in an inclusive school community, issues of race, class gender and power are very often ignored leading to "an innocent perspective on difference" (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007:354). It thus seems that although Booth and Ainscow (2002) as developers of the Index for Inclusion acknowledge discrimination as inherent in all school cultures and informing exclusionary policies and practices in schools and classrooms, Artiles and Kozleski (2007) criticise the 'innocence' of the 'remedy' (the inclusive school community) they describe to address these discriminations.

Artiles and Kozleski (2007) hold that a typical inclusive school community is presented to be cohesive and harmonious with all staff members committed to a shared view of inclusive education and with all resources and efforts devoted to fostering inclusive school cultures. They find it necessary to challenge inclusion's prevailing assumptions about community as they argue that it is critical to remember that communities do not contain monolithic cultures. Although Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn and Christensen (2006:83) do find that some scholars acknowledge conflict and tension as part of life in inclusive school communities, they argue that the end point of the implementation of inclusive education "is embodied in a monolithic view of inclusive school culture".

A neglected aspect in whole-school inclusive education literature is the complex processes of identity formation that comprise life in any community. From a CHAT perspective all school members engage in the construction of identity projects as they participate in a school community. Inclusion literature needs to question assumptions based on normative ways of belonging that require participants to accept particular identities that indicate membership. Participants build alliances and affiliations with different subgroups within a community. Hodges (1998) contends that it is also possible for members of a community to dis-identify with a community's principal practices, but not to openly resist participation. Artiles and Kozleski (2007) offer the example of a teacher that participates in the accountability practices compelled by the policy community without identifying with such practices. From a South African perspective, Moloi and Henning (2007:116) refer to this as an example of 'policy speak'. They explain that teachers may use language that "expresses the rules of behaviour that come from a system of knowledge in which they are discourse participants" and "on the surface, they may seem to become members of the discourse community of new policy", but in "actional meaning-making a different picture arises" (Moloi & Henning, 2007:115). In this sense individuals may sometimes participate in communities without identifying with them, as they struggle with alternative and changing identities (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). This implies that dilemmas created by dis-identification also cause members to come to grips with shifting locations and positions in a community. Depending on how they participate, individuals might occupy positions at ether the centre or the periphery of communities. Linehan and McCarthy (2001) maintain that in the current use of the metaphor of community not enough attention is given to the complex and messy relations between individuals and between individuals and communities, which contribute to shaping the very social practices in which learning is situated in schools.

A core practice in inclusive education should be to make visible the blindness, silences, and exclusions that have permeated the histories and educational experiences of certain individuals in school communities. Artiles and Kozleski (2007) offer a critical-transformative lens for inclusive education that requires a certain vigilance to ensure a focus on which students are benefiting from the way things are and what can be done to ensure that all students benefit. Slee (2006:112) argues that schools and teachers should grapple with the complicated questions of: Who's in? Who's out? and How come? in order to bring to light cultures that too readily "accept a descending taxonomy of human value".

I agree with Artiles and his colleagues that the notion of an inclusive school as cohesive and harmonious, with all staff members committed to a shared view of inclusive education, needs to be challenged. As far back as 1993 Maxine Greene made a plea for an expansion of the metaphor of community. She invokes the Deweyan notion of a 'Great Community' but argues that the idea of community should not be identified with conformity. The notion of a community that is attentive to difference and open to the plea of plurality is essential: "Something life-affirming in diversity must be discovered and rediscovered, as what is held in common becomes always more many-faceted-open and inclusive, drawn to untapped possibility" (Greene, 1993:17). Fine, Weis and Powell (1997:252) suggest schools

> where differences are self-consciously drawn upon to enrich and texture the community; where negotiations of difference lie at the heart of the community; and where democratic participation is a defining aspect of decision-making and daily life within the community.

To establish such schools requires engagement that is insistently democratic, diverse, participatory and conscientious about equity and equality (Fine *et al.*, 1997).

Shields's (2000; 2001; 2003; 2004; 2006) notion of a school as a community of difference offers one possible challenge to a normative and monolithic view of the inclusive school. In an attempt to move away from a normative use of the notion of community and to embrace 'community' as a construct forceful enough to encompass the many purposes of schooling, including the purposes related to academic excellence and social justice for all, Shields (2003:39) explores the question: "How can we acknowledge difference and at the same time live together in a community?"

In an attempt to answer her own question, Shields (2006) endorses the metaphor of schools as communities as it allows for extending the metaphor to schools as communities of otherness and difference. She argues that schools will be diverse and encompassing multiple realities which should be celebrated not as unusual but as a fait accompli: "It is not appropriate to pretend that there is no diversity, to talk in terms of color-blind, or to emphasize our common humanity as though that minimizes or erases the glorious complexity and diversity of the human race and indeed of all creation" (Shields, 2006:73). As schools become progressively more diverse, the unquestioned acceptance of the status quo may have negative consequences that exclude certain students. Both Greene (1993) and Noddings (1995) (in Shields, 2000) draw attention to the dark side of community, excluding some people and including others. Shared meanings and accepting environments for members of the dominant group in the school may result in exclusion for so-called outsiders (Shields, 2000). Invoking the many grounds for diversity in present-day schools, she argues for schools to be grounded in values of inclusion, participation and respect (Shields, 2003; 2004; 2006) implying a deeply moral ideal to pursue (Shields, 2003).

But what is a community of difference and how can it be developed? Shields (2003:44) defines a community of difference in the following way:

> I believe that a more robust concept of community, one that respects and understands diversity and differences and accommodates value differences, but also demonstrates cohesiveness, caring and shared goals is necessary to move us forward. This is the concept of a community of difference.

Figure 3.3, which has been adapted from Shields's (2003:55, 82) comparison of a school as a traditional community and a school as a community of difference, further sheds light on her concept of a community of difference.

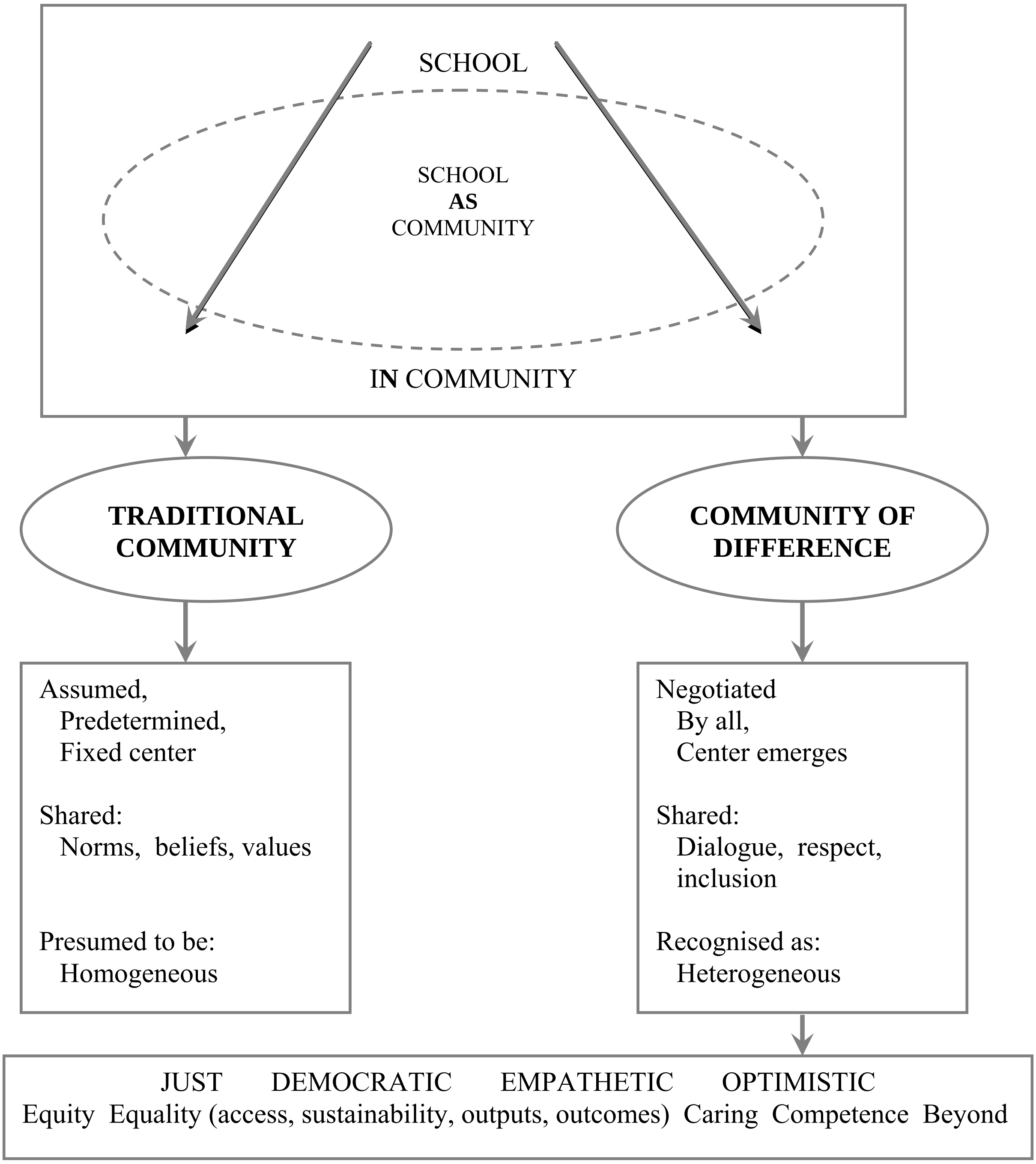
SCHOOL
SCHOOL
AS
COMMUNITY
IN COMMUNITY
TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY OF DIFFERENCE
Assumed,
Predetermined,
Fixed center
Shared:
Norms, beliefs, values
Presumed to be:
Homogeneous
Negotiated
By all,
Center emerges
Shared:
Dialogue, respect, inclusion
Recognised as:
Heterogeneous
JUST DEMOCRATIC EMPATHETIC OPTIMISTIC
Equity Equality (access, sustainability, outputs, outcomes) Caring Competence Beyond

Figure 3.3: School as a traditional community and a community of difference

As indicated in Figure 3.3, Shields (2003) sees the **school as a community** but also as **embedded in a community**. In line with the general inclusive education discourse, the Index for Inclusion process emphasises the fostering of mutually sustaining relationships among schools, parents or care-givers and their communities. Several of the indicators in the three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion specifically refer to these partnerships. Some of the indicators read as follows:

- **A.1.5** There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.
- **A.1.7** All local communities are involved in the school.
- **A.2.2** Staff, governors, students and parents and carers share a philosophy of inclusion.
- **C.2.4** Community sources are known and drawn upon.

According to Sands *et al.* (2000), parents and local communities experience profound changes in the responsibilities that they have in the educational process. It is currently a worldwide development in education that parents and the local community are invited to become full partners in school communities. In inclusive education the notion of an inclusive school community implies full membership of all the participants, including the parents and the local community. Schools thus have to *work* to include the parents and the community in the school as an essential part of being an inclusive school community. The process of education should be seen "as an evolving collaboration between the school staff, parents, children, and other members of the community" (Comer, 1987 in Zollers, Ramanathan & Moonset Yu, 1999:169).

For the purposes of this study and within the Engeström model (as has been reported before), the teachers in the research school were identified as the **subjects** of the study whilst the subgroup of participants constituting the dimension '**community**' would be all the students, the management team of the school, the governing body, the parent body and the community in which the school is embedded. With regard to teachers' appropriation of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion, teachers will have to learn how to form successful and sustainable partnerships with the parents of students in their school and also with the local community. This will be mutually beneficial and especially the learning process of the students will prosper, since research has indicated that student attendance, attitudes and conduct improve when parents work with teachers in partnerships (McKenzie & Loebenstein, 2007).

It is generally acknowledged that parent involvement has a positive impact on the child's success at school. Parent recognition implies the acknowledgement that parents can make a worthwhile contribution in the education of their children and it also implies a respect for the rights and responsibilities of parents (McKensie & Loebenstein, 2007). Parents and teachers have historically participated in a system that divided and separated, which is incompatible with the notion of shared responsibilities (Engelbrecht, 2007). This separation was never neutral in content, but reflected the power relations in society. What is currently considered necessary is that parents and the community are recognised as full partners and that in these relationships the unique perspectives, experiences, knowledge bases and personal belief systems are all valued equally (Engelbrecht, 2007).

Meaningful collaborative relationships between parents, teachers and students have been identified as a critical element in the development of inclusive school communities. In South Africa, collaboration between parents and schools is a recent phenomenon driven largely by policy changes and the transformation of education by a democratic government (Engelbrecht, 2007). Parent recognition and involvement in inclusive education implies that relationships need to be established between the schools and parents and that a commitment is necessary to overcome problems through communication and collaboration between parents and teachers (McKenzie & Loebenstein, 2007).

Furthermore, schools need to establish sustainable relationships with their local communities. Such relationships can help schools to obtain outside resources and to innovate. According to research done by Wai-ming Tam (2007), school and community relations that are of value to both parties can best be established when schools have a distinctive character, a school vision and identity and at the same time a commitment to develop a vibrant relationship with the community. Schools that possess these attributes can successfully communicate with the community and understand its needs, but at the same time the community can act as an important resource for the school. Schools need to form partnerships with their communities so that they can work together to improve the learning of all students. But schools need to develop productive relations with the community in order to survive and become sustainable (Wai-ming Tam, 2007). This is especially true about schools in less affluent communities as are often seen in South Africa.

In South Africa schools are encouraged to develop stronger links with their local communities. Such cooperation would promote greater community participation in the life of the school and also motivate the school to contribute to the life of the community (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006). Johnson and Green (2007:169) point out that “[s]chool-community partnerships can weave together a critical mass of resources and strategies to enhance caring communities that support all youth and their families and enable success at school and beyond”. In less affluent communities in South Africa, where the school is often the only centre for community development, school-community partnerships are critical (Johnson & Green, 2007).

Johnson and Green (2007) argue that the success of partnerships between the school, parents and community rests upon the recognition and application of the following characteristics of collaboration: trust, openness, honesty, positive and caring attitudes, personal relationships, being equals, understanding power and conflict, and school-wide commitment. Teachers will have to learn how to form inclusive, respectful and equal partnerships with the parent body and the community. According to Shields (2006), in the community of difference the groundwork is laid for increasing community participation, for empowering children, their parents and others to become partners in education.

In her construction of a community of difference, Shields (2003) also draws a distinction between the traditional school community and a school as a community of difference (see Figure 3.4). Contrary to the traditional community whose centre is considered predetermined and fixed, whose values, beliefs and norms are seen as equally shared by all members of the community and where homogeneity is presumed, the community of difference is one where the common centre would not be taken as a given but would emerge from a process of co-construction from the negotiation of dissimilar beliefs and values by participants in dialogic relationships where they learn to respect and to listen to each other. Conversations are necessary to assist members of the school community to make sense of various locations, power relations, and lived circumstances (Shields, 2006). Respect for each other and the inclusion of all voices are considered important. Heterogeneity is accepted and bonds among members are not assumed, but actively fostered, and boundaries are not imposed, but negotiated (Shields, 2000; 2003). Shields (2006) further argues that when schools are moved away from being bureaucratic organisations with a focus on policy and accountability and into communities of difference where discourse and disagreement are the norm, the groundwork is also laid for a more deeply democratic, respectful and inclusive society.

Shields (2003) regards the community of difference as a learning community which she identifies as an authentic community of difference in which both teachers and students are seen as reflective, critical and active learners (Shields, 2001:75). In a community of difference shared goals and vision emerge from team learning, from the best thinking and from ongoing interactions of all members.

Some values that may be useful as building blocks for a community of difference and some criteria against which to assess progress toward the development of a community of difference have been indicated in Figure 3.3. Shields (2003) contends that both academic excellence for all students and social justice for all members of a school are important values for schooling and are considered of equal significance for the community of difference. She claims that social justice and academic excellence are inextricably intertwined as academic excellence must extend equally to members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Shields, 2004). Inclusive education supports Shields' claim in this respect, as inclusive education is often defined as being about the presence, participation and achievement of all students. Students with differing abilities should be accepted and *present* in the inclusive learning community where they can *participate* fully in all activities in order to optimise their *achievement* (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). The Index for Inclusion acknowledges both social justice and academic excellence as integral to their definition of an inclusive school. The following are some of the indicators that can be quoted for verification:

- **A.2.1** There are high expectations for all students.
- **A.2.3** Students are equally valued.
- **C.1.1** Teaching is planned with the learning of all students in mind.

Shields (2003) identifies four criteria for the creation of a school as a community of difference which should be considered carefully and holistically. Schools need to be just, democratic, empathetic and optimistic. **Justice** implies the notions of equity and equality where the needs of all are equally considered and where equity is about getting into the school, staying in the school, learning the same things to the same level and as an important outcome, living well; **democracy** refers to both presence and participation – the right to have one's voice heard and understood; **empathy** resonates with Nel Noddings's work on the notion of caring and requires that all students are respected, feel that they belong and are fully included and believe they are understood; and **optimism** refers to providing students with hope to increase life's chances and choices, both in the school and beyond the school.

As explained before, the dimension of 'creating inclusive cultures' of the Index for Inclusion triangle also highlights the importance of establishing shared values in a school community. The four criteria for the creation of a school as a community of difference as identified by Shields (2003) resonate with the values identified by Rustemier and Booth (2005:5) as fundamental to an inclusive school: "equity or fairness, participation, community, respect for diversity, compassion, rights and sustainability". Booth (2005:154) extends the list to include the values of honesty and joy and argues for the enhancement of the human spirit "as about joyful engagement in teaching, learning and relationships".

In the inclusive school **shared values** are established in which all new staff, students and parents are apprenticed (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In inclusive school cultures, inclusive values and principles need to be developed to guide decisions about school and classroom policies and practices. Booth and Ainscow (2002) argue that it is through inclusive school cultures that changes in policies and practices, achieved by a school community, can be sustained and passed on to new staff and students, but sustainable development also depends on change occurring in all the dimensions of the school as depicted in the Index for Inclusion.

The values and attitudes held by teachers and the rest of the school staff are identified as key to the implementation of inclusive education (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2005). Deeply held beliefs in schools may prevent the learning and experimentation necessary as a prerequisite for the development of more inclusive ways of working (Ainscow, 2007). Carrington and Robinson (2006) draw on the work of Senge (2000) in trying to understand the limited success of processes of inclusive school development. Senge contends that most teachers still adhere to industrial-age beliefs about learning despite publicly proclaiming the opposite. He identifies five assumptions on learning still informing teachers' school cultures and subsequently school policies and practices: students are deficient and schools need to fix them; learning takes place in the head and not in the body as a whole; everyone learns or should learn in the same way; learning takes place in the classroom and not in the world out there; and there are "smart kids" and "dumb kids". Teachers seem to be unaware of their assumptions and personal theories and the implications of these for their behaviour and practice. By ignoring their responsibility to ensure quality education for all their students, they continue to reinforce the deficit perception of students who do not respond 'appropriately' to the curriculum (Carrington & Robinson, 2006:325).

The Index for Inclusion draws attention to discrimination inherent in school cultures. Discrimination can inform exclusionary policies and practices in schools and classrooms and it is also made visible in the way in which staff are appointed and welcomed into school communities. Booth and Ainscow (2002:7) see what they call "institutional discrimination" as much wider than racism and include all the ways in which exclusion can occur in schools: on grounds of gender, disability, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation: "Racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and disablisim share a common root in intolerance to difference and the abuse of power to create and perpetuate inequalities." When inclusive education is implemented in schools, one of the more distressing aspects of such a process is to reflect on own discriminatory attitudes and practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). This kind of work requires commitment, courage in risk taking and authentic cultural change, as merely critiquing the exclusion of students and others from school communities does not promise true inclusion and consequently the end of raciology, disablement or other forms of essentialist thinking (Slee, 2006).

- **Leading inclusive schools**

The scope of this dissertation does not allow for justice to be done to all the complexities at play within the contemporary leadership discourse. I will, however, attempt to look at leadership in relation to the implementation of inclusive education in schools, whilst also considering work done from the perspective of CHAT. School leadership in the South African context will also be explored briefly. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Index for Inclusion does not directly address questions of leadership, although it will be evident from the discussion that leadership is acknowledged as a prominent factor in moving schools to become more inclusive of diversity and difference.

The phenomenon referred to as 'leadership' remains largely a theoretical enigma and paradox (Allix & Gronn, 2005). Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) suggest that for a school to become more inclusive the 'black box' of school leadership should be made more transparent. In their view, the issue of inclusive education is increasingly seen as a key challenge for school principals, but at the same time leadership is also critical to any innovation in schools (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Leading schools that are implementing inclusive education is not an easy process. Processes of change are not comfortable for teachers and other professionals, as they have to be able to deal with questions being asked of their beliefs and teaching practices. Thus school leaders need to model a willingness to participate in discussions and debates and they should be prepared to answer questions and face challenges from staff members. They also need to enable staff to feel secure enough about their practices to be able to handle the challenges they have to meet (Ainscow, n.d.).

According to Riehl (2000), school principals in inclusive schools, in answer to increasing diversity, need to attend to three broad types of tasks: fostering new meanings about diversity; promoting inclusive practices within schools; and building effective connections between schools and communities. They also need to be "wedded to a relentless commitment to equity, voice and social justice" and their "efforts in the tasks of sense-making, promoting inclusive cultures and practices in schools, and building positive relationships outside of the school, may indeed foster a new form of practice" (Riehl, 2000:71). The importance of cultural factors in schools in promoting or inhibiting teacher and student learning are thus underscored (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004).

Leadership in inclusive schools thus seems to call for an unwavering commitment to inclusive education, a collaborative working style and problem-solving, conflict resolution skills, an understanding and appreciation of the expertise of others and supportive relationships with teachers. In this respect Shields (2004:38) suggests from her metaphor of schools as communities of difference that inclusive school leaders should "ground [themselves] in the bedrock moral principles of social justice and academic excellence for all students and pay careful attention to relationships, understanding and dialogue". An inclusive school leader who wants to create a community of difference will use that power deliberately and morally to promote meaningful relationships and deep understanding. Shields (2004) identifies dialogue as the lifeblood that grounds a community in the principles of social justice and academic excellence for all. Dialogue is not just talk, but a way of life – a way of connecting with others and of treating them with respect.

Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) declare that their research indicates that more inclusive schools create and support non-hierarchical organisational structures. The collaborative nature of inclusive school cultures has clear implications for the nature of leadership and processes of decision-making (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). Leadership is not solely an individual affair but is spread throughout a school with leader roles overlapping and shifting as different developmental needs arise (Harris, 2003b). Ainscow (2005) highlights social processes of learning and collaborative inquiry-based approaches within the particular context of the workplace that can foster development in teaching and leadership. Copland (2003:394) contends that research suggests evidence of "the power of inquiry as the engine to enable the distribution of leadership, and the glue that binds a school community together in common work" such as envisaged during the implementation of inclusive education.

The development of an inclusive culture requires a shared commitment by the staff to processes that produce an overall enhancement in participation among all participants. Within such a context, leadership becomes redefined and distributed, reinforcing a sense of community and of mutual trust. The importance of collaborative processes points to the importance of distributed leadership and participative decision-making (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004).

Early approaches to leadership were characterised by understandings of leadership as hierarchical, highlighting processes of control and order within a school (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). However, Copland (2003) claims that hierarchical models of school leadership, where leaders in formal roles make critical decisions about improvement and then promote adherence to those decisions among their followers, do not have an adequate answer during a time of transformation in education systems. Even in cases where traditional, authoritarian approaches have brought about significant change, such changes proved to be not sustainable.

According to Shields (2003), Burns first distinguished between transactional and transformational leadership approaches in 1978. Leithwood and colleagues applied the ideas of transformational leadership to education (Copland, 2003). Drawing on Leithwood (1992), Copland (2003:377) explains that within transformational leadership theory school leaders focus on processes of facilitation to change school cultures in which "leadership is manifested *through* other people, not *over* other people". Hallinger (2003) argues that transformational leadership wants to enhance a school climate that emphasises continuous learning and the sharing of learning. Transformational leaders support members of the school community to identify personal goals and then align their goals with broader school goals. In this way teachers are invited to see the relationship between what they are trying to accomplish and the mission of the school. Transformational leadership thus has a distributed nature and it aims to empower the development of school community members. This implies that transformational leadership requires a higher tolerance for equivocality and uncertainty and an ability to live with the messiness integral to a process of change (Hallinger, 2003).

Hallinger (2003) further argues for a move beyond a binary view of transactional leadership (for example instructional leadership) and transformational leadership and suggests contingency models of leadership that perceive leadership as a developmental process which deals with the realities of successful leadership during a process of transformation. Leadership needs to be conceptualised as a "mutual influence process" seeing that the leader's behaviours are hugely shaped by the school context (Hallinger, 2003:346). This implies that the needs of the school context should determine the type of leadership needed for a certain context and time. Leadership needs to understand and consider the school context as a source of constraints, resources, and opportunities. Factors such as the contexts of students, the community in which the school is situated, the organisational structure and climate of the school, teacher training, experience and competence, financial resources and the size of the school will affect the style of leadership required (Hallinger, 2003).

In light of the above, Hallinger (2003) contends that "schools at risk" would initially require a more directive top-down approach focused on instructional improvement. The extent of staff participation will depend on where the school finds itself in the journey to improvement. Sustained improvement over time will ultimately depend on teachers and the rest of the school community increasingly accepting levels of ownership for change processes in the school. His arguments in this respect correspond with the research findings of Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) that indicate that more inclusive schools chose non-hierarchical leadership approaches but without being laissez-faire. The school leaders in their study were not reluctant to be directive when faced with decisions that implicate values and beliefs important to an inclusionary approach to schooling.

It does however seem as if schools that move successfully towards the implementation of inclusive education provide evidence of a shift in thinking about leadership. This shift gives prominence to transformational leadership approaches which emphasise the distribution of power and empowerment rather than transactional approaches which want to maintain the traditional concepts of hierarchy, power and control (Sergiovanni, 1992 in Ainscow, n.d.). New transformational approaches in leadership require a conscious and purposeful focus on learning, the development of a 'blame-free culture' that encourages risk-taking and experimentation, and a dedication to creating and using knowledge (Harris, 2004; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). This in effect means accepting that leadership is a function to which all members of the staff contribute rather than a set of responsibilities in the hands of a small number of individuals in acknowledged leadership positions (Ainscow, n.d.; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004).

Shields (2003) combines aspects of transactional, transformational, feminist, multicultural, democratic, critical and emancipatory leadership concepts to create her notion of transformative cross-cultural leadership. She contends that transformative leadership implies moral leadership with a focus on social justice. School leaders are transformative when they work for change wherever they find injustice and inequity, whilst cross-cultural leaders understand the diverse cultures of their schools. Transformative cross-cultural leaders thus

> develop images of inclusive, caring, high-performing schools that take into account changing school populations and also prepare students for life in a global knowledge economy. They act morally, consistently and persistently in transformative ways, to create schools as communities of difference (Shields, 2003:30).

A distributed leadership approach for schools also comes highly recommended in inclusive education literature (Swart & Pettipher, 2007). Gronn (2000) describes distributed leadership as an idea whose time has come. Distributed practices are emerging in schools because work demands are escalating despite the fact that accountability measures imposed by governments do not acknowledge distributed practice (Gronn, 2003). Drawing on a literature review on school leadership conducted by Hallinger and Heck (1996) Harris (2004:12) contends that there are certain "blank spots" in the sense of shortcomings in research and "blind spots" in the sense that researchers' theoretical and epistemological biases have prompted them to overlook important implications in the leadership discourse. She claims that leadership research tends to ignore the important concern of which leadership practice will enhance sustained forms of school development. With regard to the 'blank spot' she argues that research literature very often focuses on the formal leadership of head-teachers exclusively.

In a 2005 paper Ainscow chooses to view inclusive school leadership as distributed *practice* dispersed over a school's context. He quotes Spillane *et al.* (2004) who suggest taking leadership activity as the appropriate unit of analysis, rather than focusing on the work of individual leaders. From the above it is clear that it is suggested that the notion of distributed leadership should be explored from an activity theory perspective.

According to Copland (2003), scholars in the field understand distributed leadership as a collective activity that is focused on collective goals. This signals an openness of leadership boundaries, involving the fostering of boundary-spanning activity in schools. A shift towards distributed leadership in a school may create what the Engeström model defines as *contradictions* between the components of the activity system, potentially enabling broad changes within the activity system. For the sake of furthering this argument, it is worthwhile to emphasise again that Engeström (2001:137) talks of contradictions as "historically accumulating structural tensions" within systems. Principals trained in more traditional top-down approaches to leadership will have to relinquish some control to empower others to assume new power. This will involve the renegotiation of relationships and activities in a school, as distributed leadership is grounded in expertise rather than in hierarchical authority. This therefore calls for a redistribution of power and authority toward those who are experts in certain activities in a schools (Copland, 2003), which may not be easy to accomplish, both from the perspective of the traditional leader and his or her 'followers'. Leadership in schools is thus best understood through considering leadership tasks and leadership practice as distributed over school leaders, followers and the school's context (Spillane *et al.*, 2004).

Copland (2003) holds that such a view of leadership has significant merit for instilling change in schools, as change enforced in a top-down manner most often breaks down at the point of implementation. In his view the leadership actions undertaken by classroom teachers in changing their own and each other's teaching practice can be considered the most important leadership actions in schools. Copland (2003) contends that the development of a school culture of collaboration, trust, professional learning and shared accountability is necessary to realise the ideals of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership also asks for a strong consensus regarding the important problems that require change in a school and a need for rich expertise in approaches to improve teaching and learning among those working in the school.

Gronn (2000) specifically looks at distributed leadership from the perspective of activity theory. He suggests a theory of action based on the idea of conjoint agency and a consideration of Engeström's activity theory. In activity theory, leadership is more of a collective phenomenon as explained before (Harris, 2003a). According to Presthus (2006), Gronn (2000) talks about concerted action in the sense of the additional dynamic that is the product of conjoint activity. Where people work together in such a way that they join together their initiative and expertise, the outcome is a product which is most often greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

In activity theory, activity bridges the gap between agency and structure (Harris, 2003a; Presthus, 2006). The potential for distributed leadership is present in the flow of activities in which school members find themselves and which also disentangle leadership from any automatic link with the notion of headship (Gronn, 2000). It can be argued that distributed leadership theory advocates that schools decentre the leader (Harris, 2003a). Gronn (2000) claims that leadership will only stay relevant if it is reconstructed as part of a model of jointly performed and tool-mediated activity. A distributed view of task and activities implies a new form of division of labour at the heart of the organisation of the school (Gronn, 2000).

Gronn (2000) claims that in the past, activity theory did not feature strongly in discussions on leadership and management. He finds Engeström's model helpful as a means of tracking distributed influence and leadership as it highlights the division of labour in human activity. Daniels (2004) suggests a shift at the level of rules, distribution of labour and community of the activity system when looking at new ways of distributing power and control in an activity system. According to Gronn (2000), the action of every individual only makes sense when viewed against the backdrop of the overall system of interdependent labour relations in a school. The changeability intrinsic to the Engeström model is also seen as significant as it allows for the duality of constraint and enablement in respect of action. When taking conjoint agency as a new notion of the unit of analysis it opens possibilities of a changed way of looking at the rules, division of labour and community of an activity system (Daniels, 2004) where the scope of activities to be performed "have to be redefined to encompass pluralities of agents whose actions dovetail or mesh to express new patterns of interdependent relations" (Gronn, 2000:325).

Engeström (1999c) holds that rules, community and divisions of labour can be seen as less visible social mediators of activity. In the same vein, Gronn (2000) argues that most often leadership is dispersed in schools but that it is made invisible because of the notion of headship. Authority very often 'invisibilises' the actual division of labour so that the school principal who exercises overall responsibility becomes vested with a monopoly of influence. This results in the general expectation that the head of the school is by implication also the leader. In this way headship is wrongly seen as equivalent to leadership and this leads to the division of labour in schools mostly determined by authority, the values, interests, personalities of the members in the school and the resources at their disposal.

In the same way, the school leader is also seen as the gatekeeper of change within a school system. The potential for school change such as necessary during the implementation of inclusive education is then seen as hugely dependent on the leadership skills and abilities of one person. This highlights the 'hero paradigm' of leadership (Harris, 2003b; Gronn, 2000). It seems as if a fundamental belief remains in the individual leadership capabilities of the head-teacher and that the view is accepted of school leadership that continues to equate leadership with headship, despite a scarcity of research findings linking leadership to better student outcomes (Harris, 2003b).

Gronn (2000) maintains that researchers should focus their analyses on the actual divisions of labour within schools, rather than applying the traditional dualisms such as leaders-followers. Gronn (2003) further argues that the leader-follower binary is currently widely questioned. He talks about the invisibilising of distributed work in organisations such as schools. Through a process of abstracting, the processes of real-world phenomena are made invisible. 'Visibilisation', which is recommended to 'unveil' these processes, can result in a more realistic portrayal of leadership as dispersed throughout a school.

One of the conceptions of leadership to unveil or make visible is that of exceptionalism, as highlighted by Gronn (2003). Exceptional leadership is leadership focused on the individual and is the direct opposite of distributed leadership. Gronn (2003:281) explains that "[l]eadership that is exceptional is presumed to be manifest behaviourally in individual deeds of heroic proportions" and highlights the notion of the superiority of leaders. In the same breath, non-leaders are constructed as 'followers' and can easily feel 'othered'. School leaders need to be careful because they can create a kind of unhealthy dependency, learned helplessness or disempowerment among their followers (Gronn, 2003; Shields 2003). Shields (2003) draws on Kets de Vries (1997) and suggests that the power that accompanies formal leadership positions frequently develops from a pathological desire for power and an inappropriate sense of self-importance. Gronn (2000) concurs and mentions that numerous potential weaknesses, such as ostentation for example, can be triggered when an inflated sense of agency is accredited to school leaders.

Exceptionalism can also lead to teachers disengaging from leadership, as they regularly have to witness the sheer amount of work handled by school leaders, leaving them to wonder if they have what it takes to accept a leadership position. This is one reason why education systems find it difficult to replenish their existing stock of school leaders (Gronn, 2003). Olson (2008) reports on a study of 22 nations conducted by the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that found that the lack of school leaders is seen as a global problem. The study suggests that countries can improve the general effectiveness of school leaders by elucidating the core roles and responsibilities of school principals in order to present a firmer foundation for recruitment, training and evaluation processes. The distribution of leadership tasks beyond just the school leader should also be considered. This will lead to teachers and other members taking on leadership positions, a situation that has been found to enhance workplace and student learning. Effective leadership training for all is considered crucial and more should be done to make school leadership an attractive career.

Gronn (2003) suggests a distributed perspective on leadership to help in visibilising work processes in schools. Characteristic of such a perspective in a school will be the interdependence of the whole staff, role complementarity and the overlap of actions. Conjoint activity will be facilitated by aligning plans and mutual patterns of influence.

Harris (2003a) sees distributed leadership theory as being especially useful in providing greater conceptual clarity with regard to teacher leadership. She refers to the work done by Gronn (2000) on leadership within activity theory to explain that firstly, distributed leadership incorporates the activities of various groups of individuals in a school who work at guiding staff in a change process with regard to teaching and learning. Secondly, it implies a distribution of the leadership task over the work of a number of individuals, involving the interaction of multiple leaders. Lastly, the focus is on interdependency rather than dependency, which would entail that leaders of various kinds and in various roles share the action and responsibility. Fundamental to teacher leadership is the building of professional learning communities in schools because it is premised upon teachers working in collaboration to learn with and from each other (Harris, 2003a). Harris (2003a) argues that distributed leadership is necessary for building professional learning communities which will allow for teachers to lead development and change work in schools.

Schools with an authoritarian approach to leadership generally rely on a sharp differentiation in roles and responsibilities that can present a major barrier to teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is essentially concerned with the idea that all school members can lead and that leadership is a form of agency that is distributed and shared. It relies on forms of collective action, empowerment and agency that are fundamental to distributed leadership theory. Distributed leadership implies a different power relationship within the school where the distinctions between leaders and followers tend to fall away (Gronn, 2003).

Harris (2003a) identifies several conditions for teacher leadership to flourish: teachers need time to collaborate on issues such as curriculum changes, implementing school-wide plans for change, leading study groups, organising visits to other schools and collaborating with universities; continuous professional development is necessary, not only to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge, but also to pay attention to the deliberate development of their leadership skills, such as leading groups and presenting workshops and collaborative work with colleagues and others; teacher leadership is important for the improvement of teachers' self-confidence to act as leaders in their schools; and this calls for structured programmes of collaboration to ensure that teacher can fully develop their leadership potential. Teacher leadership also requires a careful relocation of resources within the school to ensure that teacher leadership becomes integral to the management of the school.

Grant (2006), a South African specialist in the field of educational leadership and management, contends that teacher leadership is new to the majority of teachers and researchers in South Africa, but maintains that teacher leadership is critical in the transformation of South African schools. Given the inequalities and inequities that remain omnipresent in the education system, coupled with the range of new policies, such as Education White Paper 6 of 2001 on the implementation of inclusive education, that require radical change in all systems, an emphasis on headship and the 'lone figure' at the top of a hierarchical system, is inappropriate (Grant, 2006:514). The only way that schools will be able to meet the challenges is to tap the potential of all staff members and allow teachers to experience a sense of ownership and inclusivity and to lead aspects of the change process. Harris's (2004) ideal of the unleashing of human potential available within a school is only possible if a distributed leadership model is employed that ascribes to capacity-building in a school as a community with at its core, an emphasis on social cohesion and trust.

Since 1994 it has been recognised in South Africa that school leadership is key to changes in the schooling system. There has been some attempt at broadening the basis for decision-making in schools and changing the culture of leadership and of the school itself (Prew, 2007). The notion of the self-managing school was propagated by educational policy, and different leadership bodies were introduced by the South African Schools Act of 1996. Examples of these are the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), the School Management Team (SMT) and the School Governing Body (SGB) (Prew, 2007). Grant (2006) acknowledges that there are some South African schools that operate as professional learning communities, but claims that the majority of the schools are characterised by a culture of resistance, dependency and non-participation which she perceives as a legacy of apartheid. Grant (2006:528) claims that "South Africa's history has taught teachers to mistrust, to doubt, to work on one's own and certainly not to trust anybody in authority. Fear experienced by principals as a result of the professional development of their staff, is also common".

During the era of apartheid education in South Africa, headship, implying position, status and authority, dominated a view of leadership. At present, under the pretence of inclusion and participation and of transformational and shared leadership with vision and mission statements in place, many principals are still carrying on much as before. For instance, while it is claimed that parents are involved in decision-making, the reality in many schools does not support the claim (Prew, 2007). Recent research conducted by Bush (2003) and quoted in Grant (2006) has indicated only a symbolic commitment to collegiality by school principals. Bush (2007) found that in the majority of schools aims are mainly decided by principals, although they may work in association with the senior management team (SMT) and perhaps with the governing body (SGB). Prew's (2007) research found that principals often adhere to autocratic leadership styles, despite limited managerial skills. This leads to conflict in many schools and can result in a total collapse of management. This highlights the gap between national expectations regarding management and the stark reality in schools.

Bush (2007) argues that there is a difference between leadership and management, although both are needed in schools. While leadership influences others' actions in order to achieve certain outcomes and changes, management maintains current arrangements in a school efficiently. However, in their day-to-day activities, school principals seldom discern whether they are leading or managing. The nature of their work would probably reflect the school context and its particular needs at a given time.

In line with the findings of Hallinger (2003) and Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) as discussed earlier, Bush (2007) contends that South Africa's dysfunctional and underperforming schools initially require a greater emphasis on basic management such as ensuring regular and timely attendance by students and teachers, maintaining order and discipline in the classroom, and ensuring quality learning. Once schools are functional, other models of leadership can be introduced with the confidence that systems are in place to secure their implementation.

While it is true that policy initiatives in South Africa allow schools more leeway to determine their own aims and developmental processes, in reality school aims are constrained the expectations of national and provincial education departments. Schools are often left with the sole task of interpreting and implementing external imperatives in line with accountability measures (Bush, 2007).

Despite the more pessimistic portrayal of the South African education scene presented above, Grant (2006) argues for the development of a culture of distributed leadership and teacher leadership as a means to restore the self-worth and professionalism of teachers. She claims that the concepts of teacher leadership and distributed leadership are implicit in post-1994 South African education policy. The South African Schools Act of 1996 suggests a firm commitment to participative decision-making (Bush, 2007), and according to the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000b), the teacher is expected to perform seven roles, amongst them that of leader, manager and administrator. In order to strengthen leadership in schools, management of schools should follow more collaborative models of school leadership. Leadership needs to be dispersed throughout schools. School principals should thus be willing to abandon the notion of headship and fixed leader-follower dualisms, the elected model of apartheid education, and in the spirit of democracy and participation be prepared to share power with others. Grant (2006:513) argues that "in keeping with the notion of distributed leadership, teachers need to be encouraged to find their voices, take up their potential as leaders and change agents to produce a liberating culture in their schools". Both distributed leadership and the notion of teacher leadership compel schools to move from a culture of dependency to one of agency and enablement. Teachers need to be prepared to take up informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond and to work collaboratively within a culture of mutual trust and respect with all school members to move their school to become more inclusive (Grant, 2006).

Based on intensive exploratory research, Grant (2006) suggests a model of teacher leadership for South Africa. The first important suggestion from the model is that teacher leadership needs to be understood on four levels: (1) teachers need to be leaders within their classrooms; (2) teachers must also lead beyond the classroom as they develop collaborative working relations with their colleagues; (3) teachers should also become more involved in school development issues such as vision building and policy development; (4) teachers should also become leaders in community life and in cross-school networking.

It can furthermore be argued from the model that teacher leadership should always be understood against the backdrop of a specific context. In the case of South Africa it is important to place teacher leadership within the context of a relatively young democracy emerging from an apartheid history whilst still carrying the legacy of poverty and inequality. As South Africa is a country that is still battling with processes of transformation, teacher leaders need to understand and be willing to act as agents of change.

The prerequisites for teacher leadership are a distributed leadership approach, a collaborative school culture with participatory decision-making and vision-sharing, and a set of values which promote the development of a collaborative culture. Values at the heart of a collaborative culture would be transparency, trust, respect, a sense of worth, communication, consultation, shared ownership and responsibility, inclusivity, equality, sensitivity to individuals and the courage for risk-taking.

Important barriers to teacher leadership identified in the Grant (2006) model of teacher leadership are a hierarchical school management controlled by autocratic principals, an understanding of leadership as linked to a formal position, and teachers who are resistant to change. A distributed leadership approach calls for a principal who has the right balance of confidence and humility to assign leadership intelligently where strengths in colleagues are obvious.

South Africa is still one of the few countries that do not require a compulsory and specific qualification of principalship, but recently the Department of Education introduced a national qualification for school leadership in the form of an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). Among others, the new ACE: School Leadership Programme stresses a collegial model of leadership as identified by Bush (2007). Bush's (2007) collegial model of leadership includes all those theories that emphasise shared power and decision-making, such as transformational and participative approaches to leadership. The ACE qualification is seen as the first step towards implementing a compulsory professional qualification for principalship without which no teacher would be eligible for appointment to the post of first-time principal (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). Apart from his collegial model of leadership, Bush (2007) identifies several other leadership models, such as the postmodern, moral, instructional, and African models. The new ACE qualification carries traces of most of these models, but wants to move away from bureaucracy and by implication managerial leadership, which was the preferred model for South Africa in the era of apartheid. This approach is associated with authoritarian, hierarchical and inaccessible management styles with the principal's authority perceived to be juridical.

It seems as if in South Africa real transformation will depend on the nature and quality of self-management in schools that needs to be accompanied by a distribution of power within schools. The participative model is in alignment with the principles of the new South African Constitution. However, the Ministerial Committee's Review of School Governance Report (2004), as quoted in Bush (2007), suggests that the ideal of participative decision-making is not yet a reality in the majority of South African schools.

Bush's (2007) postmodern leadership model suggests that leaders should respect the diverse perspectives of school members. A postmodern leadership style is aligned with democracy and advocates a more collaborative, participatory and inclusionary emphasis for leadership that fits the aspirations of 21st century South Africa. The SGB in South Africa is one vehicle for achieving this objective. Principals need to facilitate participation by teachers, parents, students and the broader school community and acknowledge their right to be heard.

Moral leadership is also acknowledged in the South African ACE: School Leadership Programme. In this programme's materials reference is made to the importance of spiritual intelligence and leadership and note is taken of Fullan's (2005) notion of 'moral purpose'. This model highlights values, beliefs and the ethics of school leaders themselves.

Instructional leadership, despite being a more directive leadership style, is recognised by the SA Department of Education which stresses the importance of learning in its ACE: School Leadership materials (Bush, 2007). However, according to research undertaken by Bush and Heystek (2006), instructional leadership is not highly regarded by school principals in South Africa. Only 27.2% of the survey principals identified this topic as a training need. This finding suggests that principals do not see themselves as 'leaders of learning' despite the fact that school transformation ultimately depends on school leaders accepting their responsibility for developing learning. Hallinger (2003) describes instructional leadership as predominantly a unitary role of a strong and directive leader. These leaders are "hands-on principals, 'hip-deep' in curriculum and instruction and unafraid of working with teachers on the improvement of teaching and learning" (Hallinger, 2003:332). They are goal-oriented and focus on the improvement of student outcomes. They are also seen as culture-builders in the sense of promoting a school as a learning community.

According to Bush (2007), African models of leadership need to be inspired by the notion of Ubuntu which is fundamental to the South African Constitution and highlights collective personhood and morality. In the ACE: School Leadership Programme the concept of 'lekgotla' is introduced for the kgosi (leader) to adopt as leadership style. This leadership style based on the concept of 'lekgotla' (a Sesotho word for 'court') emphasises a natural belief in humanity, unconditional giving, tolerance and trust (Bush, 2007). Trust can be seen as the basis for risk-taking, inspiration, motivation and creativity in a school. African concepts of leadership and the Western participative and moral leadership models share an emphasis on collective and humane values and participation, also reminiscent of inclusive and distributed leadership approaches in schools (Bush, 2007).

The Index for Inclusion does not underscore a particular school leadership model but is infused with values such as equality, equity, participation, collaboration, community, respect for diversity, compassion and rights (Rustemier & Booth, 2005) as discussed in Section 3.3.2.3. By implication, transformational, participative, moral and distributive leadership approaches will be emphasised during the implementation of inclusive education. I would like to recommend the active investigation of the notion of teacher leadership as an offspring of the distributed leadership model for the inclusive school, in general and in particular in South Africa.

- **The notion of support in inclusive education**

The Index for Inclusion adopts a broad notion of support as "all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to student diversity" (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) and thus views support as integral to schooling in general and implies the involvement of every school and all teachers. This means that enriching education takes place in the classroom with learning support available for all students (Bouwer, 2005). Dealing with the complexity of student differences and thus rendering support to ensure quality learning for *all* students, would entail that teachers have to ask "if their decisions allow a more open space for participation and emancipation or a more closed space for marginalization and silencing" of students (Mariage Paxton-Buursma & Bouck 2004:537). These authors suggest linking socio-cultural and critical theory in a meaning-making process that can open the discourse space to support *all* students equally and in effective ways (Mariage *et al.*, 2004:537).

Socio-cultural theory has the same Vygotskian and Marxist roots as CHAT, but scholars working from Vygotskian philosophy tend to name their approach "socio-cultural" whilst those giving a more Leontévian slant to their work prefer the term "cultural-historical" (Roth & Lee, 2007:190). Socio-cultural theory creates an awareness of discourses influencing the learning and development of students and invites schools and teachers to socially contract new possibilities, voices, perspectives and norms, whilst critical theory adds a stance of critique (Mariage *et al.*, 2004), offering the opportunity to question and transform the complex underlying structures and processes of schooling in order to become more inclusive of human diversity. Arguing from a Vygotskian perspective, Gindis (2003:217) explains learning support as all students' "integration to the fullest extent possible in social-cultural interaction, provision of appropriate and effective 'psychological tools' and ensuring scaffolded (mediated) learning experiences".

Socio-cultural theory (or CHAT) shifts the unit of attention and analysis from a solitary focus on a student to a context revealing the social, cultural and historical variables influencing the development of students and groups and the critical role of activity systems such as schools, families and communities, as well as tools such as language (Mariage *et al.*, 2004). The student is thus seen as embedded in several activity systems, which implies that support and interventions to remove barriers to learning and participation need not necessarily focus directly upon the learner but may take the form of changes in one or more of the activity systems in which the student is involved (Johnson & Green, 2007).

Key concepts of the Index for Inclusion that inform the notion of support in an inclusive environment include the idea of 'support for diversity', but also that of 'barriers to learning and participation' and 'resources to support learning and participation'. In Section 2.3.5 of this inquiry the discourse on changing terminologies was addressed. To recapitulate, the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) argues that 'barriers to learning and participation' provides an alternative to the notion of 'special educational needs'. The idea of 'special educational needs' is highly relative as the need to categorise students into those with 'special educational needs' and those who are 'normal' becomes obsolete when the education system as a whole is able to respond to student diversity successfully.

One of the reasons for adopting the notion of 'barriers to learning and participation' for the Index for Inclusion and that of 'barriers to learning and development' within the South African context, was to draw attention to the fact that the medical and individual emphasis within 'special educational needs' omits to highlight how issues such as class, gender and race influence the lives of students categorised in this way. In the past, access to educational opportunities and the quality of those opportunities in

South Africa were influenced by inequalities, inequities and marginalisation resulting in severe barriers to learning and development for some students. Against this background, the act of categorising certain students as having 'special needs' within the South African educational context does not assist in any way in recognising and responding to their particular needs (Howell, 2007). Many students in South African schools struggle to learn because of a lack of appropriate mediation (Johnson & Green, 2007). An education system can prevent certain students from acquiring psychological tools similar to those of students who experience fewer barriers to learning and participation. Students experiencing barriers to learning and participation sometimes require different methods of mediation in their appropriation of psychological tools. The socio-cultural meaning should, however, remain the same and it should be remembered that meaning is more important than the method employed to mediate the meaning. The meaning of the internalisations should be retained for all students. Supporting strategies should thus be aimed at mastering psychological tools and using them towards the same goal of cultural development (Gindis, 2003).

Expectations and attitudes of broader society can negatively influence the access of students with diverse learning needs to mainstream schools and classrooms and therefore their opportunity to participate in joint activities with their peers. This is why Vygotsky insisted on changing negative societal attitudes toward differences. The search for positive capacities and strengths in the support of students is the trademark of the Vygotskian approach (Gindis, 2003).

The point of departure for support in inclusive education in South Africa is "the pedagogy of possibility that takes into consideration barriers to learning, different intelligences and learning styles" (Department of Education, 2002:22). This notion of support implies that all students may at times need support and the removal or minimising of barriers to learning and participation. The purpose of education support is thus no longer only to respond to the learning difficulties of individual students, but to prevent problems and to work actively towards enhancing the wellbeing and academic success of all students (Johnson & Green, 2007). Education White Paper 6 of 2001 stresses the need for changes in "attitudes, behaviour, methodologies, curricula and environments" in order to maximise participation and prevent or minimise barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001:55).

With regard to the resources to support learning and participation the Index for Inclusion highlights that the minimising of barriers to learning and participation calls for mobilising resources within the school and its community. These resources to support learning and participation are often under-utilised and can even be hidden waiting to be 'unveiled'. It is not only about financial resources, but also about resources that can be found in any aspect of a school, such as in students, the parent body, communities and teachers, in changes in cultures, policies and practices.

There is also a wealth of knowledge within a school about barriers to learning and participation which may not always be used to the full. The Index for Inclusion wants to utilise this knowledge to inform inclusive school development. Booth and Ainscow (2002:6) suggest the following questions to reflect on with regard to addressing barriers to learning and resources in schools:

- What are the barriers to learning and participation?
- Who experiences barriers to learning and participation?
- How can barriers to learning and participation be minimised?
- What resources to support learning and participation are available?
- How can additional resources to support learning and participation be mobilised?

Booth and Ainscow (2002) stress that particularly the resources in students, in their capacity to direct their own learning and to support each other's learning, may be under-utilised. This may also apply to the potential for teachers to support each other's learning and development. The notion of classrooms as communities of learners is promoted by Reid and Valle (2004) to mediate academic, social and emotional growth among all students, employing their differences as strengths in the classroom. Classrooms as communities of difference include all students and support their learning as they "engender a sense of safety and belonging, value for diversity, shared responsibility for the community and an overall atmosphere of support and caring" (Reid & Valle, 2004:475). Such a classroom can provide the foundation to support cooperative learning and the formation of positive classroom relationships and participation in classroom discourse.

Discourse constitutes the ways of doing, being, thinking, and communicating through language and other mediators in the classroom. When teaching in the classroom privileges teacher talk around specific content information, it limits the discourse avenues in a school and classroom and impedes the development of the dispositional and disciplinary knowledge and skills necessary for the 21st century global society. When teachers are seen as the main initiators of topics, questions and forms of assessment, students are seldom seen as producers of knowledge and their participation in instructional speech genres are restricted. Most often speech genres like conversational discourse, inquiry, critique and debate are not afforded to students for whom learning is difficult. Changing the nature of classroom-based discourse is necessary to allow for an open, rich discourse accessible to all students. This, however, necessitates shifts in mediational form, function, communication styles and roles (Mariage *et al.*, 2004).

Within an inclusive school and classroom approach, changing the nature of the classroom-based discourse can be seen as a significant step towards minimising barriers to learning and participation in the classroom. A classroom that privileges the unique experiences and language-using practices that *all* students bring to school and that fosters their positive identity development as communicators and actors can enrich the educational lives of children and support the learning of especially those who come to school at a disadvantage (Mariage *et al.*, 2004). Mariage *et al.* (2004:544) employ the following quote from Rodis, Garrod and Boscardin (2001) to emphasise the importance of allowing *all* students their democratic right to engage meaningfully in classroom discourse and to take ownership of their learning activities:

> The self is not a thing, but an active, mysterious creator, marvelously able to experience and to articulate its existence in an untold variety of ways. Indeed, the signature of the self is agency, or the possession of the capacity for authorship in living. To 'receive instruction' at the expense of being able to speak, articulate, compose, and make our own meaning is to be silenced. And through silence – if that is all there is – we cannot learn.

What can be derived from the quote above is that students can act as resources of support in the classroom to prevent and address barriers to learning and participation through enhancing their agency and voice and fostering social learning. Students should be supported in chipping away at the barriers to their learning in order to combat learned helplessness. They should be supported in reducing and even removing the barriers, in order to achieve the maximum independence possible in learning (Bouwer, 2005).

When CHAT and critical theory are linked, teachers begin to see that their teaching practice affects students' lives and identities as learners and as active participants in their own learning processes. Supported learning experiences for all students thus require an expansion in current ways of thinking, teaching, researching and organising schools (Mariage *et al.*, 2004). Teachers in mainstream classrooms have to accept that it is no longer desirable or acceptable to refer students who are experiencing barriers for expert help elsewhere. Ways of accommodating them have to be found in the classroom (Johnson & Green, 2007). Substantial research suggests that special programmes, special teachers and special schools cannot match the effects of high-quality classroom instruction (Allington, 1994).

Teachers can support quality learning in inclusive classrooms by adjusting to the developmental needs and levels of their students, rather than by expecting students to adjust to a system that is not attentive to their needs. They need to work with students not from a one-size-fits-all approach but from a base of knowing each student well and building on the student's particular knowledge (Tomlinson, 2004). All students have different learning needs, different learning styles and methods of engaging with the teaching and learning process; they require different levels and forms of support at different times during their lives and are affected in different ways by a range of external factors that influence their participation in the classroom (Howell, 2007).

Research, however, indicates that most often classroom teachers are not prepared to change their teaching practice to provide responsive instruction and opportunities for quality learning for all. Classroom teachers tend to assume they have taught struggling students effectively when they 'expose' the students to certain content and skills, rather than when they scaffold success. As long as scaffolded learning is not acknowledged by general classroom teachers as an important approach to supporting the learning of students, there is little impetus to retool these teachers to ensure quality learning for all students (Tomlinson, 2004).

The categorising, labelling and sorting approach has negative implications with regard to the quality of curriculum and instruction that students are likely to encounter (Tomlinson, 2004**)**. Schools have long been better organised to sort children than to support them. Sorting children, as Bloom (1976) pointed out in Allington (1994), always takes less effort than supporting children. But this sorting has always benefited children of the advantaged classes more than it benefited less advantaged children (Allington, 1994). Allington (1994) maintains that we have confused sorting and labelling children with supporting their learning.

Teachers have to take the responsibility for differentiating the curriculum for a particular learner or group, and to be aware of the many factors that may influence learning success. In other words, they become part of the education support network (Johnson & Green, 2007). As part of the support delivered in the classroom, it seems the best to accelerate learning for more students (including those who are advanced) rather than slowing it down. It is advisable to pair the highest quality of responsive differentiated instruction with the highest quality curriculum to ensure access to quality learning for all students in inclusive classrooms (Allington, 1994; Tomlinson, 2004).

In South Africa the classroom teacher forms an integral part of the network of support as recommended in Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001). In Education White Paper 6 of 2001 it is, however, acknowledged that both teachers and students need support to ensure quality learning for a diverse body of students. In Section 2.5.3 of this dissertation the support system as recommended has been discussed in short. Students should be accommodated within the general education system and be supported in an integrated, community-based manner (Landsberg, 2005). Education support in schools and classrooms will thus be strengthened with a focus on the development of district support teams, education support teams and a new support role for special schools as resource centres, incorporated in district support teams to support mainstream and full-service schools (Lomofsky & Green, 2004). Education White Paper 6 of 2001 makes provision for support by means of a systems approach and collaboration between these systems (Landsberg, 2005).

- **Collaborative partnerships in inclusive schools**

In literature on inclusive education (Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow, 2007; Engelbrecht, 2007; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Sands *et al*., 2000; Swart & Pettipher, 2005) collaboration is always highlighted as one of the key characteristics of an inclusive school community. Collaborative processes, cooperation and partnerships are also seen as fundamental to work done with the Index for Inclusion. The Index for Inclusion process is presented as one of "collaborative self-review that draws on the experience of everyone connected to the school" (Booth & Ainscow, 2002:10). The framework thus presents collaboration as the way of working with the Index for Inclusion, but at the same time collaboration is also recognised as a central characteristic of the inclusive school community. In this way "the medium is the message" (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004:132). The following are some of the indicators of the Index for Inclusion supporting the statement:

- **A.1.3** Staff collaborate with each other.
- **A.1.5** There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.
- **A.1.6** Staff and governors work well together.
- **B.2.1** All forms of support are coordinated.
- **C.1.5** Students learn collaboratively.
- **C.1.8** Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.

With regard to support networks within inclusive school communities, Sands *et al*. (2000) stress that the increasing learner diversity in schools, larger class sizes and the intensifying needs of students all contribute to a demanding work environment for teachers. Teachers need to break through the walls of isolation to form collaborative partnerships with each other, and with parents and students. They should support professionals and community members in combating stress and accept ownership for all students in order to provide quality education for all (Voltz, Brazil & Ford, 2001). Collaboration is the key to community and inclusion (Sands *et al*., 2000): "The development of inclusive school communities requires a shift from exclusion, individualism, and isolation to an emphasis on belongingness, alliances and mutual support, which also form the basis of collaboration" (Sands *et al*. in Engelbrecht, 2007:178). The development of inclusive school communities can more easily be realised in institutions where collaboration and support, an ethos of caring and the sharing of power are evident (Swart & Pettipher, 2007).

Collaboration can be seen as "the common thread" in current initiatives for school change (Friend & Cook, 2007:4). Friend and Cook (2007) define collaboration as a style for interaction between two co-equal participants voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making and working towards a common goal. Collaboration is thus a chosen *style* for interpersonal cooperation and conveys *how* an activity is occurring. According to Sands *et al*. (2000), the term 'co-equal parties' does not imply that participants all have the same set of knowledge and expertise, but that the strength of a collaborative partnership lies in the unique perspectives, experiences, expertise and personal belief systems that all the individuals bring to the table to share. Friend and Cook (2007) identify certain defining characteristics for collaboration. In the first place collaboration is seen as **voluntary**. Participants should be willing to share ideas and expertise, as collaboration implies a personal choice and cannot be mandated (Swart & Phasha, 2005). Collaboration also requires **parity** among participants. Parity implies the equal validation of contributions, and power in decision-making should be shared. **Mutual goals** are imperative to the collaborative process. Sharing at least one common goal can make it possible for participants to pool their knowledge and resources and work towards a joint plan (Swart & Phasha, 2005). Without a strong commitment to collaboration, the focus might remain on disparate goals and the team will not be able to come up with a joint plan. Differences need to be set aside as unnecessary to the issue under discussion (Friend & Cook, 2007). People who work in a collaborative style also **share resources, responsibility** and **accountability** for the outcomes of the joint plan. Unique resources are often in the hands of individuals to share in a collaborative endeavour. The types of resources to contribute depend on the roles and activities of the different participants; be it parents, teachers, other professionals, students or community members. All of these resources are necessary to accomplish shared goals (Friend & Cook, 2007). Each team member assumes full responsibility for the decisions that are made together and is also fully accountable for the results of the joint effort (Sands *et al*., 2000).

As collaborative relationships mature, they are characterised by an emergence of shared values (Friend & Cook, 2007; Sands *et al*., 2000). These values include trust and respect for each other as person and for specific expertise and skills, commitment to each other, and positive communication based on effective personal interaction skills (Engelbrecht, 2007). Through the emergence of shared values, deeper levels of respect and trust, and mutual support, each of the participants emerges enriched and thus better able to do their work (Sands *et al*., 2000).

Friend and Cook (2007) identify three models of team interaction: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. In the **multidisciplinary team**, members will acknowledge the importance of contributions from different disciplines, but they may not see themselves as part of a team, will develop separate plans and implement their plans separately by discipline. Members of **interdisciplinary teams** will share responsibility for services among disciplines but will remain primarily responsible for specific disciplines. Teams will meet for case conferences and consultations, but goals are developed by discipline and then shared with the team to form a joint plan. Team members will implement parts of the plan for which their discipline is responsible, whilst coordinated services will be the exception.

Transdisciplinary approaches to teaming are the most recent and collaborative to date (Friend & Cook, 2007). This team model embraces all the defining characteristics discussed in the previous paragraphs. Transdisciplinary teams are integral to the inclusive model of schooling and critical when schools consider the implementation of inclusive education. Policy development in education in South Africa propagates a more inclusionary, participatory and democratic approach to education. Schools can no longer function as institutions separate from their communities and from the parents of their students (McKenzie & Loebenstein, 2007), whilst the acknowledgement of the rights of students allow them some say in their own schooling. Furthermore, Education White Paper 6 of 2001 expanded the concept of education support to include a much wider range of supportive interventions than were previously offered by special education teachers. The approach to provision is also more integrated. Given the lack of resources in the country, a form of service delivery that emphasises collaboration and consultative support for teachers rather than direct support for students is seen as the only feasible answer. Education support is conceptualised as operating at institutional, district and national levels (Stofile & Green, 2007). When looking at the big picture, it becomes clear that schools in South Africa will not be able to function effectively without establishing meaningful collaborative partnerships on many levels and with many different partners. Schools and their members will have to learn how to work within an ethos of collaboration and how to transcend cultural, historical and professional boundaries after working in isolation for so long.

Despite the obvious value of collaboration across professional boundaries, it remains a challenge to create and sustain effective team approaches in schools where everybody is included on an equal basis. Intragroup dynamics often challenge collaborative efforts, whereas power issues may be dormant. Parents, students and community members are most often the missing voices in collaborative efforts to change schools to become more inclusive, whilst support professionals find it challenging to accept teachers and parents as equal partners (Engelbrecht, 2007). From this it can be deduced that all the members of inclusive school communities have to *learn* how to work collaboratively across cultural, historical and professional boundaries during the implementation of inclusive education in order to ensure that all students receive the necessary support for quality learning. Engeström's notion of expansive learning is applicable here.

Harry Daniels and his colleagues (Daniels, 2004; Daniels, Edwards, Martin, Leadbetter, Brown & Middleton, n.d.; Daniels, Leadbetter, Warmington, Edwards, Martin, Popova, Apostolov, Middleton & Brown, 2007) explain their work on a four-year project on learning in and for interagency work within CHAT as theoretical framework and by using the notion of expansive learning as developed by Engeström (1987). They see interagency work as one important new practice that teachers and other professionals will have to learn to master within an inclusive system (Daniels, *et al*., n.d.). They explain expansive learning as “the creation of new knowledge and new practices for a newly emerging activity: that is, learning embedded in and constitutive of qualitative transformation of the entire activity system” (Daniels *et al*., 2007:523). Individual learning and the transformation of an activity system can be initiated by the introduction of a new way or style of doing as in the case of the introduction of interagency work within education support.

Daniels and his colleagues (2007) draw on the work of Victor and Boynton (1998) (as does Engeström) in the field of organisational science to look at recent developments in learning and the transformation of work. Victor and Boynton (1998) identify five types of work in the history of industrial production and maintain that each type of work generates and also requires a certain type of knowledge and learning. Currently **co-configuration** as the fifth type of work is emerging in multi-professional settings (Daniels *et al*., 2007) Co-configuration emphasises the continual development of the service (or product) in order to adapt practices to respond more effectively to the changing needs of clients whilst also involving them in co-designing the services that they need (Daniels *et al*., 2007). In the practices of co-configuration the client becomes an equal partner with the professional(s) with dialogue as an important precondition (Daniels *et al*., n.d.) Daniels (2004) sees it as a matter of concern that many services are shaped by their histories and that they are very often organised for the convenience of the provider and not the client. Engeström’s metaphor of ‘knotworking’ is applicable where the need is to move beyond conventional teamwork and networking (Engeström, 1999a). Daniels *et al*. (2007:526) explain knotworking as

> a rapidly changing, distributed and partially improvised orchestration of collaborative performance which takes place between otherwise loosely connected actors and their work systems to support clients. In knotworking, various forms of tying and untying of otherwise separate threads of activity take place. Co-configuration in responsive and collaborating services requires flexible knotworking in which no single actor has the sole, fixed responsibility and control.

From the above it is easy to see the parallel between knotworking and collaboration within transdisciplinary teams. Transdisciplinary collaboration or knotworking provides the potential for joined-up solutions to meet complex and diverse client needs (Daniels, 2004). An important incentive for both is the notion of services to clients that traditionally ‘underlap’ rather than overlap and the complexity of clients (students in the context of this study) that is easily ignored (Daniels, 2004**.** Changes in schools in order to transcend boundaries and to work collaboratively with students and their parents require new forms of negotiated professional practice (Daniels, 2004). This implies that professionals in education will have to discuss and negotiate priorities and goals across the boundaries of their own professional context. They will have to recognise the need to take the lead at times and to follow at other times, because the interest of the client is the object of the activity (Daniels, 2004).

Daniels and colleagues (n.d.), however, argue that it takes time to conceptualise inter-professional collaboration and to learn a transdisciplinary style of working, since professionals in education typically tend to work independently from each other and rarely negotiate with each other (let alone with the student) (Daniels, 2004). Co-configuration presents a twofold learning challenge to schools (as one example of a workplace). Co-configuration needs to be learned (*learning for co-configuration*). Expansive learning entails a process of renegotiation and reorganisation of collaborative relations and practices (division of labour) and the creation and implementation of matching concepts, tools and rules. Learning will also take place *in co-configuration* in the sense that school communities have to learn constantly and continuously from interactions with their clients.

The dynamic and diverse needs of students within inclusive schools and classrooms compel teachers and other professionals to work towards mutual goals, to pool their expertise and to share resources, responsibility and accountability. Whether we call it transdisciplinary collaboration or knotworking, the fact remains that professionals working within the education system will have to learn the necessary skills to work effectively in teams across boundaries in order to ensure quality education for all within an inclusive education system.

3.3.2.4 Ways of working with the Index for Inclusion

This discussion on the ways of working with the Index for Inclusion draws on the seminal work of Ainscow, Booth and colleagues in the field of school development for inclusion (Ainscow, 1998; Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow, 2003; Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2001; Ainscow, Howes, Farrell & Frankham, 2003; Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004; Ainscow & Kaplan, 2004; Ainscow, 2007; Rustemier & Booth, 2005; West, Ainscow & Stanford, 2005). The development of the Index for Inclusion is the result of a collaborative action research project. The aim was to explore how schools develop in ways that support the learning of all students by addressing barriers to learning and participation that exist within their existing cultures, policies and practices in order to identify priorities for change (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

Their work with the Index for Inclusion involves a cycle of activities that are used to review and develop existing policies and practices. Each school may elect to go through the cycle on more than one occasion. The school research activities can be guided by the indicators of the Index for Inclusion. The process starts from the first engagement with the materials and then entails progression through a series of five school developmental phases. The five phases follow a typical development cycle. The five phases are as follows:

Phase 1: Starting the Index for Inclusion process
Phase 2: Finding out about the school
Phase 3: Producing an inclusive school development plan
Phase 4: Implementing priorities
Phase 5: Reviewing the Index for Inclusion process.

During the first phase a representative coordinating group is set up in the school. It is suggested that coordinating groups include a critical friend. Such a ‘friend’ should be incorporated from outside the school and should be supportive without being afraid to challenge existing cultures, policies and practices in the school. The critical friend should also be committed to seeing the process through to the completion. The emphasis should be on gently and sensitively ensuring that uncomfortable challenges are not avoided. Incorporated in the first phase of the Index for Inclusion process is also an exploration of the school’s particular approach to school development and connecting the Index for Inclusion process with current working arrangements in the school. The coordinating team raises awareness of the Index for Inclusion process and explores existing knowledge by employing the concepts and review framework. The key concepts of the Index for Inclusion have been discussed as the sign system of the Index for Inclusion in Section 3.3.2.3 of this inquiry. In the Index for Inclusion process the investigation is deepened by using the indicators and questions. Several activities are suggested in the Index for Inclusion to assist the exploration of existing knowledge in the school. The first phase is concluded when the coordinating group informs themselves about the subsequent phases of the Index for Inclusion process in order to introduce the framework to the rest of the school community.

In the second phase the current knowledge of the different groups making up the school community is explored. The coordinating team of a particular school is responsible for choosing the best way to investigate present knowledge in the school. All data collected in this phase should be used as opportunities for discussion, debate and further investigation. When deciding on priorities for future action, some members of the school may feel overwhelmed by the Index materials. It is best to emphasise that the purpose of the review is to select priorities for development rather than to change everything at once. After members of the school community have engaged with the indicators and questions, they will be able to identify specific areas for change. The coordinating team should analyse the evidence, collect further information if warranted and draw up a list of priorities, ensuring that the opinions of less powerful groups such as parents and students are reflected in the list. Long- and short-term priorities should be indicated and then the coordinating group should negotiate them with the rest of the staff.

In the third phase the school development plan is revised in the light of new priorities. During the fourth phase the coordinating team group supports the implementation of agreed changes and the staff development activities necessary to support them. The development should be sustained and the process recorded. Finally, in the fifth phase the whole process is reviewed with the aim of formulating further improvement efforts and perhaps repeating the Index for Inclusion cycle.

Ainscow and Booth and their associates explain their way of working *with* (and not 'on') schools as involving processes of collaborative inquiry and development, usually carried out in partnership with schools as a means of developing better responses to the challenges of student diversity. Collaborative inquiry is seen as akin to action research where the aim is an active process of combining systematic reflection and strategic innovation. Their research allows participants to be the researchers and, at the same time, the subjects of the research through collaborative inquiry and thus aims to bridge the worlds of practitioners and scholars. The relationship between theory and practice is seen as dialectical, meaning that practice is not treated as dependent upon theory to tell what to do, but that both theory and practice confront and question one another in an ongoing dialogue. The idea of multiple interpretations of events in schools is also acknowledged.

The collaborative work of Ainscow, Booth and associates within schools simultaneously progresses in two cycles: in the first cycle they *work with* school members to develop inclusive cultures, policies and practices in schools and in the second cycle they *try to understand* the development of inclusive cultures, policies and practices. As the developments in schools occur, members of the research team collect data from school members in order to further assist the process of change in schools. At the same time, they analyse what happens to levels of participation and achievement in the schools as they attempt to develop more inclusive practices.

The involvement of university staff in the research efforts in schools is thus intended to strengthen processes of research and change, whilst helping to overcome some of the reported limitations of action research, such as the failure to provide satisfactory explanations for the generation of new insights through the research process.

Their purpose is to close the well-argued gap between research and practice. They contend that research findings would be ignored if they bypass the ways in which practitioners formulate their problems and the constraints within which they have to work. Meaningful working relationships should be established within schools, involving practitioners and academics in forms of dialogue that promote critical reflection and action to bring about improvements. This requires the development of social processes that can facilitate group engagement with evidence. A process of critical review can lead to insights that can have an immediate and direct impact on the development of thinking and practice in the field.

It is clear from the above that the Index for Inclusion involves a methodology that acquires an essentially social process of learning how to learn from differences. It is concerned with processes of school and teacher development and uses collaborative inquiry-based approaches to facilitate developments in teaching and leadership in relation to students. However, turning such approaches into processes that can make a deeper and more sustainable impact on the culture of schools and classrooms is not easy. It seems as if much of what teachers do during a typical lesson is carried out at an automatic and intuitive level, involving the use of implicit knowledge. Furthermore there is little time for them to stop and think. By employing the Index for Inclusion process the familiar can be made unfamiliar in order to encourage self-questioning, creativity and action. It can cause disequilibrium in thinking which can result in challenging existing assumptions about teaching and learning. Problems may be revealed which were previously hidden. It can thus assist in creating space for re-examination and rethinking by interrupting existing discourses and by focusing attention on overlooked possibilities for moving practice forward. Interruptions must be welcomed and followed by an invitation to engage in dialogue.

The focus must not only be on practice, but must also address and sometimes challenge the thinking behind existing ways of working. The Index for Inclusion process can also assist in 'unveiling' assumptions about particular groups of students that are usually taken for granted. Schools are often influenced by perceptions of socio-economic status, race, language, gender and disability. It is important to question how such perceptions influence classroom interactions, since deeply entrenched deficit views of 'difference' which define certain types of students as lacking something can be the cause of barriers in the classroom.

The research of Ainscow, Booth and associates suggests that collaborative inquiry-based approaches for school improvement can lead to periods of distress as school members struggle to make sense of unfamiliar points of view. Therefore, new meanings are only likely to surface when research evidence in schools creates 'surprises'. Through an engagement with various forms of evidence that interrupt ways of thinking, those involved will be able to recognise overlooked or creative new possibilities for moving practice forward. All of this is difficult to accomplish in contexts where teachers feel unsupported or threatened. The roles of the school principal and other senior staff are key to encouraging such rethinking amongst their colleagues.

These researchers acknowledge the complexity inherent in schooling. Teachers experience dilemmas in their schools and classrooms that can often be ascribed to the influence of tensions and contradictions within the school, district and national policies. By working with the Index for Inclusion in schools a deeper understanding can be developed of the nature of these policy contradictions and how they impact on school and classroom encounters. The researchers stress that attention should be given to both personal and collaborative processes in schools as a focus on group processes only can result in teachers coming together to reinforce existing practices rather than confronting the difficulties they face in different ways. Teachers should be guided towards a ‘reflective turn’ as a way of thinking about practice. Problem-solving activities should also become an inherent and taken-for-granted way of working for a school that is geared towards inclusive ways of working.

As can be derived from the above discussion, Ainscow, Booth and colleagues acknowledge that both individual and group learning are intricately part of school development processes. Artileset al.(2006), however, found a lack of attention to the construct of learning in the work of Ainscow, Booth, and colleagues in school development for inclusion. Artiles *et al.* (2006) acknowledge the claim made by Ainscow and his colleagues that they work from socio-cultural theories of learning and particularly from Wenger’s (1998) notion of communities of practice. They see learning as a characteristic of practice. They argue that practice offers the means of making meaning through social action, but they do not spell out “the specific processes of actions that make the learning process” (Engeström, 2001:150). Furthermore, reports on teacher learning that has occurred rely on “researchers’ descriptions and that of participants” (Artiles *et al*., 2006:85). I would suggest that any work done in schools with the intent of changing existing cultures, policies and practices should consider engaging with the complexity of teacher learning. This study particularly wants to look more closely at teacher learning in the workplace when employing the Index for Inclusion as a tool. Teacher learning will be further explored in Section 3.4. The next section will look at research that has been done with the Index for Inclusion to date.

3.3.2.5 Employing the Index for Inclusion in research in schools

Rustemier and Booth (2005) have reported on the work done with the Index for Inclusion in schools in the United Kingdom. They explore how the published version was interpreted and used by schools operating under conflicting pressures. Their study found that more primary schools made use of the framework, although quite a few secondary schools also engaged with the Index for Inclusion materials.

In England the government distributed the Index for Inclusion to schools. The National Assembly for Wales later followed suit in Wales. From official education reports in England it became clear that the Index for Inclusion could successfully be used to implement policy on inclusion in schools, although its use is not legalised and schools can decide to use the framework on a voluntary basis. The study by Rustemier and Booth (2005) reports on how schools have found interesting ways of engaging with the Index for Inclusion materials. However, their final discussion on their findings it is clear that they were not entirely satisfied with the scope and ways of engagement with the framework in the United Kingdom.

In many ways the agenda of the Index for Inclusion for school development is in direct opposition to that of education initiatives from the English government. It therefore comes as no surprise that the study indicates that schools do not attempt to put every aspect of the Index for Inclusion into practice. The Index process foregrounds participatory approaches to school development and encourages "dialogue, collaboration, support, the building of inclusive cultures, the sharing of deeply held values, and the attempt to put such values into action" (Rustemier & Booth, 2005:46). The government's approach highlights competition, inspections and the identification of 'best practice' in school development processes. Whilst the government prefers top-down initiatives, the Index for Inclusion wants schools to decide about their own priorities for change in their local schools. The Index for Inclusion initiative is concerned with removing barriers to learning and participation for all students, whilst government documents focus on the inclusion of students with 'special educational needs'. Rustemier and Booth (2005) promote inclusion as a value-based approach informing the whole of the education system whilst the English government handles it as an add-on. Due to the vast number of initiatives from the government, policy fragmentation creates problems for practice. This results in a reactive approach to policy and resistance from schools and teachers. It remains difficult to determine the true value of the Index for Inclusion material as the framework is taken up within the messy reality of schools.

Examples provided in the report show that schools can successfully use the framework to make changes to their cultures, policies and practices and that these changes can be quite remarkable. There is a definite correlation between schools that implement the full cycle of activities and the success of their outcomes. Not many schools can, however, report on employing the framework in such a comprehensive way. What can be considered a positive outcome is the way in which the Index for Inclusion allows schools to take greater control over their own school developmental processes for inclusion. Yet, in many schools the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process is negatively affected by pre-existing approaches to development and inclusion, such as the narrow view that inclusion is only about the inclusion of students with disabilities and those with 'special educational needs'. Practices that stem from such perspectives still ascribe to the categorising and labelling of students which often go unquestioned even in schools where the Index for Inclusion have been implemented.

Schools differed significantly in the comprehensiveness of changes they chose to make in engaging with the Index for Inclusion process. Some schools distinguished between changes that they felt required short-term and longer-term strategies which resulted in minimal changes to cultures, policies and practices in their schools. Rustemier and Booth (2005) suggest that to counter such limited engagement with the Index for Inclusion ways need to be found to integrate the Index with other materials that can similarly support putting inclusive values in action.

Currently work is being done to explore more detailed case studies of work with the Index for Inclusion on an international level. An international study that is in progress examines the ways in which the Index for Inclusion has been adapted and used in different countries around the world, including Australia, England, Eritrea, Germany, India, the Middle East and North Africa, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan and Wales. Work done with the Index for Inclusion in some of the above-mentioned countries will be discussed in the rest of this section. An earlier attempt with the 2000 version of the Index for Inclusion in South Africa will also be reported.

Ainscow (2007:4) feels strongly that the Index for Inclusion can help to disrupt/interrupt existing practices in schools by insisting on “rethinking existing discourses, and by focusing attention on overlooked possibilities for moving practice forward”. Research, however, indicates that experienced teachers find it difficult to make changes in practice when they are not exposed to what teaching actually looks like when it is done differently. From research, Ainscow (2007) also suggests that teachers have to develop a common language with regard to their practice in order to experiment with new approaches. The Index for Inclusion can provide the framework to develop such a shared language with regard to inclusion in schools. It is through shared experiences that teachers can begin to make changes to their teaching.

Ainscow (2007) also stresses the importance of evidence as a ‘lever of change’ and uses mutual observation, sometimes through creating the opportunity for teachers to see their colleagues at work, as well as video recordings of teaching practices, to alert teachers to different ways of teaching. Engaging with evidence – particularly the views of students – can be a key strategy in this respect. Research involving the Index for Inclusion also points to the importance of cultural factors in schools and how deeply held beliefs within schools may prevent the development of more inclusive ways of working. Beliefs should be challenged, especially those indicating deficit views of difference. Values in schools are formed in the complex interplay between individuals, between groups and individuals and between groups and individuals. It has proved to be impossible to separate those values and beliefs from the relationships in which they are embodied. In working with outsiders committed to the promotion of inclusion it is possible to consider social and moral values and beliefs and their connections with policies and practices in schools. This often contributes to a growing commitment to inclusion. According to Ainscow (2007), research significantly indicates that leadership practices in schools can afford or constrain inclusive developments in schools.

Further research with the Index for Inclusion in Britain is reported by Corbett (2001), Dyson, Gallannaugh and Millward (2003); Hick (2005), Hodson, Baddaley, Laycock and Williams (2005); Norwich, Goodchild and Lloyd (2001) and Vaughan (2002). Dyson (2001a) and Rose (2002) offer certain evaluative comments on the Index for Inclusion but not from a specific empirical research base.

Corbett (2001), who used the Index for Inclusion in a limited way as a tool for analysing the cultures, policies and practices in a school known for “working at inclusion for about 15 years” (Corbett, 2001:55), does not report on the value of the Index for Inclusion for promoting inclusive education in schools. Likewise Dyson *et al.* (2003) did not set out to make the Index for Inclusion central to their research effort, but only employed it to draw a distinction between the Index for Inclusion’s approaches to inclusion and the standards agenda foregrounding competition, accountability and government control. Dyson *et al.* (2003) determined that the standard-based agenda of the Education Department could act as a significant constraint for schools in the process of becoming inclusive learning organisations.

Hick’s (2005) study involved educational psychologists as critical friends in a pilot project employing the Index for Inclusion. They were able to support the development of inclusive practices in several ways: they assisted schools in taking ownership of the Index for Inclusion materials and process; balanced the critical and participatory elements of their role with sensitivity; brought their own perspectives on inclusion to the schools and often broadened them in engaging with the schools and the Index for Inclusion process; managed to effectively engage in collaborative consultation with the schools; and raised awareness for inclusion. Their experiences with the Index for Inclusion process also influenced their approach to assessment. Research findings further indicated that critical friends should be aware of the importance of including student perspectives in evaluating inclusive practices in schools, should work collaboratively on an equal basis with schools and should expect and be prepared to become learners themselves in engagement with the Index for Inclusion process.

Hodson *et al.* (2005) also report on the role of educational psychologists in the Index for Inclusion process. A funded project to assist secondary schools in being more inclusive of their Grade 7 students with diverse learning needs was implemented with the assistance of educational psychologists in four research schools. The educational psychologists did not regard themselves as critical friends but redefined their role as guiding the process in each school. Inclusion issues were identified using students’ responses to questionnaires based on the Index for Inclusion materials, where after schools formulated and implemented interventions in line with their own priorities. Following relatively simple interventions, positive results were reported with regard to gains for students with diverse learning needs.

The educational psychologists experienced the work as ‘fascinating and stimulating’, although the reality involved a vast amount of work. There was considerable potential for the collection and analysis of useful data. It was the first time that they were required to manage a large project budget and they were unable to spend all their funds due to time constraints. The sensitive nature of the self-review data was not always considered and one of the research schools withdrew from the project to resolve certain issues on their own. Not all school managers and teachers were fully committed to the project.

Norwich *et al.* (2001) reported on two studies employing the Index for Inclusion. In the first study, questionnaires were sent to all local education authorities (LEAs) to determine their involvement in promoting the use of the Index for Inclusion in schools. The research results indicated that at that stage 75% of LEAs, the majority of which were in metropolitan areas, were developing an inclusion policy. The different LEAs reported little feedback from schools on the use of the Index for Inclusion, but feedback received identified the framework as valuable, a good management tool and providing a broader view of inclusion. On the negative side the Index for Inclusion process was seen as "daunting", "too broad", "too wordy, too abstract" and "rather lengthy". It was also felt that the Index for Inclusion process did not focus enough on student outcomes and that while it did have the potential to be effective, it needed a lot of time, commitment and strong leadership to get it underway (Norwich *et al.*, 2001:158). What the LEA respondents further highlighted was that the Index for Inclusion was in competition with other initiatives to be implemented in schools and that it was detached from the reality of curriculum and teaching in secondary schools. In summary, comments on the value of the Index for Inclusion were mixed, although they were more positive than negative. They indicated the potential of the framework, but also the daunting scale of school developments arising from its use.

The second research study examined how two secondary schools implemented inclusive education. Only one of the schools employed the Index for Inclusion – they used it as a framework for supporting an already well-established inclusion programme. Questionnaire 4 for students in secondary schools was used and as a result a 'Circle of Friends' group was established to foster links between mainstream students and students included from a nearby special school. Several further advantages of the inclusion initiative were reported. The second school started from a less inclusive position and worked towards a more inclusive approach within a school-university partnership. In the end the second school indicated an interest in employing the Index for Inclusion in their school subsequent to completing a specific project on students with 'special educational needs'.

Rose's article (2002), which comments on effective classroom practice, does not draw on a specific research study. He holds that the Index for Inclusion can add value to processes of self-review and school development, but argues that there is an urgent need to move away from macro-theories of inclusion (and includes the Index for Inclusion as one example) to focus on pedagogy and teaching approaches that enable all students to perform effectively in mainstream classrooms. Dyson had previously (2001a) followed the same line of thought by asserting that even the more radical plans for inclusive education such as the Index for Inclusion offer too little on specific educational goals and purposes apart from a broad commitment to learning and participation for all students. He asked that the notion of educational goals be more fully operationalised in terms of curricular and social experiences and educational outcomes, albeit still in a flexible way.

Since the launch of the Index for Inclusion by the CSIE, it was translated into Norwegian, Spanish, Catalan, Finnish, Romanian and German. It was also expected to appear in Hungarian, Arabic, Maltese and Portuguese. A Chinese translation for use in Hong Kong schools was also in preparation. UNESCO in Chile used the Spanish version in schools in Latin American countries and in the Caribbean; and four universities in Spain employed the Spanish version in local schools (Vaughan, 2002). In the USA universities in New York State and Connecticut sought permission to trial it in a group of pilot schools. A university in Quebec also requested permission to translate the Index for Inclusion into French. All of these overseas initiatives had been given direct or indirect support from the ongoing work of the Index for Inclusion team members (Vaughan, 2002).

Vaughan (2002) and Vislie (2003) report that the Norwegian version of the Index for Inclusion, had been piloted in a group of schools in Norway. The Index for Inclusion was, for instance, piloted in all the schools in one municipality as part of a five-year-long programme for national evaluation of school reform financed by the Norwegian Research Council. It was particularly employed as a means of contributing to the improvement of policy and programme.

Vaughan (2002) briefly summarises examples of school development initiatives from different pilot studies with the Index for Inclusion as follows: staff development activities for making lessons more responsive to student diversity; the promotion of multicultural attitudes in school to counter racism; devising a staff development plan that focuses on understanding students' perspectives; improving school-home relationships; and addressing the bad reputation of a school among the local communities. From research it was also determined that the Index for Inclusion process can easily inform or take over the school development plan as a way of reviewing and sustaining school development for inclusion. Vaughan (2002) further reports on a conference on the Index for Inclusion jointly organised by the Canterbury Christ Church College and CSIE where both positive and negative responses to the framework were entertained. On the positive side, the Index for Inclusion was described in the following way: it is flexible; it can lead to better understanding between different groups; the questionnaires are adaptable; the process helps with raising awareness for inclusive education; the concepts are universal; and it is a good tool for changing values and beliefs and can successfully inform school development. Negative responses indicated that the comprehensiveness of the framework is overwhelming; there is a lack of guidance on how to use the questionnaires; it is too difficult to use without help; it assumes that school principals are positive towards inclusion; and it was difficult to implement alongside all the other pressures on mainstream schools to transform.

The Index for Inclusion has been used in schools in different regions of Australia (Queensland, Tasmania, Perth and Victoria). More recently, the Queensland Government has introduced a major investigation into its special education service, employing the Index for Inclusion as a key agent in the investigative process. Afterwards schools in Queensland could make use of the framework for self-evaluation and school development (Vaughan, 2002). Papers (in chronological order) by the following researchers report on research into the Index for Inclusion in Australia: Forlin (2004), Deppeler and Harvey (2004), Carrington and Robinson (2004), Carrington and Holm (2005) and Carrington and Robinson (2006).

Forlin (2004) conducted a research study employing the Index for Inclusion. Three levels of data were collected during an application of the first two phases of the Index for Inclusion process in five diverse schools. Data was collected on the *process* that schools chose to follow in the Index for Inclusion process; the *perceptions* of all the community members on the inclusive practices in each school; and the *evaluation* of the value of the Index for Inclusion for the Australian context. With regard to the *process* followed, Forlin (2004) reports that schools were initially reluctant to participate due to the additional commitment it would require. The Index for Inclusion process was initially seen as only about including students with disabilities, but the final outcome was a review of ‘inclusivity’ which considered all groups in the school’s community. The coordinating groups at the five schools were central to the success of the initiative, whilst leadership in supporting the process was a critical factor in the school’s continued involvement in the project. The research assistant acting as critical friend to the respective schools played a prominent role in maintaining the momentum and keeping the process on track. The following strengths of the process were identified: the process was initiated and led from within the school, implying that the school took ownership of the process; the process was adapted to the particular context and circumstances of each school; the coordinating group led the process collaboratively; and the research assistant provided support as a critical friend.

With regard to the *perceptions* of school communities, the following priorities were identified for future attention: staff-student respect; staff appointments; bullying; homework; classroom discipline; staff expertise; teachers’ response to diversity; and staff using student difference as a resource. Concerning the *validation* of the Index for Inclusion for use in an Australian context, the following have been identified as potentially influencing the process: collaboration within the coordinating group and between the group and the wider community; gender balance of the coordinating group; large blocks of time for meetings; lack of parental involvement; anxiety with regard to the data collection phase; need for release time for teachers if required to participate during school hours; infringement on free time of teachers; existing heavy workloads of teachers; and organising data collection to ensure a maximum response rate.

Recommendations include the development of a professional development package to support the Index for Inclusion process and the training of school district officers to ensure support for teachers in schools. Support can be strengthened by training designated teachers in schools to enable schools to conduct realistic reviews. Based on reviews, goals need to be determined to identify potentially marginalised groups, to minimise barriers to learning and participation and to monitor progress towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

Forlin (2004) is positive about the Index for Inclusion as an *appropriate and valuable method* to raise awareness of inclusion. It can ensure an increased focus on difference, a detailed analysis of current situations and can also be used as a means of identifying priorities for change within the Australian context.

Deppeler and Harvey (2004) report on the first stage of a three-year project investigating the effectiveness and sustainability of a whole-school approach to improve inclusive practice. In the first stage of the project the Index for Inclusion was evaluated for use in the Australian context. Their paper reports on a six-phase process of validation and modification, employing both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The 2000 version of the Index for Inclusion was considered too comprehensive and containing irrelevant data. Four questionnaires for the four stakeholder groups affected by the project were developed to assist in the needs analysis phase of the process. It was also evident from their research that the original Index for Inclusion did not directly address questions of curriculum and leadership and consequently their questionnaires constructed by way of an extensive research process also included questions on the above. The questionnaires were to be used in the second phase of their project after the members of the expert panel and coordinating groups had given the go-ahead.

Carrington and Robinson (2004) describe a collaborative project between Queensland University of Technology and a large primary school in which the Index for Inclusion was applied to facilitate professional development related to inclusive schooling. Both the teachers and the researchers gained valuable knowledge during an application of the five phases of the Index for Inclusion process in the school. In their conclusive summary the researchers identify the Index for Inclusion as a useful framework for professional development and indicate that the process was enhanced by the professional development model cultivated in the collaborative project. Teachers were engaged in professional dialogue on several levels, and the combination of roles of critical friend and peer mentor, as well as the use of an action research model of cycles and spirals ensured a depth of learning for all involved. There was a specific focus on curriculum, pedagogy and staff-student relationships that contributed to the extension of teachers' practices in meeting the needs of diverse students.

In another project Carrington and Holm (2005) employed the Index for Inclusion in a study at a secondary school in Australia where students directed inclusive school development. The Index for

Inclusion was used as a tool to engage students in conversations about exclusion and inclusion. Their way of working in the school reflected the action research cycles as described in the Index for Inclusion. This process enabled ongoing conversations and practices associated with the collection and review of data which contributed to students obtaining a greater measure of power in their lives, whilst encouraging both teachers and students to develop relationships based on mutual respect.

In a 2005 paper Carrington and Robinson suggested four guiding principles for the development of a more inclusive school community based on their extensive work with the Index for Inclusion in different school contexts: develop a learning community in schools by incorporating a critical friend; collaborate with parents and the community in which the school is embedded; make a point of engaging students as key collaborators in school review and development; and support teachers' critical engagement with inclusive cultures and practices. Teacher learning can evolve from the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process in schools as the social relationships that result from the process can serve as catalyst for learning in less formal and more community-focused ways.

Heung (2006) reports on the introduction of an adapted version of the Index for Inclusion, called the Indicators for Inclusion in Hong Kong, into schools in Hong Kong during 2004 to promote inclusive practices. The adaptation of the UK Index for Inclusion was considered necessary in light of cultural differences between the two contexts. Unlike in the practice in most other countries, the adaptation of the original Index for Inclusion was undertaken and supported by the government of Hong Kong. The adapted version was developed in accordance with the framework of quality assurance for external evaluations of schools in Hong Kong. The materials were designed to assist schools in establishing targets and success criteria in school self-evaluation and school development. The three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion were extended to four domains. The fourth domain addressed the outcome of student learning. Students' academic performance, motivation participation, self-concept and other learning skills were stressed in line with the view in Hong Kong that a successful school is one that enhances students' academic performance. Adding an additional domain on the outcomes of student learning can perhaps offer a way of addressing certain shortcomings with regard to pedagogy, teaching approaches and formulating educational goals for classroom practice in the Index for Inclusion as identified earlier by Rose (2002) and Dyson (2001a).

Heung (2006) is fairly positive with regard to the adapted Index's ability to move schools towards more inclusive practice. She feels that the introduction of the Hong Kong Index was timely and that it can provide schools with a common language to communicate and challenge their existing practice. However, she also identifies certain barriers to inclusion in schools. An early impact study has shown that schools still feel challenged by the idea of self-evaluation as an integral aspect of school and classroom practice as well as by the need to successfully address teachers' thinking and practice. It is also difficult to balance improvement and accountability in Hong Kong and currently schools in general still stress achievement and competition as the most important goals for activities in the classroom. This culture has been dominant in education in Hong Kong for a considerable time, making it difficult for teachers to change. Heung (2006) argues that policy changes have to drive transformation by rewarding schools on the basis of acceptance and accommodation of individual student qualities.

The following study applied the Index for Inclusion in five socio-economically different primary schools in Indonesia. Fearnley-Sander, Moss and Harbon's (2004) study focused on the perceptions and practices of primary school civics teachers and school principals with regard to inclusion and its relevance to democratic citizenship, as well as on their understanding of the school's role in the production of civic cultures. The Index for Inclusion was central to the project design. The framework provided a way to examine the civic cultures of the participant schools and the methodology to link the school cultures to the macro-culture systems of Indonesia in a time of transformation. According to Fearnley-Sander *et al.* (2004), the Index for Inclusion ascribes to a political tradition of liberalism and democratic rights that was never before part of Indonesian political history. Democratic education is a recent choice under a new political dispensation. Liberalism highlights the value of the individual, choice and diversity. With this in mind, applying the Index for Inclusion in their study to compare its principles with the ethical bases of inclusion in the citizenship curriculum presented an opportunity to determine the extent to which difference in conceptualisation limits the usefulness of cross-cultural comparison.

Research results indicated a mismatch between the reality of classroom cultures and practices and the indicators of the Index for Inclusion. The researchers argue that one answer for this could be that applying the Index for Inclusion to developing countries could be seen as "an instance of continuing colonial hegemony" (Fearnley-Sander *et al.*, 2004:212). But rejecting the Index for Inclusion as culturally inappropriate for the Indonesian context does not successfully address the ethical issue of attending to the needs of the individual child. Participating teachers pointed out that their inadequate resources, relative to the richly resourced classrooms of Western countries make it difficult to respond to individual needs effectively. However, viewing the Index for Inclusion as a framework only applicable to "well-resourced contexts is in fact to claim that the Index contradicts its own values base, since differentiation on the basis of resources is understood as being counter to the ethics of inclusion" (Fearnley-Sander *et al.*, 2004:212). The researchers emphasise that the problem should rather be seen as emanating from inadequate resources than from teacher inefficiency. The wider culture in which the schools are embedded is in effect the 'culprit in this story'. The researchers indicate that a cross-cultural project of inclusion is in principle possible, but they accentuate the need for analyses of inclusive practice to consider the cultural and socio-political context of the schools in which the Index for Inclusion is applied.

Important in the context of this research inquiry is the report “Developing learning and participation in countries of the South: the role of an index for inclusion” compiled by Booth and Black-Hawkins in 2001 and revised in 2005. This report has been briefly mentioned in Section 1.1 but will be dealt with in more detail here. The authors indicate that whilst the emphasis in the application of the Index for Inclusion in England was on individual schools, in the Four Nation Project (India, South Africa, Brazil and England) the focus was more on the way education could be supported within a broader area, including the communities, other schools and district departments in which schools were nested. Research has proven that school transformation was more evident in schools that collaborate with and are supported by colleagues in formal support centres in their respective districts.

The authors of the Index for Inclusion are aware of the cultural and socio-political implications when countries apply a set of materials specifically developed in and for the English context, but research has indicated that the materials could be used without substantial adaptations in countries such as Norway, Finland, Spain, Portugal and New Zealand, although the transforming powers of translation should not be underestimated.

The report discusses separately and in detail the outcomes of the research teams in India, South Africa and Brazil on the applicability of the Index for Inclusion within their contexts. I will, however, only look at the research findings generated in South Africa. According to the report, the research team was employed in central administration in Gauteng, whilst the research inquiry was conducted in a district in the rural area of KwaZulu-Natal. Their work formed the basis of the work of the District Inclusion Task Team. They addressed both the school and the classroom context. Their first step was to address practices embedded in the medical model and this was easier to accomplish in schools in disadvantaged areas where a sense of community prevailed and where specialised services were not readily available. The national policy on school development, which required schools to compile a three-year development plan, was also in place.

The research team saw the Index for Inclusion (2000 version) as a powerful document that could support school development and they acknowledged the relevance of the framework and concepts. Considerable work was, however, necessary to simplify the language, remove jargon relevant to the English system and replace it with corresponding features of the South African system. They also indicated that ‘race’ as a marker was important in the South African context and that it warranted an indicator of its own. The diversity of school contexts in South Africa had to be kept in mind in the translation and adaptation of the materials. Practices as set out in Dimension C of the material were mostly in line with curriculum policies in South Africa and the Index was therefore considered valuable in monitoring the adoption of these practices in schools.

Several barriers to introducing the Index for Inclusion in schools were identified. Innovation overload was a big concern. Since the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, the education system was staggering under innovations due to policy changes, which both teachers and school managers experienced as overwhelming. Pressure on schools was considerable and multi-layered. There was a need to coordinate the following initiatives: schools were to improve matriculation results; engage in whole-school review and development; introduce the new curriculum; review the introduction of continuous assessment; engage in the training of school governing bodies; look at policies on the misconduct of students, combating violence, child abuse, racism, substance abuse and involve communities to establish peaceful environments under the auspices of the school safety programme. The particular district in which the research was undertaken was also pushing for the Health Promoting Schools Initiative.

The South African research team suggested that the Provincial and National Departments of Education should be involved in the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process in districts and schools. They recommended that the process should be linked to national processes of school self-evaluation and development as the Index for Inclusion endorses the current emphasis on participation and bottom-up approaches to school development. The Index for Inclusion process can also address the strong dependency culture in schools, as a culture of helplessness can constrain processes of self-evaluation and school development.

Several adaptations to the Index for Inclusion were recommended. For the South African team, questions on race, the role of the school principal and a broadening of the concept of bullying to include threats to physical safety were considered important.

The workshop was in general agreement that questions on the applicability of the Index for Inclusion in countries of the South has more to do with economic circumstances than cultural differences, which corroborates the findings of the Fearnley-Sander *et al.* (2004) study conducted in Hong Kong. The following adaptations to the 2000 version of the Index for Inclusion for countries of the South were recommended: limited changes to the indicators and questions are required for well-resourced settings; indicators and questions required considerable adaptation in countries where there is widespread poverty and inequality, often implicating new indicators and questions; an Index should provide examples of how it can be used to support a range of education systems; attention should be given to developing basic conditions for teaching and learning in some areas to encourage a process of education development; building on existing knowledge in a school in a collaborative way before using detailed material from the Index for Inclusion is advised; when developing an Index in a particular country it is important that it should first support development in schools in economically poorer communities; stereotyping of economically poorer communities as for example lacking in community and teacher strengths should be avoided; and the strengths of some schools in economically poorer communities in including all students should be recognised. Beyond the school context, it is also important that an Index includes recommendations for the inclusive development of local and national policy, the work of local government, NGOs and teacher training institutions. When implementing an Index process attempts should be made to integrate it with other local and national initiatives.

To conclude, agreement was reached at the workshop that the Index for Inclusion requires adaptation for use in any country because of differences of system and culture. A process of translation is involved even when English is the national language in another country. It is the process of translation of the indicators and questions for use in another country that provides a means for exploring subtle differences of culture and education system. A version of the Index for a particular country should be accessible to those speaking the variety of languages of that country. The importance of encouraging acceptance of ownership of the process by the school was also emphasised as a means to ensure sustainable development.

3.4 TEACHER LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE

3.4.1 Introduction

This section wants to explore teacher learning in more depth. In an appraisal of the work done in schools by Ainscow and colleagues, Artiles *et al.* (2006) argue that they propose a situated model of learning in which the process is the product. For them teacher learning *in situ* is social learning, but they do not describe in any detail the specific processes of actions that inform the learning process of teachers (Engeström, 2001). Engeström (1987), with his notion of expansive learning, on the contrary, exemplifies how workplace learning for innovation can be argued from a well-developed theoretical base. His concept of expansive learning within the broad framework of CHAT will be explored against the backdrop of the different perspectives of learning in the workplace. Particular attention will be given to affordances and constraints in teacher learning in schools.

The importance of teacher learning as workplace learning is highlighted in the work done by Ainscow and his associates. Deppeler *et al.* (2005) also stress the importance of workplace learning for inclusive education in strong terms. In their view, support for inclusive education should rather consider investing in teacher learning processes than in intensifying accountability measures for schools. Schools should be supported to become more inclusive by building and supporting the knowledge creation and competencies of their teachers as principle asset of a school. There should be an emphasis on involving teachers as learners and thus as active constructers of knowledge in collaborative relationships in their respective schools. Schools should be motivated to form themselves into learning communities and especially inclusive learning communities, where learning becomes the heart of the change process and where everyone in the school community is involved (Swart & Pettipher, 2007). The construct of an inclusive learning community can be identified as the ideal context in which to 'situate' the learning of teachers, but it can also be viewed as a central outcome of the Index for Inclusion process. A key assumption of viewing schools as inclusive learning communities is that there is a great deal of untapped knowledge already existing in schools and that this knowledge can become more explicit and expanded when teachers interact intensively in collaborative work (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). This is also one of the central assumptions of the creators of the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

Lohman (2006) argues that the scope and intensity of teachers' work has become more stressful, complex and ambiguous during recent years. They also have to face greater uncertainty than ever before. Change is a constant for educational systems (Darling-Hammond, 1998) and innovations have to be applied within the scope of a 'normal' workday. Drawing on a 2000 report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Päivi (2008) maintains that knowledge creation and application are conspicuously slower in the field of education than in other fields. There is a need to develop shared working cultures by teachers and researchers in which knowledge is created and used in a joint effort as theoretical knowledge remains latent until it is sparked off by specific situations. Exploring relevant literature on teacher learning in the workplace seemed appropriate for this study.

3.4.2 Teacher learning as workplace learning

Interest in workplace learning has gained momentum since the beginning of the 1990s. Currently research within this focus area is both extensive and interdisciplinary. This development can be ascribed to the rapid change in society and working life during the past few decades. Continuous learning has become important for both individuals and organisations (Päivi, 2008). According to Päivi (2008:6), continuous learning has become important for the individual, but "the learning of groups, the learning of communities, the learning of organisations, the learning of interorganisational networks and even the learning of regions" is also implicated.

Learning in the workplace can be described as unplanned and tacit, often collaborative and decidedly contextualised with unpredictable outcomes. In order to be a specialist in the workplace one has to develop context-specific competence which is only possible in real situations. Learning in the workplace can take different forms such as by doing the job itself, through collaborating with colleagues, working directly with students as clientele, tackling challenging and novel tasks and reflecting on and reviewing one's work experiences (Päivi, 2008).

In focusing on learning in the workplace it is important to understand what is meant by learning. Three opposing metaphors have been offered for understanding learning (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005).

Sfard (1998) offers metaphors rather than theories of learning to describe learning from two different perspectives: learning identified by the metaphor of **acquisition** or **participation.** Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen (2004) add another metaphor for learning: that of **knowledge-creation**.

According to Paavola *et al.* (2004), the debate between cognitive and situated perspectives on learning and human activity is fundamental to the first two metaphors. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) explain teacher learning by acquisition in terms of teachers acquiring knowledge or skills that were previously absent in their repertoire, thus assuming deficits in their current knowledge base and skills. They have to learn commodified content that pre-exists the learning process, which can be clearly identified and measured. This works well within a technically rational audit culture. Reddy (2004) argues that the dominant approach for the in-service training of teachers in South Africa seems to be a deficit model approach located in the paradigm of 'teacher as technician' who needs to be further developed and corrected. Such instrumental approaches fail to take into account the many and complex processes whereby teachers learn, the diversity of schools and school contexts or how teachers view professional development processes (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005; Reddy 2004). In such a culture, learning as a sense of personal growth and change is lost, as learning consists of placing 'content' into human brains as vessels. The acquisition metaphor sees worthwhile learning as intentional and planned, whilst the reality paints another picture. Teacher learning is often "unplanned and unintentional - a corollary to engagement in activities for which the prime purpose is not learning" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005:112). Learning is more often about ongoing development, learning something that has not been done before, and meeting unexpected challenges and problems (Engeström, 2001; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005).

Sfard (1998) argues that we have recently witnessed a move away from the acquisition metaphor towards a participation metaphor in which learning is always seen as situated and progressively developed through activity. Recent research indicates that teacher learning for inclusion is most effective when tailored to the unique needs of teachers and the unique qualities of the schools which these teachers inhabit. Learning that is collaborative, embedded in the daily lives of teachers and that provides meaningful opportunities for continuous growth, seems to be most successful when implementing inclusive education (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Participation in practice thus amounts to learning and understanding. Barab and Duffy (1998:5) summarise learning within the participation metaphor as 'knowing about' where 'knowing about' refers to an activity and not a thing, is always contextualised, and "is about a functional stance on the interaction - not a truth".

The third metaphor of learning strongly emphasises *collective knowledge creation* for developing shared objects of activity (Paavola *et al*., 2004) which is not the focus of the first two metaphors or models of learning. The knowledge-creation model shares features with each of the first two models and softens the contrast between the models. Paavola *et al.* (2004:573) contrast the three metaphors of learning as follows:

> [T]he acquisition perspectives focuses on knowledge and knowledge structures in learning and processes of learning within individuals' minds. The participation perspective emphasizes the meaning of social practices and activities as bases for learning. And the knowledge-creation perspectives focuses on analyzing the processes whereby new knowledge and new mediating objects of activity are collaboratively created.

Under the third metaphor of learning Paavola *et al.* (2004) identify three models of what they call innovative knowledge communities of which Engeström's model of expansive learning is identified as one. They argue that the three models share several commonalities. I use these commonalities to discuss Engeström's expansive model of learning. According to Paavola *et al.* (2004) the first characteristic of Engeström's model of expansive learning in the workplace is a focus on knowledge creation and the pursuit of newness. Engeström (2001) explains that it is often necessary, due to unforeseen challenges in the workplace, to learn new forms of activity which are not yet there for both personal lives and organisational practices. Such a process of learning is cyclical and repetitive rather than linear due to the ambiguity and creative chaos characteristic of activities in present-day workplaces. Learning can thus be seen as a process of radical transformation and development.

The second commonality that the Engeström model (1987) shares with the other models is an emphasis on mediation as the third element in the learning process. Paavola *et al.* (2004:564) point out that "[t]he concepts of activity and dialectics operate as mediating factors, bringing dynamics to the model". Questioning is also allocated an important mediating role in Engeströms' model as the questioning and criticism of existing practices initiate the expansive learning cycle. The third commonality sees knowledge creation as fundamentally a social process. The fourth commonality explores the role of individual subjects in knowledge creation. The Engeström model emphasises the role of communities, material things and cultural history, but the individual subject is allocated the role of questioning existing practices and starting the cycle of expansive learning within a school.

The fifth commonality deals with different forms of knowledge. The three learning models criticise propositional and conceptual knowledge when presented as the only forms of knowledge. Propositional knowledge is declarative or formal knowledge (theoretical knowledge), whereas procedural knowledge highlights knowledge embedded in skills: practical knowledge that is not informed by theoretical knowledge. Hidden knowledge or tacit knowledge, which is identified as a third form of knowledge, is based on impressions and a 'gist' of things. It is considered an important part of innovative knowledge creation. In the Engeström model tacit knowledge is implied but not explicitly highlighted, because in expansive learning more emphasis is placed on knowledge embedded in practice.

The sixth commonality acknowledges the different forms of knowledge as discussed above and while criticising the assumption of propositional and procedural knowledge as the only forms of recognised knowledge, they all stress conceptualisation and making knowledge explicit in innovative processes. Engeström's expansive learning cycle requires the construction of a new solution to the problem that started the expansive learning process. Although new knowledge is created in practice, Engeström uses theoretical models such as his extended triangle and the seven phases of the expansive learning cycle.

The last commonality describes how to organise collaboration for developing shared objects of activity in an innovative way. This commonality connects the other six and is closely related to the role that mediation plays in the different models. Collaboration in the Engeström model involves practices and activity systems and takes place through objects and not just between people. This implies that the focus is on neither individual learning nor collective learning, but on how they can both be directed and organised toward developing shared objects.

Paavola *et al.* (2004) contend that models of innovative knowledge communities are still new to both educational and workplace settings, but argue that these models of learning can provide valuable guidance for restructuring school settings into innovative knowledge communities. The models can support people in reflecting on their communities and transforming these communities, which has proven a challenging task to date. In the context of my study, challenges can include social, spatial and temporal structures in schools that can act as formidable constraints. The tradition of teachers working as isolated professionals is but one of these constraints (Paavola *et al.*, 2004). It is difficult to get teachers "to reflect jointly on their practices and to pursue transformations by asking questions, constructing models and visions, and examining emerging, novel pedagogical approaches in practice" (Paavola *et al.*, 2004:571). Päivi (2008) argues that models for learning in the workplace should be aware that workplaces in different fields have different working cultures and that learners come from different age groups and educational and professional backgrounds, as well as from different positions in the workplace. An important challenge for workplace learning is also the extent to which the workplace provides a learning environment for employees.

According to Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth (2001), the interconnection between teacher learning and the school as a professional community does not exist in schools. I endorse their claim that teacher learning mostly happens outside the context of the school. These learning opportunities are mostly presented as optional, and in most cases workshops are attended by teachers less in need of intellectual broadening. These workshops can lead to individual learning but seldom change the workplace in any way. Grossman *et al.* (2001) thus argue for a vision of professional community that is located within the school, offering the possibility of individual transformation as well as the transformation of the school in which teachers work.

3.4.3 Schools as workplaces that can afford and constrain teacher learning

Päivi (2008) argues that the school as a workplace can either afford or constrain teacher learning. Not all workplaces offer opportunities for innovative learning as explained in Engeström's model of expansive learning (1987). It is, however, considered crucial for the implementation of inclusive education that schools as professional learning communities develop and create new pedagogy and practices to address all forms of diversity in the school effectively (Deppeler *et al.,* 2005).

Teacher learning is always situated in a complex social context and derives much of its meaning from that context. It is important that teacher learning for inclusion should not only consider how teachers learn but also how schools as communities affect teachers' learning and practice (Robinson & Carrington, 2002). The links between conditions for learning, learning communities and school change for inclusion can be described as recursive relationships (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). Learning, thinking and knowing entail relations among people engaged in activities in a school (Barab & Duffy, 1998). The object under construction is important for the school as professional learning community. Grossman *et al.* (2001) argue that the well-being of students as clientele must be central. The inclusion discourse would add that the well-being of *all* students with their diverse learning needs should be the object under construction. But for Grossman *et al.* (2001) the improvement of practice to address student diversity comprises only one pole of the tension of teacher community. The second aspect of teacher community highlights teachers' continuing development to be able to realise the first pole of teacher learning. The teacher community thus needs to be equally concerned with student learning and teacher learning. In the context of my inquiry this constitutes the central discourse. Both of these aspects represent central ingredients in teacher learning for inclusion. Holding these two poles of the inclusive learning community together creates tension created by the dynamic and "ever-shifting movements of personalities, identities and human desires" (Grossman *et al.*, 2001:955).

I concur with Grossman *et al.* (2001) that few teachers enter the profession to learn from and with other adults. But learning with and from each other is fundamental to the challenge of facilitating the development of inclusive learning communities. To assume that teachers can of their own accord organise themselves "into congenial units reflects a romanticism that misrepresents the realities of group dynamics in complex settings such as schools" (Grossman *et al.*, 2001:990). Developing the school as a community of difference (Shields, 2000; 2001; 2003; 2004; 2006) is also applicable to the notion of a professional learning community for teachers. Community and diversity are in constant tension. However, democratic educational contexts imply that individual voices are important, that different perspectives can be productive and that the wisdom of the collective exceeds that of the individual teacher (Grossman *et al.*, 2001). Teachers will have to learn to see each others' differences as resources rather than as problems and to acknowledge that any attempt at establishing a community is undertaken by fallible and diverse human beings.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) draw on the work of Fuller and Unwin (2003; 2004) in the field of workplace learning and specifically employ and adapt their often quoted continuum of expansive-restrictive learning environments. Fuller and Unwin (2003) argue that their notion of an expansive approach to apprenticeship within a community is more likely to result in the sort of learning and transformation that Engeström (1987; 2001) has called “expansive learning”. They therefore acknowledge a connection between their work and that of Engeström. Table 3.4 reflects Hodkinson and Hodkinson’s (2005) adaptation of the Fuller and Unwin continuum of expansive-restrictive for learning environments for teachers, but also some aspects of Päivi’s (2008) rendition of the Fuller and Unwin’s (2004) continuum.

Table 3.4: Adapted version of the Fuller and Unwin (2003; 2004) continuum of expansive-restrictive

Expansive	Restrictive
Close collaborative working	Isolated, individualist working
Colleagues mutually supportive in enhancing teacher learning	Colleagues obstruct or do not support each other’s learning
Supported opportunities for personal development that go beyond school or government priorities	Teacher learning mainly strategic compliance with government or school agendas
Out-of-school educational opportunities including time to stand back, reflect and think differently	Few out-of-school educational opportunities; only narrow, short training programmes
Opportunities to integrate off-the-job learning into everyday practices	No opportunity to integrate off-the-job learning
Opportunities to participate in more than one working group	Work restricted to home departmental teams within one school
Opportunities to extend professional identity through boundary crossing into other department, school activities, schools and beyond	Opportunities for boundary crossing only come with a job change
Support for local variation in ways of working and learning for teachers and work groups	Standardised approaches to teacher learning are prescribed and imposed
Teachers use a wide range of learning opportunities	Teachers use narrow range of learning approaches
Knowledge and skills of all the teachers developed and valued	Knowledge and skills of key groups developed and valued
Team work valued	Rigid specialist roles
School principal and management team as facilitators of teacher development	School principal and management team controllers of teacher development
Innovation important	Innovation not important

Before discussing how to promote expansive learning for schools and teachers, it is worthwhile to heed Päivi’s (2008) warning that apart from good things, bad things can also be learned at work. This means that teacher learning does not necessarily always have desirable outcomes but that it could strengthen existing negative features of the workplace. This could lead to bad work habits and dysfunctional practices that do not necessarily serve the goal of the school as an inclusive community.

3.4.4 Expansive teacher learning

Expansive teacher learning wants to work towards innovation in teachers' and schools' practices. Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development suggests that all learning is in some way collaborative and that learning takes place through a process of inquiry within a social group (Wells, 2000). Roth and Lee (2007) identify two forms of learning in the zone of proximal development. One form emphasises the collaboration between a less experienced person and one who is more experienced. The second form of learning happens when two or more individuals collaborate as peers at the same developmental level and completely new or more sophisticated actions in collective activity develop. This form of learning is closely linked to Engeström's (1987) reformulated definition of the zone of proximal development as the distance between the actions of an individual and the historically new forms of societal activity created in collaboration (Roth & Lee, 2007). For teachers, collective activity can result in learning to teach through implicit ways: modelling the actions and practice of new forms of actions available in collective activity. Collaborative learning has a strong commitment to dialogue; negotiation and the production of spaces where one will find a fusion of diversity that facilitate mutual understanding (Roth & Lee, 2007).

Roth and Lee (2007) explain that collective learning implies a *dialectical* process between the interpsychological and intrapsychological dimensions of learning and development. There is thus an intrinsic relationship between external and internal activity. External processes are transformed to create internal processes by a process of internalisation or appropriation. It is through a process of internalisation that "teachers move beyond [*current*] positions of cognitive internalization of theory and practices toward transformative positions of reflective commitment needed to guide them in their generative development" (Ball, 2000:229)

This entails that teachers in their workplace are not merely at the mercy of existing school contexts but that they have agency which allow for critique and revision. Teachers make sense in praxis but often find it difficult to 'unveil' the structural relations that energise the activity system with its generalised motive. Unveiling the influence of structural relations warrants a thorough interpretive analysis of historical determinants that would not be possible by individual effort, but warrants a group effort (Roth & Lee, 2007).

Engeström (1987) claims that expansive learning is well suited to circumstances where people and organisations have to learn something that is not stable or not even defined or understood ahead of time. New practices and skills are literally learned as they are being created. In his view (Engeström, 1987; 2001) standard learning theories have little to offer if one wants to understand these processes. Engeström (1987) turns to Bateson's (1972) theory of learning as one of the few approaches helpful for tackling the issue of expansive learning. He explains that Bateson distinguishes between three levels of learning: Learning 1 refers to conditioning and acquisition of the response deemed correct in a particular context, for example, learning correct answers in classrooms. Bateson points out that whenever we observe Learning 1, Learning II is however already present in the sense that people acquire deep-seated rules and patterns of behaviour characteristic to the context itself. Thus, in classrooms, students learn the 'hidden curriculum' of what it means to be a student: how to please the teachers, how to pass the exams, how to belong to groups, and so on. Sometimes the context, however, challenges people with conflicting (contradictory) demands and under such circumstances, Learning II creates a double bind. Such pressure can prompt Learning III. In these conditions a person or a group begins to radically question the sense and meaning of the context and to construct a wider alternative context. Learning III as expansive learning is essentially a collective endeavour.

The expansive learning cycle begins with individual subjects questioning accepted practice and it gradually expands into a collective movement or institution. Ascending from the abstract to the concrete is achieved through specific learning actions. The process of expansive learning should be understood as construction and resolution of successively evolving contradictions in the activity system (Engeström, 1999c). The learning actions in the cycle of expansive learning can ideally be described as follows:

- The first action is that of questioning, criticising, or rejecting certain aspects of accepted practice and existing knowledge. This action can be called *questioning.*
- The second learning action is that of *analysing* the situation. Analysis evokes "why?" questions and explanatory principles. As explained before, types of analyses would be historical-genetic and actual-empirical.
- The third action is that of *modelling.* An explicit, simplified model of the idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation is constructed.
- The fourth action is that of *examining the model* and experimenting with it in order to fully grasp its dynamics, potential and limitations.
- The fifth action has to do with *implementing the model* in practice.
- The sixth and seventh learning actions are those of *reflecting on* and evaluating the process and *consolidating* its outcomes into a new, stable form of practice (Engeström, 1999a).

For interest's sake I consider it worthwhile to interrupt my discussion on the work of Engeström to consider the first learning action of *questioning* in more detail**,** in light of the Index for Inclusion and CHAT. The developers of the Index for Inclusion, in their extensive work with the tool in schools, argue that much what teachers do is often "carried out at an automatic, intuitive level" and that there is little time during their working day "to stop and think" (Ainscow, 2007:4). The detailed questions ensure that the materials can challenge thinking in any school, whatever its current level of development. I think that the notion of Leont'ev's three levels of human functioning could be made applicable here. I prefer Wells's (1996) explanation of Leont'ev's three-level analysis of joint activity. According to Wells, each of the three levels - activity, action and operation - provides a different perspective on the organisation of events. In any event-in-a-context the *activity* that is being undertaken can be identified according to its motive, the 'object', that provides its motivating force. The second level is that of *action;* the perspective on an event which is afforded by considering the goal to be achieved. It is only in action that an activity is "translated into reality" (Wells, 1996:75). The notion of the zone of proximal development is associated with the level of activity and is crucially different from the notion of a goal. A goal is a fixed-end point or end state, a zone is the distance or area between the present and foreseeable future (Engeström, 1987). Engeström's (1987:174) reformulation of the definition of the zone of proximal development reads as follows:

> It is the distance between the present everyday actions of the individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to the double bind potential embedded in the everyday actions.

Operation as third level of human functioning can be explained in the following way: In distinguishing between the level of action and operation, Leont'ev explains that an 'action', by virtue of being goal-directed, requires that the participants give it their conscious attention, whilst an operation, by contrast, is likely to be a well-practised routine, and therefore no longer in need of conscious attention. This implies that a pattern of behaviour that starts as an action may, over time, become so routinised that it becomes an operation. The reverse movement can also occur in the sense of the Index for Inclusion that can act as an interruption to make the familiar unfamiliar and thus cause disequilibrium in thinking which could result in a challenge to existing assumptions about both teaching and learning (Ainscow & Kaplan, 2004; Ainscow, 2007). Expansive teacher learning can then potentially be the result, should the teachers be willing to engage in the transformative process of learning as envisaged by the Index for Inclusion.

Roth and Lee (2007) explain the above process in a slightly different way. They assert that all activity systems, such as the research school in this study, have inner contradictions. Very often these contradictions are hidden, but when inner contradictions become conscious they can become the primary driving force for change and development in activity systems. Learning can thus occur whenever a new tool is applied within an activity system to make the inner contradictions conscious or "causes interruptions" that help to "make the familiar unfamiliar" in ways that stimulate self-questioning, creativity and action (Ainscow, 2005:4). Thus a new possibility is presented for community members, leading to an increase in generalised action possibilities and therefore to collective learning. Research makes visible and pushes forward the contradictions of the activity under scrutiny, challenging the actors to appropriate and use new conceptual tools to analyse and redesign their own practice (Engeström, 1999c).

Engeström (1999b) reports that the theory of expansive learning, when applied to large-scale work in activity systems, requires a period of two to three years. A large-scale expansive cycle of organisational transformations, however, always includes smaller cycles of expansive learning, which can be seen as potentially expansive. The occurrence of a fully-fledged expansive cycle is not common, and it typically requires long-term effort and deliberate interventions. With these reservations in mind, the expansive learning cycle and its embedded actions may also be used as a framework for analysing smaller-scale expansive learning processes. An interventionist research methodology is needed which aims at pushing forward, mediating, recording and analysing cycles of expansive learning in local activity systems (Engeström, 1999c).

When juxtaposing the Index for Inclusion process as a framework for promoting inclusive practices and the theory of learning through expanding as promoted by Engeström, the resemblance is obvious. Engeström's work is, however, firmly placed within Vygotskian theory on learning and development and his extension of Vygotsky's work. The "specific processes of actions that make the learning process" (Engeström, 2001:150) are also carefully explained. Another important distinction between the two processes is the fact that the Index for Inclusion as a tool presents "a principled approach to education and society" and "is essentially about putting values into action" (Rustemier & Booth, 2005). The Index for Inclusion wants to change cultures, practices and policies in schools in particular ways in order for them to become more inclusive of student diversity. Some agency is left to the teachers as they have to determine their priorities for change but within the framework provided by the indicators in the Index for Inclusion. It is difficult to determine from available literature on Engeström's work how he gains entry into research settings, but what is evident is that the methodology employed has only one outcome in mind and that is expansive learning in the workplace. What is learned and the innovative practices resulting from the process are left to the agendas of the practitioners. The agency is in their hands, and the researcher-interventionist works with their agendas in order to promote learning.

The idea is thus to enhance expansive teacher learning through creating and encouraging more expansive features of schools. Table 3.4 can serve as a guideline in this respect. Although there will always be some restrictions to expansive learning in school, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) found in their research that most schools and teachers will be able to achieve more expansive environments with regard to certain criteria, albeit less with others. In some incidences it might even be best not to push too hard for some expansive features, as certain expansive dimensions might be partly contradictory. One of the important contradictions in schools as identified by Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) is that the one pole of the learning community, namely teacher learning, is most often seen as secondary to the teaching and learning of students. Should this be combined with a scarcity in resources, it is in most cases difficult to foster the development of schools as inclusive learning communities. Engeström (1987), on the other hand, argues that it is precisely these contradictions that can push innovative practice forward.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003) identify possible actions to increase the expansiveness of teachers' learning environments. In the first place, they recommend that over and above a focus on the restriction of the workplace on teacher learning, research also needs to examine ways in which wider cultural, socio-economic and political factors influence workplace learning. They therefore recommend a focus upon the interrelationship between the school as activity system, individual learner dispositions to learning and some wider contextual influences. They see variations in the activity of teachers as grounded in the dispositions, values and identities of teachers, and the culture and ethos of the schools within which they work, as well as wider socio-economic and policy systems impacting on them and the school as an activity system.

In a 2005 article Hodkinson and Hodkinson identify certain actions to increase the expansiveness of teachers' learning contexts. They claim that individual teachers can contribute in important ways to teacher learning and development in schools and can play a major role in increasing the expansiveness of their workplaces. In their research into teacher learning in the workplace, they have found several examples of dedication to personal and professional growth, as well as to mutual support of colleagues. Further examples include learning through mentoring others, through foregrounding their own learning and in helping to create supportive environments for the learning of their colleagues. All of these are possible provided the school context is conducive to teacher learning, although "much depends upon the status, career ambitions, identity and self-perception of the teacher" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005:126). The above factors are also related to other contextual factors such as family life, career stage, national and school structures regarding career development, and salary. The esteem and self-efficacy of teachers in a particular school are also important contributing factors to teacher learning.

Schools can make considerable contributions to support expansive learning environments for teachers. School management can set an example and demonstrate that they support learning for teachers by finding innovative ways to help teachers to critically reflect on own values, theoretical perspectives and practices, as well as on personal, school and policy contexts which influence these. They can plan strategically with teachers for the development and support of an expansive learning environment. Collaborative learning, boundary crossing and participation in different teams can be promoted. Flexibility in planning for teacher learning is also recommended.

On a policy and administrative level, in concurrence with Deppeler *et al.* (2005), they stress the importance of investing in teacher learning processes rather than in intensifying accountability measures for schools. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) suggest that funds and policies should target teacher learning through everyday working practices. Long and intensive teacher training programmes to allow for engagement with new ideas and the facilitation of shifts in disposition can also be considered. Another source of teacher learning that they promote is that of teachers working in schools other than their own for short period of times. To realise this, extra funding is however necessary to buy in support teachers.

3.4.5 Learning as both as a social and a personal construction

Billet (2008) argues for a refocus on the individual learner and stresses that accounts of the mediating roles of individuals are often absent in contemporary conceptions such as that of Engeström's activity system (1987; 2001). Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003; 2005) critique Engeström's contribution to the field of workplace learning in that he only recognises the individual as a small and integral part of something much wider. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003:4) claim that Engeström "posits a separation of and opposition between the individual and social structures, which then interact dialectically". This they see as implying a fundamental separation between the two in the first place. Here Engeström is in line with other proponents of workplace learning who declare that learning is mainly a social and cultural process.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) propose a combination between learning as social and participation and learning as personal construction. They see this as academically possible and as positing more effective ways of studying and improving teacher learning. For them "the embodied person is constructed through the positioned social life that person leads, including work" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson; 2003:4). Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003:4) draw upon Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus where habitus "can be seen as made up of a largely internalised subconscious battery of dispositions that orientate a person's actions in any situation" and see it as "a means of expressing the integration of social structures and person (body and mind), as indivisible". In this way they want to highlight the impact of worker biographies on both the affordances and interdependencies within activity systems.

Billet (2008) argues his case for a refocus on individual learning processes from a more positive stance towards socio-cultural theories of learning. The teacher as individual learner can be perceived "as [a] socio-historic person that negotiates the immediate social experiences in workplace settings. In a similar way, the immediate social experience of work comprising norms, practices and techniques is founded on a wealth of required practices that have derived from their historical cultural enactment" (Billet, 2008:40). In the context of my study this implies that an individual teacher as a subject in the school (as activity system) has a unique interpretation of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion and its process, which can either afford or constrain the implementation process. In similar vein, individual teachers' freedom and capacity to learn are limited by the activities that the school enables. Billet (2008) sees this as implying a relational interdependence. The focus and direction of individuals' intentions play an important role in processes of learning and in remaking cultural practices. Humans have a unique capacity for reflective self-evaluation, which implies the freedom to resist taking action. Efforts at securing the close transfer of knowledge from the intermental to the intramental are consequently unlikely to be completely successful (Billet, 2008).

Learning throughout one's working life thus needs to be seen as a relational concept with the relationship being mediated by the personal agency of the individual. Given the uniqueness and capacity of teachers that arise from their socially-derived life histories means that the interdependence between the social and individual is more likely to be relational in unequal, inconsistent and disjointed ways (Billet, 2008). Workplace learning thus involves "a negotiated, but transformative journey as individuals selectively negotiate their engagement in work, and changing work requirements, work practices and the shifting bases for participation in work" (Billet, 2008:53). Teacher learning needs to be understood in terms that include their capacities, agency, interests, identities and subjectivities and their active role in the remaking of the workplace (Billet, 2008).

In light of the above, it is interesting to note that Roth and Lee (2007), as proponents of CHAT, assert that CHAT holds much promise for working across three interrelated topics in learning research: motive or motivation, emotions and identity. Motivation, emotions and identity are,

> as Vygotsky realized, integral to cognition, knowing and learning, not some independent or peripheral factors that affect cognition (learning). These phenomena and concepts therefore cannot be understood apart from individuals engaging in concrete social activity, which posits addressing them in a dialectical manner (Roth & Lee, 2007:213).

For Roth and Lee (2007) the mind is not separate from the body: thinking, learning and judgement making are embodied. The whole person interrelates with the social world. The individual learner is thus an important factor to consider with regard to workplace learning.

From a CHAT perspective, being unmotivated to learn would imply that the teacher as learner is following differing objects or motives from those that are for instance sanctioned by the sign system of the Index for Inclusion (seen in the context of my study). Motivation in the context of my study would thus be seen as displayed when teachers as agents decide to internalise the sign system of the Index for Inclusion. Motivation in any activity involves a degree of control over the object; "the prospect of expanding control and action possibilities has positive emotional valence" leading teachers as learners to buy into it and thus to realise a specific activity (Roth & Lee, 2007:214).

Roth and Lee (2007) further explain that emotions are integral to the functioning of the activity systems and that the emotional cannot be disconnected from cognitive issues. Emotions are always tied to the motives and goals of learning. Learning in the sense of increasing one's possibilities in the world and control over one's life conditions are generally associated with positive feelings and emotions. DiPardo and Potter (2003:317) quote Vygotsky (1987:333) as follows: "The emotions are not 'a state within a state'. They cannot be understood outside the dynamic of life. It is within this context that the emotional processes acquire their meaning and sense." DiPardo and Potter (2003) also emphasise that teaching is emotional work. They (2003:337) further argue that "as key strands in the 'web of meaning' our emotions are intimately connected to our thoughts and actions and shaped in important ways by the institutional, cultural and historic contexts in which we live and labor".

Vygotsky sees thought, motivation, interests and emotions as being intimately and intricately interwoven. Tappan (1998:32) maintains that at its core Vygotsky's socio-cultural psychology advocates "a caring, relational, dialogical process as the key to good learning". In the context of my study, it is important to note that DiPardo and Potter (2003:323) contend that school change theorists are also now turning their attention to "the affective fallout attempts to alter practice and policy, addressing troublesome emotions such as grief and anxiety, as well as the need for hopefulness and trust". It is important to acknowledge the stress for teachers involved in ambitious change initiatives. Even those teachers who are initially enthusiastic about change efforts often report feelings of discouragement because of the hard work and the distance between expected outcomes and the reality in schools and classrooms. What is often perceived as purely intellectual work of teachers during times of radical school reform can be 'drenched' with emotional meanings and influences. Meijers (2002) draws on Doorewaard (2000) to caution that emotions need to be valued; should be treated with caution; and demand concentrated attention, especially so in times of change in education systems and schools.

Teachers who perceive that matters of importance are slipping beyond their control can feel particularly vulnerable. As change initiatives carve away at teachers' sense of agency and efficacy, education reformers remain passionately fixed on accountability measures, seemingly oblivious to the human costs involved in the process. In contrast, Vygotsky's work holds the recurring suggestion that the role of emotionality in the teaching-learning process is crucial (DiPardo & Potter, 2003). DiPardo and Potter (2003) advocate for the need for appropriate support of teachers during times of transformation and reform in education systems. If this does not transpire, teachers' professional well-being is at stake. Teachers' work is politically charged and involves both emotional and cognitive investments and challenges. They recommend an expanded neo-Vygotskian conception of the work of teachers to enrich the efforts of researchers, policymakers, teachers, educators and administrators in order to provide enhanced understanding and to better support structures that include their emotional as well as intellectual needs.

Roth and Lee (2007) define identity from a cultural-historical activity perspective as a dialectical feature that is continuously produced and reproduced in practical activity, which both presumes and produces identity, while Geijsel and Meijers (2005:423) see identity as “the ever-changing configuration of interpretations that individuals attach to themselves, as related to the activities that they participate in”. In both incidences identity is thus perceived as involving a learning process and not something that just happens but that is constructed in activity with the help of culturally available tools. This view is further supported by Hodges (1998) and Wortham (2004) who contend that, according to an ontological approach; learning changes not only what is being learned (which would be simply ‘epistemological’) but also who the learner is becoming: “To learn is to take up new practice, to change one’s position in a community. Thus learning can change identity and the self” (Wortham, 2004:716). An individual’s identity is therefore involved in constant transformation as one adjusts and adapts one’s actions to the affordances and constraints of the situations in which one finds oneself, but also acts to change the mediational means available in order to achieve one’s goals (Wells, 2004).

Geijsel, Sleegers, Van den Berg and Kelchtermans (2001) argue that the type of learning that is necessary during periods of innovation and change is that of identity learning. They contend that without changes in teachers’ personal identity sustainable changes in schools are not possible. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) concur with DiPardo and Potter (2003) that fundamental changes in teachers’ work can lead to feelings of insecurity about the benefits of innovation, about their own role as implementers of policy changes and about their future role as teachers. They also stress that, making cognitive processes the focal point in innovations can lead to the emotional side or the sense-making aspect of change processes remaining unexplored. For them teacher learning is both a process of social construction and individual sense-making. The core process of educational change is thus the identity learning of teachers. It is only possible when social construction and individual sense-making become closely related to each other (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005).

As is often the case with school development processes, identity learning also starts with a ‘boundary experience’; an experience in which the individual experiences the limit of an existing self-concept. Geijsel and Meijers (2005:424) provide the following explanation:

> Boundary experiences happen when a person, trying to participate more fully (centrally) in a social practice, encounters a situation in which one is unable to function adequately because one cannot fully identify with the new situation and its exigencies. Such a significant event causes ‘existential insecurity’, forcing the individual to see themselves - and often others too - in a different perspective.

A boundary experience may present as a cognitive problem but more often it will be of an emotional nature as "the current identity configuration does not fit the situation" (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005:424). A general first reaction to such an experience would entail an unwillingness to accept the situation, recovering a sense of well-being by an act of avoidance or by finding other ways of coping. Most often boundary experiences appear to teachers in the form of innovations that they have to adopt in their classrooms as they are judged on the outcomes of these innovations. These challenges cannot be avoided and have to become the objects of reflection. Firstly, boundary experiences can be the starting-point of learning. Innovations should thus be judged for their potential for learning and not seen as problematic. Secondly, identity learning needs a 'double dialogue' concerning the meaning of the boundary experience for the school as a community, as well as its personal meaning for every teacher. Geisel and Meijers, (2005) argue that these two dialogues need different platforms. In the dialogue for personal sense-making, life themes and professional histories of teachers need to be clarified and time and space should be allocated for emotions, not in a therapeutic but in a professional sense. This dialogue for sense-making asks for a slower pace than what is required during the dialogue for meaning-making. Geisel and Meijers (2005) suggest career guidance and counselling as a platform for sense-making processes of teachers during a time of change. Research results indicate that career guidance and counselling for teachers can provide a promising platform for personal sense-making in relation to developments in schools.

As previously indicated, Billet (2008) contends that humans have a unique capacity for reflective self-evaluation which affords them *agency* in the workplace. This provides a possible premise to explore the reasons for teacher resistance to participation in communal actions, but also for exploring reflection as essential to workplace learning. With regard to the former, Gitlin and Margonis (1995) argue that school change literature tends to overlook important preconditions for reform: the fundamental restructuring of teachers' work. Teachers' resistance to reform initiatives have been of continuing concern to researchers and administrators. Gitlin and Margonis (1995) suggest that the possibility should be considered that the acts of resistance by teachers can make good sense. Issues of time and authority have been repeatedly identified by teachers as important constraints. They recommend a focus on the altering of class and gender bias embedded in the construction of teachers' work. Teachers' concerns that change initiatives will only increase their responsibilities without contributing to worthwhile changes in their practice should also be addressed in order "to avoid the push-pull cycle where outsiders push for reforms and teachers resist, leaving schools fundamentally unchanged" (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995:377).

Reflection, it seems, can be defined in different ways. Edwards (2002:162) sees learning in its most evolved form as involving "a recursive, reflexive questioning of ourselves and contexts in order to see more of the possibilities available". Edwards (2002:162) draws on El'Konin and Davydov to provide one possible definition of reflection:

> Reflection is a basic human ability (a) to consider the goals, motives, methods, and means of one's own and other people's actions and thoughts; the mental facet of this ability is sometimes called metacognition; (b) to take other people's point of view; view things from perspectives other than one's own; and (c) to understand oneself; study one's own strong points and limitations in order to find the ways to excel or to accept one's shortcomings. Introspection is one part of this remarkable human faculty; the power for self-changing and transcending one's limitations is another component of the human ability for reflection.

Reflection is also increasingly used as a means to support professional development. It is central to the Index for Inclusion process in schools (Ainscow, 2003) and to Engeström's notion of expansive learning (Engeström, 1987). For Edwards (2002:165), working in CHAT, reflection is "an essential part of learning through engagement with the world". Teacher reflection is also recognised as an essential feature of workplace learning. Teacher reflection in social contexts occurs as teachers engage in and share their reflections in diverse ways. Reflection from a CHAT perspective is understood "as a process that is embedded in everyday activities situated in school cultures that are social in nature, where interaction with others are an important medium in which reflection occurs" (Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles & Lopez-Torres, 2003:250). Teachers use reflection as situated in the activity systems of teacher education programmes, classrooms, schools, and professional development events. Reflection can be used as a metacognitive mechanism for teachers to regulate their own practices before, during and after teaching, but it is more than a metacognitive mechanism as it is constituted in social practice. CHAT allows for the production of activity systems in which teachers mediate their own learning with others through reflection, inquiry and other tools and practices. Teachers can get together in collaborative learning groups with the purpose of learning and transforming their own professional practice and the school in which they work. In light of the above reflection as a practice for teacher learning with regard to inclusion is central to this study.

Where do I position myself with regard to the above discussion on teacher learning? I want to argue for extending the Engeström model of expansive learning to include a focus on the individual learner engaging with his or her context as a whole person (Billet, 2008; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2003, 2005; Roth & Lee, 2007). I consider it important to explore Billet's (2008) notion of relational interdependence between the learner and his or her context. A refocus on individual learners should entail exploring their rich variegation of capacities, interests, identities, emotions and motives as they make the choice to engage or disengage in the remaking of their workplace. Exploring in this context points to Tappan's (1998:32) argument that Vygotsky's socio-cultural psychology in effect promotes learning as "a caring, relational, dialogical process as the key to good learning".

I would suggest that one way of extending Engeström's notion of expansive learning would be to consider Geijsel and Meijers's (2005) idea of teacher learning as both a process of social construction (collective meaning-making) and individual sense-making which should be closely related in order to ensure educational change (organisational learning). I consider this as important for my inquiry into teacher learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion. Their notion of identity learning as initiated by a boundary experience resonates with Engeström's idea of the individual learner that instigates the cycle of expansive learning. Contradictions in the workplace are most often unveiled by an individual to be taken up into collective learning processes at the workplace. For Engeström this culminates in a cycle of collective meaning-making at the workplace, whilst Geijsel and Meijers (2005) argue for a double dialogue that necessitates two platforms: one for social construction (collective meaning-making) and the other for sense-making which implies exploring the implications of the change process for each teacher personally. The latter entails a slower process as the dialogue for personal sense-making includes for instance life themes and professional histories of teachers that need to be clarified, whereas time and space should also be allowed for emotions.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter the Index for Inclusion as artifact, tool and sign system has been presented. Expansive teacher learning has also been discussed. The discussion on the Index for Inclusion and as well as that on expansive teacher learning has been framed within CHAT and more particular in the work done by Engeström on workplace learning. In the next chapter the research plan for this study will be presented.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN INQUIRY TO CAPTURE TEACHER LEARNING DURING A TIME OF CHANGE

4.1 INTRODUCTION: ALIGNING AIM AND WAY OF WORKING

The aim of this inquiry was to investigate teacher learning for inclusion at a historically disadvantaged primary school during the implementation of inclusive education facilitated by the Index for Inclusion as tool. I used a critical ethnographic design for the study as I specifically wanted to interrogate the constraints and affordances for teacher learning during a time of change.

In line with Rogoff's suggestion with regard to analysis within CHAT (as discussed in Yamagata-Lynch, 2003), I chose to foreground the institutional-community plane of analysis whilst 'blurring out' two other planes, namely that of the personal and the macro-social and macro-educational. It is, however, important to note that Rogoff (1995) suggests that 'blurring out' is *not* ignoring, but rather consists of identifying the prominent features of the two planes that are not being examined to help further appreciate the complex activities that take place on the zoomed-in-on plane of analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2003). Consequently, this study addressed the following primary research question: What were the constraints and affordances for learning during the participation of the teachers in the Index for Inclusion process in their workplace?

The sub-questions were formulated as follows:

- Which features on the macro-social and macro-educational level impacted on teacher learning in the workplace?
- What affordances and constraints to teacher learning could be identified on the institutional-community plane as the pivotal plane of analysis for this study?
- Which features on the personal plane impacted on teacher learning in the workplace?

This study was theoretically framed within CHAT and in particular in the work of Engeström. Ethnography as research genre has been suggested by researchers working in education to complement the core of CHAT as it affords the necessary tools to link the local and the macro, which was also the intention of this study (Gutiérrez & Stone, 2000; Williams, Davis & Black, 2007).

Ethnography as design genre also seems to be most often used in work-oriented interventions (Rautkorpi, n. d.). Activity-theoretical ethnography is generally presented as ethnography of change. Ethnography is considered appropriate as design genre (Henning *et al.*, 2004) when the study involves change processes in activity systems (such as schools) due to the introduction of a new practice which opens up the conflicting dynamics between old ways of doing and the demands of the new practice (Rautkorpi, n. d.). In my study, foregrounding teacher learning during a time of change, I used CHAT and the work of Engeström as both theoretical lens and analytical tool, but also extended Engeström's conceptual kit by adding a critical stance and an emphasis on individual teacher learning.

The methodology used by Engeström in his developmental work research (DWR) relies on interventions aimed at supporting practitioners (such as teachers in this study) to analyse and redesign their activity system and the ideas of mediated action and expansive learning are central. Developmental work research as applied by Engeström contains the important Marxist concept of contradictions. According to Engeström (2001:135), contradictions within an activity system act as a guiding principle for empirical research. It is through the resolution of contradictions in localised work-based settings that the activity system is transformed, learning happens and the system moves to become something new. Avis (2007), however, argues that there is a split between Engeström's theorisations and the practical application of activity theory in developmental work research (DWR). Developmental work research is more a form of consultancy aimed at improving work practice. Through the application of activity theory in development work research, Avis (2007) claims that whilst the notion of contradictions used by Engeström has a Marxist appearance, it has much in common with the soft systems methodology of Checkland used to guide organisational change which is criticised for its lack of critical perspective (Jackson, 2005).

According to Avis (2007), Engeström also has a tendency to play down adversity and ambivalence in relations in his developmental research work despite the pivotal position allocated to the idea of contradictions. The consequence is that transformation (in the sense of radical change) becomes curtailed, which can easily lead to verbal radicalism without any social impact, whilst Marxist theory specifically accentuates the radicalism of social transformation. Avis (2007) argues for reclaiming the radicalism of activity theory rooted in Marxist theory; failure to do so leads to conservative praxis as social antagonism and the wider socio-economic and political context are not addressed. Rautkorpi (n. d.), who works within the CHAT framework, suggests that the level of critical ethnography is always present in the local interpretations and the broader historical, political, economic, social and symbolic context needs to be considered through the contradictions experienced, which are always contradictions on a deeper level of activity systems.

The Index for Inclusion can be seen as a radical plan for inclusive education (Dyson, 2001a) which needs a critical stance as the researcher as interventionist becomes a change agent in collaboratively developing structures intended to critique and support the transformation of schools (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). In light of its radical stance it was the tool of choice for this study as in South Africa the persisting inequalities and inequities that remain omnipresent in the education system, coupled with the agenda of Education White Paper 6 of 2001 on the implementation of inclusive education, require radical change in all systems (Grant, 2006).

Inclusive education needs to be a project of critical thinking and radical reconstruction, politically steadfast and aggressive as it calls for the radical rewriting of what it means to be school (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Slee, 2001a). According to Artiles and Kozleski (2007:355), inclusive education should "infuse a critical transformative agenda into its project that interrogates and aims to change historical inequities". A transformative agenda for inclusive education requires a (critical) third eye that focuses on the boundaries and intersections of cultural categories and practices in order to make visible the blindness, silences, and exclusions that have permeated the histories and educational experiences of marginalised groups.

Mariage *et al*. (2004), Reid and Valle (2004) and Tomlinson (2004) draw on Vygotsky's theories *and* critical theory to discuss the project of inclusive education. Reid and Valle (2004) explain that we tend to see the process of education as it currently *is,* whilst we need to recognise that it could *become* something different and better. We need to recognise that the fact that inclusive education is as yet not well done, does not absolve us of pursuing a more just society. Exclusion renders those who are marginalised powerless (Reid & Valle, 2004). Critical theory adds a stance of critique to socio-cultural theories and opens the discourse space to address "the complexity within multiple voices and marginalized silences; of encountering the tension of dualities; and of transforming meaning and action" (Mariage *et al*., 2004:537).

From the above, the value of critical ethnography as design genre should become clear. Engeström employs ethnographic methodology in his interventionist work, but is criticised for not being radical enough in his choice of developmental research work (DWR) as vehicle for his research. Inclusive education and the Index for Inclusion, on the other hand, call for a radical transformative agenda which demands a more critical stance as teacher learning for inclusive education implies transformative changes in school and classroom cultures, policies and practices. I argue that critical ethnography seemed to be the logic consequence for aligning the aim of the study and the way of working as critical ethnography interrogates commonly held values and assumptions, challenges conservative structures, and engages in transformative social action (Crotty, 1998).

The study was also set up to address the subjective problematic that Engeström seems to neglect (Avis, 2007; Langemeyer, 2006). According to Langemeyer (2006), Engeström interprets contradictions mainly as dysfunctions between the six dimensions of the activity system and in the process ignores personal motivation and internalised constraints as possible barriers to teacher learning (as in the context of this study). In Chapter 3 I argued that the individual learner was an important factor to consider with regard to workplace learning. Certain features from the individual plane can significantly impact on teacher learning in the school as workplace.

The third generation of activity theory allows for studying the impact of the macro-educational plane on teacher learning on the institutional-community level as was built into the design for my study. According to Daniels (2008) Engeström, in his third generation of activity theory, posits networks of activity systems that pay homage to the involvedness of boundaries that are constructed and contravened between multiple activities in practice.

In the rest of this chapter I discuss the way in which the critical ethnography study was designed and explain the procedures for sampling, the choice of data collecting methods and the manner in which data analysis proceeded. The chapter concludes with the ethical issues I considered in designing and conducting the inquiry.

4.2 THE DESIGN OF THE INQUIRY: PLANNING A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY FOR CHANGE

I used a critical ethnographic design for this study as I wished to interrogate the constraints and affordances for teacher learning on the institutional-community plane whilst also exploring features from the personal (subjective) and macro-educational levels that impact on teacher learning. A critical ethnographic design genre provides a useful toolkit for a researcher/interventionist implementing a pre-designed framework such as the Index for Inclusion in a local setting (Barab *et al.,* 2004).

Any research inquiry needs a plan or strategy which contains key points to be addressed. The research genre of a study is a plan that serves as a guide or a map and outlines, step by step, what the researcher hopes to accomplish with regard to her fieldwork process, data analysis and interpretation (Madison, 2005). The research design encompasses a flexible set of guidelines that connects the theoretical paradigm to the research methodology and situates the researcher in the experiential world, connecting her to the site where the inquiry will be conducted and to the practitioners and bodies of interpretive data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Henning *et al.* (2004) prefer to use the term 'design *genre'* which they feel captures the nature of different types of qualitative research more adequately than the notion of type or format. In this they draw on Holliday (2001) who borrows the word 'genre' from literary studies. A qualitative study is presented largely in language and is about the meaning constructed from the language that presents the data. The researcher selects a research genre that will address the research question optimally, "but will also indicate the researcher's reflexive knowledge of how language makes meaning, what role theory plays in interpretation and understanding, and how ideology and politics manifest in the research" (Henning *et al*., 2004:31). In qualitative research it thus makes sense to replace the idea of a design or type with genre.

Currently, there is a very wide range of research genres to choose from in qualitative research. The researcher has to select one that is in harmony with her philosophical assumptions and most appropriate for generating the kind of data required to answer the research questions set for the study. One of these research genres is ethnography. When ethnography is employed within a critical theoretical framework, a critical ethnographic study is conducted (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b).

Ethnography has always been one of the qualitative traditions of inquiry (Creswell, 1998), and qualitative research has a strong association with ethnography to the extent that not too far back in the past, all qualitative research was seen as ethnographic (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b). Since then the postmodern 'theory shock' happened and traditional ethnography as research design was questioned with regard to its underlying assumptions, aims and methods - "to the point of rendering it impracticable" (Brown & Dobrin, 2004:1). But from the discursive relationship between postmodern theory and ethnography, ethnography reinvented itself and critical praxis emerged (Brown & Dobrin, 2004). Critical praxis has come to be embodied in ethnography and has transformed it. Ethnography no longer asks to understand a culture but also wants to unveil oppressive forces and power imbalances (Crotty, 1998).

It remains difficult to differentiate between meta-theories as the distinctions are not always clear-cut, but overlapping and contested (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). Foley (2002:472) explains that cultural Marxist ethnographers (such as Engeström) most often adopt what Bernstein (1983) calls a "practical rationality" that steers "a middle course between the extreme objectivism of scientific rationality, and the extreme subjectivism of antirationalist, antirealist critics of science". I argue that Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) explain this 'middle course' taken by cultural Marxist ethnographers rather well in their notion of **resistance postmodernism**. In their critical qualitative work they offer the idea of resistance postmodernism as a type of postmodern social theory that presents a counterweight to the scepticism of postmodernism.

Resistance postmodernism adheres to a form of materialist intervention and thus allows for an interventionist and transformative stance that is integral to the work that I describe in this thesis. It operates from the premise that "difference is politicized by being situated in real social and historical conflicts" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000:294). Bringing resistance postmodernism and critical theory together allows for an interchange between the praxis of the critical and the tentativeness of the postmodern. Critical theory provides postmodernism with a value base in the sense that a distinction can now be made between repressive and liberatory social relations. Postmodernism has to be ethically grounded in order to allow for a morally challenging and transformative programme of action

(Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). In all our actions as humans we presuppose some value relation to truth. In this way truth seems internally related to meaning in a pragmatic way (Carspecken, 1996). Truth involves regulative rules that must be met for some statements to be more meaningful than others. If this cannot be presumed, truth becomes meaningless and transformative praxis without purpose.

According to Massey (2004), many feminists have also chosen to highlight ethical goals for ethnographic work. They refrain from asking ontological questions (about the sort of knowledge produced) but rather ask what sort of good can be done with and within research projects. An ethic of care has been promoted to ensure that the fragile grounds of commitment are not undermined (Cintron, 1993 in Massey, 2004). An 'ethic of care' was also integral to the work done with the Index for Inclusion in the school selected for this study.

Critical theory, which has its roots in the original conception of hermeneutics, is sometimes referred to as critical hermeneutics (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). Ontologically critical qualitative research focuses on the social construction of people's ideas and concepts (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). Researchers are interested in how their research participants give meaning to their personal constructions and interpretations of reality (Merriam, 2002). The narratives, experiences and insider's voices or emic perspective (Henning *et al.*, 2004) are the mediums through which the researcher explores and understands reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a).

Epistemologically critical qualitative research holds that the way of knowing reality is to engage and interact with participants. This also significantly implies that the researcher cannot be separated from the research and that research findings are socially and collaboratively created rather than discovered. By exploring the wealth, depth and complexity of social phenomena the researcher can begin to develop a sense of understanding of the meanings participants impart to their own experiences and contexts. The chief strength of qualitative research, and also of qualitative research in the critical mode, is the depth of understanding and the richness of description it permits. It allows the researcher to study the qualities and the characteristic of the selected social phenomena in depth, with openness and in detail (Durrheim, 2006; Henning *et al.*, 2004; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a).

Critical qualitative research is also naturalistic, constructivist and idiographic (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). It is conducted in the natural context of the research participants, and the constructions and interpretations of individuals and groups become the main source of data. It carries the unique trademark of every individual or group of participants. The researcher is also the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Merriam, 2002) and the inherent flexibility and freedom of qualitative research allows the researcher to modify her research plan to suit the object of the study, which can contribute to the validity of the findings. The researcher has more control and freedom in the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Henning *et al*., 2004). But in addition, qualitative research (also when looking through a critical theoretical lens) is holistic in the sense that the whole activity under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts. This implies that interdependencies exist that cannot be condensed to linear cause-effect relationships (Durrheim, 2006).

Critical theory is thus distinguished by an interpretative approach with a marked interest in critically challenging authentic social realities (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2000), critical theory is particularly concerned with issues of power, justice and inequality and the way in which economy, discourses of race, class, gender, disabilities, beliefs, education, religion and social institutions and cultural dynamics act together in constructing a social system. Critical theory assumes that social reality is historically created and is produced and reproduced by people. It maintains a dialectical view of society and argues that social phenomena should always be viewed within their historical and cultural contexts. Critical theory is never static but always evolving in light of new theoretical insights and new social issues.

According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), critical theory is evolving or being reconceptualised in answer to the "post-discourses" (e.g., postmodernism, critical feminism, poststructuralism). There is a great awareness in critical theory of how individuals' views of themselves and the world are influenced by social and historical forces. Although people have agency to change their socio-economic circumstances, they are also constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political control (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a).

Critical theory wants to deliver social critique to unveil restrictive conditions, oppressions and contradictions, and counteract internalised constraints, and believes that these can be made the subject of transformation (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). Research conducted from a critical stance wants to reveal the constraints that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the decisions that significantly influence their lives by stimulating self-reflection to overcome the barriers imposed by established institutions and internalised ways of thinking. In this way a greater degree of independence and agency can be achieved (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, 2005) suggest that cultural production can be thought of as a form of learning, as it generates knowledge, shapes values and constructs identity. Viewing cultural production as a process of learning implies that a process of relearning can be envisaged. In this way transformation and empowerment in a world of domination and oppression become a distinct possibility, implying a more just, democratic and equal society. A possible role for critical theory as a problem-identifying, questioning research position could therefore be to work against any unconscious reinforcement of existing society's hold over thinking. It is important not to make a too narrow interpretation of the problem, but to consider the social and historical contexts and to interpret the empirical material generated from fieldwork as socially constructed phenomena produced in part by dominant ideologies (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

I conclude my discussion on the role of critical theory in research with the following informative statement from Kincheloe and McLaren (2005:321) before exploring critical ethnography as research design for this study in more detail:

> To engage in research grounded on an evolving criticality is to take part in a process of critical world-making, guided by the shadowed outline of a dream of a world less conditioned by misery, suffering and the politics of deceit. It is, in short, a pragmatics of hope in an age of cynical reason.

Critical ethnography is critical theory in action (Madison, 2005). This means that critical ethnography is a qualitative research genre informed by critical theory, which implies that all the characteristics of qualitative research and critical theory (as discussed above) will be applicable to critical ethnography as research genre. Critical ethnography for the 21st century, deeply informed by *resistance* postmodernism (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000), shifts the goal of praxis away from the acquisition of knowledge *about* research subjects to approaching them as collaborators and engaging them in dialogic relationships in site-specific discourse communities (Brown, 2004; Brown & Dobrin, 2004). Critical ethnography has become relationship- and a place-conscious (Brown, 2004).

Horner (2004) argues that all ethnography, when conducted from a cultural materialistic perspective (as was the case in this investigation) is collaborative in nature. Exploring teacher learning in the workplace through a critical ethnographic research genre can thus be seen as a form of labour that implies an inherent social process. Meaning-making in the on-site research process is dialectical and multivoiced, and its methods collaborative and aimed at change. Critical ethnography as a research genre has been personalised, socialised and politicised, being informed by collaboration, multivocality and self-reflexivity (Brown, 2004; Horner, 2004).

The complexity of the task of the critical qualitative researcher is evident in the many aspects that require consideration in designing an inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) metaphorically describe the qualitative researcher as either bricoleur, maker of quilts or, as in filmmaking, a person who puts together images into montages. The researcher as a bricoleur produces a bricolage - "a pieced-together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:4). Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) extend the metaphor of the bricoleur to highlight the particular complexity of critical ethnographic research. In critical research the bricolage exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world of both the researcher and the practitioners as participants in the research study and the complications of power. Bricoleurs understand that researchers' interactions with the objects of their inquiries are always complicated, complex and unpredictable. Self-reflexivity for the researcher is thus of particular importance in critical ethnography.

In her embrace of complexity the bricoleur constructs a far more active role for humans both in shaping reality and in creating the research processes and narratives that represent it. Critical researchers actively construct their own research methods from the tools at hand and emphasise the blurred boundary between the hermeneutical search for understanding and the critical concern with social change for social justice. Understanding and action are synergistic. Rejecting normalising discourses, bricoleurs commit their knowledge to work to help address the ideological and informational needs of marginalised groups and individuals. In this way the bricoleur hopes to contribute to an evolving criticality. Thus the bricoleur is dedicated to a form of rigour that is familiar with numerous modes of meaning-making and knowledge production that originate in diverse social locations. These multiple perspectives delivered by the concept of difference provide critical hermeneutical bricoleurs with many benefits (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). In light of the above, Foley and Valenzuela (2005) maintain that each ethnographer develops her own notions of collaboration, positionality and authorship.

As researcher engaged in critical ethnography I needed both theory and method (Madison, 2005). CHAT provided the theoretical framework necessary for this ethnographic study. Foley (2002:477) posits that cultural Marxist ethnographers, such as Engeström, are epistemologically reflexive in at least two ways:

> First, they must critically analyze the disciplinary and discursive historical context that shapes them and their interpretations. Second, they must practice a systematic, disciplined abductive process of the development within and against the discursive traditions of a discipline(s).

CHAT thus allowed for a systematic abductive process. As explained in Chapter 1 the abductive process links theory and empirical fieldwork and provides heuristic and analytical devices such as presented by Engeström (1987; 2001) to map and represent the cultural and political practices observed in the research setting (Foley, 2002).

In line with the underlying assumptions of critical ethnography, CHAT also embodies the notion of hope. We are encouraged not to accept circumstances as they are, but to view each action as rich with the possibility of transforming our circumstances and ourselves (Roth, 2004). Likewise, Wardekker (2000) makes out a strong case for research in the CHAT fashion to be both transformative and collaborative. The ethnographer is not indifferent to the development and change of practice. Change follows from the very nature of the relation between research and practice. Sustainability beyond the limits of the research project is actively pursued.

To summarise: this study employed a critical activity-theoretical ethnographic research genre (informed by CHAT as theoretical framework) in working for change in a primary school in order to become more inclusive of diversity. Teacher learning for inclusion was foregrounded.

4.3 A METHODOLOGY FOR MY STUDY

4.3.1 Employing a qualitative methodology

Academic literature on ethnography and critical ethnography contains a great variety of methods of data collecting and sources of data that seem to flow from deeply immersing oneself in the culture of for instance an institution such as a school (Aunger, 2004; Carspecken, 1996; Delamont, 2002; Madison, 2005). The goal is ‘thick description’ and it seems from the above authors as if a critical ethnographic research genre generally employs a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research has come to mean any investigation into subjective issues, those involving participants’ choice of activities, attitudes, values, beliefs, and meanings. Hence a research methodology that uses interviews, surveys, questionnaires, content analysis of documents and activity and participant observation can be regarded as qualitative. Qualitative methodology with its emphasis on description and on recording the flow of experiences from the insider’s perspective is the embodiment of empirical inquiry. It addresses the question: What is happening here? (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994).

This study employed a critical qualitative methodology as it wanted to explore how practitioners give meaning to their personal constructions and interpretations of their learning activity (Merriam, 2002). The researcher could only attempt to understand the lived ‘realities’ of the research participants through their own narratives and experiences (Henning *et al.*, 2004). The methodology of a study focuses on the research process and the kinds of research tools and procedures to be used. The point of departure is the specific tasks at hand, such as the selection of the research school and participants, the role of the researcher and methods of data collection, analysis and verification (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). These tasks, as well as the ethical measures employed, will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3.2 Sunset Primary School selected as research school

I argue that decisions about selecting appropriate locations and participants for an investigation are largely determined in relation to the research questions and research genre guiding the study. In this critical ethnographic study I wanted to understand the constraints and affordances that impact on teacher learning when bringing a tool of change from the outside into a particular primary school, as a community of difference (Shields, 2003), to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education. As a research genre, ethnography does include setting the boundaries of the system to be studied, but the 'system' that an ethnographer tries to capture is the way of life within a social system such as a school. It is thus a study of the way of life of an identifiable group of people. The life of the group of people has to be studied over a period of time with the goal of capturing general everyday activities and tools and of finding ways of communicating and meaning-making. It is about exploring "the rituals and actions that bind the group of people, the signs and symbols they use to present and represent them and the language and variations of language they use" (Henning *et al.*, 2004:43). When conducting a critical ethnography research study, as was the case in this investigation, the emphasis is still on exploring the culture as a way of life of a group of people, but now data is captured to specifically determine what the power relations are and whether hegemonic practices aimed at supporting processes of transformation are common (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Taft, 1999).

Sunset Primary School, selected as in site-specific discourse community for this investigation, was included as one of three research schools for the UNESCO-funded project as explained in Chapter 1. In the UNESCO project the emphasis was particularly on schools that were seen as historically disadvantaged by the apartheid system and who needed additional support to implement inclusive education to ensure quality education for all its students. Poverty in all its manifestations could be singled out as an important characteristic of the communities in which these schools were situated (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2006). In this respect, Kamper (2008) claims that even today, the already fragile social fabric of communities that resulted from segregated past policies and the practices deriving from them are still disrupted by persisting poverty and social ills. Schools in these historically disadvantaged communities are most often severely affected by "poverty-related odds, such as hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, unemployment, gangsterism, drug abuse, and a fatalistic mindset" (Kamper, 2008:1)

Here, once again, it is also important to note that Sunset Primary School is situated in a so-called Coloured (of mixed origin) community. I again call on Guitierrez (2002) to defend the fact that I use social categories based on race to position myself and the practitioners, but argue that it is significant in the context of my empirical work conducted at Sunset Primary School. I further argue that when working from CHAT as a theoretical framework it is considered important to understand human actions seen in the context of their immediate geographical and socio-economic surroundings and their historical and cultural context. Their *way of life* cannot be explored through an ethnographic research genre without studying the contexts in which they are embedded.

Social categories based on race were legislated during the apartheid dispensation in South Africa to the detriment of, among others, the so-called Coloured (of mixed origin) community. The Coloured community had membership criteria and social status imposed on them from the outside through legal structures which resulted in the creation and hardening of racial and ethnic boundaries. The Coloured group was declared neither black nor white. This situation provided them with a non-status. The group was thus marginalised into an intermediate status in South Africa (Sonn & Fisher, 1996).

The legacy of the apartheid dispensation was characterised by fragmentation, inconsistencies and inequity in educational provisioning. Since the education system favoured the white population higher teachers' salaries and per student expenditure was paid to white schools, despite the fact that the white population constituted only 15% of the total population. Many schools in Coloured communities still struggle with a crisis of authority and the loss of a culture of learning and teaching (Mestry & Singh, 2007; Pather, 2007). Historically disadvantaged schools, such as Sunset Primary School, are also struggling to address the diverse needs of their student populations. These schools do not always possess the expertise and resources and are in need of support to develop as quality inclusive schools accommodating the needs of all students. At policy level a considerable move has been made towards attaining the inclusive objectives of Education for All (EFA), but the reality in many schools in South Africa - such as Sunset Primary School - proves otherwise.

Teachers working in communities, such as Sunset Primary School, have to deal with harsh social conditions and schools in these communities are often depicted as failing their students. West, Ainscow and Stanford (2005:78) claim that research is generally focused upon successful schools, leading to an inadequate explanation of those that are less successful as lacking "the 'characteristics' of their more effective cousins". They argue that the "backward mapping" of such characteristics into less functional schools is not helpful as the experience of being characterised as failing can in itself act as a barrier to progress. They contend that these teachers often need to rediscover a sense of purpose. In this respect I argue that an understanding of the context within which the researcher seeks to find answers to research questions is critical and that learning from practitioners working in these contexts is essential in unpacking and better understanding what they regard as their 'reality'.

I purposefully selected Sunset Primary School as research school for my study as it met certain selection criteria that were considered important for this study. Sunset Primary School was one of the research schools struggling to make progress with the development of their school into an inclusive school community due to several constraints. The UNESCO funding was originally only intended for a period of two years (2004-2005) to allow for the implementation of one full cycle of the Index for Inclusion process in all three primary schools. After two years (2004-2005) the project was terminated in one of the research schools making sustainable progress. The evaluation and review process at the end of 2005 indicated that two of the schools were in need of additional support to finally take over the ownership of the development of their schools into inclusive school communities. Additional funding was made available to extend the project at Sunset Primary School as well as in the second school for another year (2006). Towards the end of 2006 the project was terminated at the second school. However, for all practical purposes I stayed in contact with Sunset Primary School up to the end of 2008. Since considerable input and support seemed necessary to move the school to become more inclusive of student diversity, teacher learning initiatives were conducted *in situ* at the teachers' request whenever funding was available during 2007 and also in 2008.

Sunset Primary School was selected as a research school for my study in the first place because of the relationship that I had been privileged to establish with the staff during my prolonged engagement with the school. A second reason for selecting the school derived from the extensive work undertaken in the school with regard to teacher learning for inclusion. A third and decisive reason for making Sunset Primary School the subject of my study on the constraints and affordances to teacher learning in a particular school as activity system, was based on the troublesome finding that it *seemed* as if the outcomes of the project did not measure up to the effort that went into working collaboratively and intensively with the teachers in changing school and classroom cultures, policies and practices to become more inclusive. The *Why?* question thus spawned the critical stance of this particular investigation into teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. In the fourth place, the teachers declared themselves willing to participate in this study.

4.3.3 Sunset Primary School in context

Engelbrecht and Oswald's (2005) project report submitted to UNESCO describes Sunset Primary School as being situated in a small rural town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. In a subsequent article reporting on the first two phases of the project, Engelbrecht, Oswald and Forlin (2006:123) further explain the context:

> The community is close-knit and does not easily accept people 'from the outside'. This makes for stronger feelings of community in the town, but also opens up the possibility for exclusionary practices and discrimination in both the town and school. Poverty, unemployment and adult illiteracy are major problems in the surrounding community, although a small percentage of the residents are more affluent.

It was reported that a few parents from the town had professional careers and some earned a good 'middle-class' salary. The teachers residing within the town would be an example of the latter category. The school was described as being situated in a safe area. This aspect is considered important in South Africa, as in several (mostly urban) communities gang-related activities are making the areas surrounding schools unsafe places for students, staff and other members of the school community. At the time of writing the project report the number of students attending the school was declining and students stayed away from school because of bullying on the playgrounds. Emotional and behavioural problems were also rife in the school (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Engelbrecht *et al*., 2006).

To thicken the description (Henning *et al.*, 2004) it is important to mention that the Sunset Primary School is situated in a charming village within one of the wine-producing farming areas of the Western Cape. At the time of the project, a number of the students' parents were working on nearby farms as labourers. The school was the only available primary school (Grades R-7) in town, with a secondary school (Grades 8-12) accommodating the children of the town and nearby community. The language of preference for the community and schools was Afrikaans and all students were taught through the medium of Afrikaans. Sunset Primary School also catered for students in their last pre-school year and two female teachers were employed to prepare children from age five to six for formal education. The school is situated in an area with a good infrastructure with larger towns and several universities in the vicinity.

Sunset Primary School celebrated its ninetieth anniversary in 2002. The school was established in 1912 by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and classes were conducted in a corrugated iron building on a farm and later moved to the church hall. It was only in 1968 that the current school buildings were erected and classes started there towards the end of the same year. During 1988 the staff counted 32 teachers, but since 1994 student numbers have dwindled due to several factors of which an important one seemed to be the racial integration of schools. After the 1994 election and subsequent changes in legislation, parents from Coloured communities had a wider choice of schools where they could send their children. Several children from the town chose to attend schools formerly reserved for white students. Farm workers usually received permanent housing on the farms where they were employed but due to policy changes farmers now prefer their workers to look for accommodation elsewhere. As a result Sunset Primary School lost some of its students to other schools in the vicinity. Families are also smaller, largely because of economic constraints.

On entering the school for the first time in July 2004, we found that the student enrolment was 644 with 17 permanent teachers, including the management staff, constituting the staff of the school. This implied a teacher: student ration of 1:38 provided the management team was actively involved as classroom teachers. This was the case, with only the school principal exempted from having a class of his own. He, however, had to teach certain learning areas to the more senior students. Afrikaans is the language of instruction in the school. It was also the home language of the majority of the students. The school accommodated only a very small percentage of Xhosa-speaking black students. The school had a permanent learning support teacher affiliated with the Education District Office. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the staff profile of Sunset Primary School as applicable in 2005.

Table 4.1: Staff profile of Sunset Primary School (2005)

Position	Gender	Year of birth	Teaching grade	Number of students in class	Qualifications	Years in teaching	Years at school
School Principal	Male	1954	6 and 7	From 36-52	BEd (Hons)	26	5
Deputy Principal	Male	1956	5	34	BEd (Hons)	27	27
Departmental Head: Intermediate and Senior Phases	Male	1966	7	52	Teacher’s Diploma	15	8
Departmental Head: Foundation Phase	Female	1952	1	41	BEd (Hons)	35	18
Senior teacher	Female	1961	6	34	Higher Teacher’s Diploma	17	17
Teacher: Foundation Phase	Female	1959	2	34	BEd (Hons)	27	27
Teacher: Foundation Phase	Female	1963	1	39	BEd (Hons)	18	18
Teacher: Foundation Phase	Female	1960	2	35	BEd (Hons)	24	24
Teacher: Foundation Phase	Female	1959	1	39	Diploma in Education	26	5
Teacher: Foundation Phase	Female	1963	3	35	BEd (Hons)	20	13
Teacher: Foundation Phase	Female	1960	3	33	BEd (Hons)	26	22
Teacher: Intermediate Phase	Female	1960	4	43	BEd (Hons)	25	22
Teacher: Intermediate Phase	Female	1957	6	33	BEd (Hons)	28	10
Teacher: Intermediate Phase	Female	1960	4	43	BEd (Hons)	27	5
Teacher: Intermediate Phase	Male	1955	5	34	BEd (Hons)	21	11
Teacher: Senior Phase	Male	1965	7	52	Teacher’s Diploma	18	18
Learning Support Teacher	Female	1963	All grades		Diploma in Special Needs	18	11
Teacher: Pre-Primary	Female	1967	Grade R	27	Training in pre-primary education	15	12
Teacher: Pre-Primary	Female	1977	Grade R	26	Training in pre-primary education	8	8

In 1968, during the apartheid dispensation, Sunset Primary School was built with pre-fabricated material. The initial picture of the school was one of neglect. The school buildings seemed dilapidated and the toilets in particular were not clean. It seemed as if the staff and students did not care to keep the school clean and littering on the school grounds and in the school itself was obviously a big problem.

The school did not have a school hall, but had a computer room and a library. The prefabricated wall between two classrooms had been removed and the enlarged space was being utilised as a temporary hall for all their meetings. At the time of my first visit to the school I observed that neither the computer room nor the library was in use. The teachers' computer skills were not up to standard and consequently the students received no training in computer skills. Nobody in the school was available or prepared to run the library. The principal's office was small and the school had only limited space available for the school's secretary, who also acted as receptionist. On the other hand, the staff room was small but neat, and had a homely atmosphere. Certain classrooms, especially those of teachers accommodating the lower grades, were quite welcoming. The classroom of the learning support official was large and better resourced than the other classrooms. There was enough space to work in small groups with the students. In terms of sport facilities, the school only had a netball court. They had to use the facilities of the municipal grounds for other sport activities. Although the school owned ample grounds, the playground in use was small. The grounds were undeveloped and considered unsafe spaces for students to play in. It can be derived from the above discussion that the school had certain under-utilised assets, but relative to more affluent schools in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, the school was under-resourced and underdeveloped.

4.3.4 Gaining entry

In ethnographic studies the researcher has to go into the field to learn about a culture from the inside out. This involves, in the first instance, gaining access to the research site (Schwartzman, 1993; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). One aspect that Engeström often neglects to report on in his interventionist research in workplace learning is gaining access to and entering the research setting. I found that gaining access and stepping into Sunset Primary School as potential site of research was one of the more significant phases of the entire time spent in the school. Problems of access and the experience of first encounters are not often narrated in research reports and are often treated as "'noise' as far as data/information of the research project" is concerned (Schwartzman, 1993:48). It seems as if these experiences are viewed as something to negotiate and get out of the way. Yet access is a significant part of doing research because in the first place, the researcher must gain access in order to collect information, and secondly the process of gaining access affects what information is available to the researcher (Feldman, Bell & Berger, 2003; Schwartzman, 1993). Apart from the above, as researcher I can also confirm that access is not something that is gained once and for all but is a process that has to be renegotiated on a continual basis whilst a relationship of trust is being established (Delamont, 2002).

Two officials representing the Western Cape Education Department in the district in which the research schools for the UNESCO-funded project were located, initially identified three research schools as potential research sites. Two of these schools were prepared to become part of the project whilst a third school declined the invitation. Sunset Primary School was approached after the principal of yet another school was not prepared to become part of the project due to the school's involvement in another project. The principal of Sunset Primary School explained afterwards that he had been reluctant to participate in the project and only agreed after the officials had indicated that the school could benefit from the intervention. Time constraints were proffered as possible reasons for non-involvement on his side. Both he and quite a few of his staff members were involved in further study at another university. Given the way in which Sunset Primary School became part of the project, gaining access and building relationships of trust were at times an uphill battle.

Schwartzman (1993) emphasises the importance of how one presents oneself to gatekeepers in an organisation in order to gain access to a setting, and explains that it is crucial for setting up the particular expectations about one's research. The principal of Sunset Primary School was aware that he as the institutional gatekeeper could terminate the intervention whenever he wished, adding additional stress to our participative work in the school. It quickly became evident that getting permission to conduct a study in a particular school involved more than getting an official blessing (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study official permission was procured from the research section of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the district officials who conducted the preliminary negotiations with the principal of Sunset Primary School. A study can however still be sabotaged by the principal as the on-site key gatekeeper, as well as by the staff (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

On 22 July 2004 the research team met with the principal and his management team for the first time. The principal acted as spokesperson and explained that they were willing to participate in the research project but that time constraints were a real challenge. A meeting with the staff was arranged for 4 August 2004. Schwartzman (1993:49) explains that a first encounter is critical because it is the first time that the practitioners and researchers have to meet and observe each other and "informants will make sense of the researcher in the ways that they make sense of all strangers who appear and begin to ask questions". During my first meeting with the staff of Sunset Primary School the teachers showed resistance in different ways. There were many interruptions as teachers frequently left the staffroom to answer their cell phones (mobiles), other teachers arrived late and others left early. Field notes dated 4 August 2004 indicate that "time constraints can become a problem in the course of the research process. At 15:00 the teachers started packing their belongings to signal the end of the school day. The teachers complained about the unpredictability of their days. In-service training sessions organised by the WCED regularly interrupted their working day.” Due to time limitations, the aims and phases of the Index for Inclusion process could only be explained in broad terms. They promised to have the members of the coordinating team appointed by 12 August 2004. At this stage I realised that it would take time for practitioners and researchers alike to understand what each was up to and to label each other’s behaviour in appropriate ways (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Schwartzman, 1993). In all research, this can be a very tense time for researchers (Schwartzman, 1993). In this particular study, valuable time was lost in procuring a third school for the project and the responsibility now rested with the research assistant and me to negotiate initial access successfully. At this stage we could not predict how it would turn out.

Both Feldman *et al.* (2003) and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) emphasise the importance of building relationships of trust in fieldwork. Good rapport needs to be established with those with whom you will be spending time, so that they will accept you as researcher and the work that you plan to do in the school (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The goal was to increase the practitioners’ level of comfort and to encourage them to talk openly and eventually to trust me enough to work in partnership with me. This could only be accomplished by playing down my status as academic as the practitioners were initially very wary about the research process to be conducted in their school. I shared knowledge about myself and my career in a low-key way (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) also advise the researcher to be persistent, flexible and creative when negotiating entry to a research school. I found persistence, flexibility and creativity to be necessary not only to gain access to Sunset Primary School, but also throughout, in implementing the Index for Inclusion process in the school. In my reflective notes I often referred to myself metaphorically as a bulldog. I was in need of a strong grip just to hold on and not to lose hope.

4.3.5 Describing my role as interventionist/researcher

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) hold that the researcher’s positioning on the participant/observer continuum as ethnographer within a research site should be determined with the particulars of the actual study in mind. They explain that an ethnographic fieldworker will usually stay somewhere between the extremes poles of being a detached observer and being completely involved at the site. Balancing participation and observation can be difficult for an ethnographer (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Finer details concerning how much, with whom, and how you participate tend to work out as the research process develops.

I can describe my position in engaging with Sunset Primary School as dimerous: I was both interventionist and researcher. Hasu (2005) describes the precarious position of the ethnographer as one in which she continuously seeks to maintain a delicate balance between being an involved co-participant and co-experiencer and being an independent researcher who needs data. Wardekker (2000) contends that researchers need to attain a balance between participation and distantiation. As *interventionist* my role, which was more one of co-participant and co-experiencer, can be encapsulated in the idea of becoming a *critical friend* to the school during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process. I have discussed the role of the critical friend in Section 1.4.2 where I introduced myself as researcher, as well as in Section 3.3.2.4 where the ways of working with the Index for Inclusion were explored. Here I further explore my specific engagement as interventionist in the school.

I explained my role as collaborator and partner to the practitioners at Sunset Primary School, but realised at the same time that my positioning as university lecturer (supposedly coming with a superior knowledge base), as advocate for inclusive education with the Index for Inclusion as tool at my disposal and as researcher put me in a privileged position with regard to them. I would have to gain their trust and work hard at building a relationship where power was shared more equally in order to be accepted as a member of their team.

Becoming a critical friend to the school members of Sunset Primary School during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process relates strongly to the way of working at a research site as a critical ethnographer. In Section 4.2 of this study the role of the critical ethnographer was explored. Becoming a critical friend to Sunset Primary School in working towards the outcomes as envisaged by the Index for Inclusion framework, required me to enter the school as a co-partner and co-member in a process of intervention with an inclusive agenda. As an interventionist employing the Index for Inclusion as a tool, I could be both a critic and a friend. My ethnographic journey with the staff of Sunset Primary School can be discussed against the background of Brown and Dobrin's (2004:5) explication of the reconfigured practice of critical ethnography:

> This reconfigured praxis seeks to actualize both aspects of the Freirean educational praxis, in which critical analysis of localized and politicized problems is but a springboard into meaningful action to mitigate, legislate, or eliminate those problems. The activating agent for this analysis-into-action dialectic is the ethnographer-other dyad: is the emerging, peerlike partnership between ethnographer and participant in which the student-other is empowered as a coinvestigator of a problem that is critically analyzed in collaboration with the ethnographer as a precondition for evolving an action plan to meaningfully and effectively engage the problem.

By employing the Index for Inclusion and its cycle of five phases as a tool, I tried to mediate action toward transformation by enticing the staff in the school to become collaborators and peers in engaging with the challenging issue of student diversity in their school. It called for critically interrogating this complex social issue *as a team* in order to challenge and change exclusionary cultures, policies and practices in the school that impact negatively on student learning. However, the staff of a particular school such as Sunset Primary School needs both time and support to learn new meanings and implement new practices "because they have all been immersed in the status quo and built their understandings and expectations of schooling from earlier experience" (Crebbin, 2004 in Carrington & Robinson, 2006:327). Wardekker (2000) explains from a cultural-historical activity theoretical stance that research tries to use the dialogue between the researcher and the practitioner to its fullest extent as the dialogic process is itself change-inducing. To interrogate the status quo a critical stance is warranted, but this process requires the staff to have a *friend* to support them and to understand how difficult it is to change deeply-ingrained assumptions, theories, practices and identities.

In describing the role of a friend during an intervention process in a school, Hasu (2005) introduces her idea of *sensitive* ethnography of change for expansive collaborative processes of learning. For Hasu (2005:99), working in an institution (such as a school) the problem of "'subject heterogeneity' and the diverse personal positions and trajectories in accomplishing, experiencing and living with complex organisational change" is obvious. She claims that the 'simultaneity' of being at the same time an involved participant in the school and an outsider can strongly sensitise the interventionist "to the delicate nuances of the research participants' choices or actions that are not straightforwardly visible or voiced in the open, and are, therefore, not directly observable or recordable as data" (Hasu, 2005:91). She suggests that for practitioners, expansive collaborative processes of learning require mastery of the cognitive and material sphere. However, she maintains that they also have to cope with complex emotional and relational dynamics in which change and the construction of identities play an important role.

The interventionist needs a heightened sensitivity to practitioners' lives and voices, including the position or identity that they attribute to themselves or that is attributed to them within the school as activity system. As an outsider the interventionist should be sensitive to individual changes, to the emergence of a new identity, and to the one participant who is responding to the intervention in a positive way (Hasu, 2005). In order to understand practitioners' actions, thoughts and emotions it is necessary to understand the ways in which they participate in social practice. Individual practitioners may participate in multiple social practices in unique and personal ways. There will also be those who choose to disengage from joint collective learning initiatives which beg the interventionist to listen to the voices of those who choose differently.

Hasu (2005) also highlights intersubjectivity and mutual interdependence in learning for change. She quotes John-Steiner (2000) who focuses on creative collaborations (among teachers) that involve the questioning and rethinking of traditional educational beliefs and assumptions and practices, indicating that practitioners may sometimes overcome severe challenges and reach beyond their known capabilities when relying on significant relationships to provide complementary cognitive resources and capabilities for their partners. These relationships can also provide ‘safety zones’ where support is readily available and criticism is easier to handle constructively. Collaborating in working for change in a school can be empowering, but may also involve some of those who are fragile in risk-taking, uncertainty and a need for intense long-term commitment. Dealing with the vulnerable and the fragile in joint accomplishments is a particular challenge for the interventionist as friend.

As *researcher* I needed data (Hasu, 2005). My role as researcher comprised the generation of data in collaboration with the coordinating team of Sunset Primary School or the collection of data on my own, wearing the hat of the researcher. The research data generated and collected either facilitated and assisted the processes of change in the school, or was employed to analyse and understand what happens to levels of participation and achievement in the schools as they attempt to develop more inclusive practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

Both as interventionist and researcher during the facilitation of the Index for Inclusion process at Sunset Primary School, I was included in a community of support which comprised a research assistant who regularly accompanied me on my visits to the school, as well as the research and project teams who met frequently. An accomplished research consultant from an overseas university was also appointed to help with the implementation of the project. She visited South Africa on regular basis and her support was invaluable. The research team included the project leader, the research assistant and me. Besides the research assistant, the project leader and me, the project team also included the two officials from the Education district office under whose jurisdiction the three research schools sorted. They were members of the project team from the beginning. My experience of inclusion in this community of support was a source of personal commitment and consistency over the comprehensive and insecure research effort (Hasu, 2005). The regular meetings of the research and project teams also acted as a safeguard against own biases and prejudices that could contaminate the intervention and research process in the school. In addition to personal sensitivity, Hasu (2005) also emphasises reflexivity for her sensitive ethnography of change. Reflexivity is considered to be particularly important for critical ethnography (Brown, 2004; Horner, 2004). Wardekker (2000) talks about critical consciousness that is essential to good research practice.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), reflexivity involves self-awareness and critical self-reflection by the ethnographer on potential biases and predispositions as these may affect the research process. The interventionist/researcher should reflect critically on the self as researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Davies (1999 in Aunger, 2004:102) explains that “[r]eflexivity, broadly defined, means a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research.” According to Thomas (1993), critical reflexivity holds two important implications for the researcher. In the first place, he concurs with Johnson and Christensen (2008) and Aunger (2004) in so far as reflexivity involves the examination of the influence of our own values and ideology on our research and whether we might unintentionally have excluded opposing examples that could undermine our analysis. The second implication relates to the social effects of the research findings and how they are presented. In Chapter 1, (see 1.4.2) I introduced myself and explained my positioning within the context of the study. In employing the Index for Inclusion as a value-laden tool to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education at Sunset Primary School I tried to interrogate the injustices of exclusion in order to take action to change it. In this way I tried to meet Thomas's (1993) requirements for a critical ethnographer.

4.3.6 Participants as informants

I employed purposeful sampling to select informants that could best contribute to my understanding of the affordances and constraints regarding teacher learning at Sunset Primary School (Thomas, 1993). Neuman (2006) describes the informant in field research as a participant with whom a field researcher develops a special relationship and who is knowledgeable about the field. The informant is usually a person who is currently involved in and familiar with the research setting and the culture and is in a position to witness important events, whilst also having time to spend time with the researcher. An insider's knowledge is crucial to providing the most relevant and meaningful information. The notion of substantive sampling will also be discussed as it seems relevant to the sampling procedures utilised in this study.

Patton (1990:169) notes that the "power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research; thus the term purposeful sampling." Purposeful sampling is often premised on the concept of theoretical sampling as discussed by Glaser and Strauss (1967 in Patton, 1990). Theoretical sampling means selecting informants who embody the important characteristics that the researcher believes of interest to the study (Williamson, 2006). Gold (1997) suggests substantive sampling as complementary to theoretical sampling when the emphasis is on generating informants' own meaning-making of their experiences and activities and how they make sense of the phenomenon under study. When employing substantive sampling, the researcher begins by selecting as initial informants a few persons in positions that are likely to provide good information with regard to the culture of the school as activity system. From there they can help to identify those who are generally thought to be representative of various social categories and point of views in the school. Substantive sampling is usually used to reach substantive objectives. The researcher needs the social knowledge of people (in this case, the people in the school) to help saturate the empirical categories pertaining to the sample. Saturation means that no additional data is being found whereby the ethnographer can develop further properties of the category. The researcher also goes out of her way to look for groups or individuals that stretch the diversity of data as far as possible.

In this study data was initially collected by questionnaires and open questions to inform the needs analysis phase. The questionnaires were completed by the whole school community and certain themes could be identified that had to be explored further. Through purposeful sampling information-rich informants were interviewed and through a process of substantive sampling the data was saturated, and a clear picture emerged of the affordances and constraints with regard to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School as the workplace. The research participants were the whole school community of Sunset Primary School: the principal and management team, the teachers, the parents and all the students from Grades 5 and 6. Depending on the methods of data collection employed, participants became informants at different stages in the research process. Additional informants were interviewed at later stages in the research process that could assist in revealing the details and nuances of teacher learning *in situ* (Thomas, 1993). The participants are further identified in Section 4.3.7.

4.3.7 Methods of data generation

Qualitative research employs different methods of data collection. It is, however, important to understand that objective reality can never be captured even when multiplying the methods of data collection, because as researchers we only come to know a phenomenon through its representation. Employing various methods of data generation can best be understood as a strategy that adds accuracy, complexity, richness and depth to an inquiry (Flick, 2002 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). When employing a critical ethnographic research genre researchers try to be holistic in describing a group or a phenomenon. While acknowledging that fundamental to holism is the assumption that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, a holistic description does not ignore the parts of the whole. It is important to analyse the parts in order to understand the whole. The ethnographer has to work back and forth between the parts and the whole in order to create a picture of the cultural group. In order to understand the parts to be able to describe the whole, multiple methods were used in this study to try to ensure a good representation of teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. The ethnographic report generally includes a rich and holistic description of the group (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Both **primary** and **secondary** data was employed in this study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), primary data is data that the researcher has collected herself, whilst secondary data existed prior to starting the research. Although I was involved in the generation of both the primary and secondary datasets, certain datasets already existed when I started the research for this particular study. In the case of secondary data analysis "an empirical exercise on data already collected" is thus performed (Strydom & Delport, 2005:319). Primary and secondary data was collected through different methods at various stages of my research engagement at Sunset Primary School.

Predominantly qualitative methods of data collection were employed to generate the datasets. Even when data was collected by way of more structured questionnaires, the data generated by the questionnaires was analysed through descriptive statistics only and employed in a more qualitative way. Secondary data was originally generated to assist in the process of facilitating change in working with the staff of the school and as a means to evaluate the Index for Inclusion process in the three research schools. For the purposes of this study secondary data was re-analysed as a means of understanding the learning and development processes of the teachers. Although the project was officially terminated in the last two research schools in December 2006, some of the data generated was not analysed or published at all and was thus included as primary data, whilst additional data was collected during 2007 and 2008 to specifically shed light on teacher learning during the implementation of a change initiative.

4.3.7.1 Participatory Observation

Gold (1997) argues for a form of ethnographic research that collects data that was informed by participants' actual experience. This agrees with Wardekker's (2000) argument, from a cultural-historical activity perspective, that research should be focused on practical activities organised in activity systems and that the researcher should study these practical activities from the historical and the actual dynamics of that practice. If research should be both genetically and contextually adequate, it is self-evident that data should be collected that can provide detailed information on the context in which the research is executed and on how the learning trajectories of teachers evolved over time.

Participatory observation allows for studying the context and the genesis of a practice over time (Henning *et al.*, 2004) as it is grounded in the establishment of substantial and meaningful rapport between the researcher and the research institution which requires the long-term immersion of the researcher in the everyday practices of the practitioners (Angrosino, 2005). Participatory observation has essentially become a matter of interpersonal interaction. The researcher needs to participate experientially in the everyday activities of the group in order to come to some interpretive understanding of the meaning of activities and social rituals in the context. She will have to become part of the action at least for short periods of time in order to study the culture of a group of people (Henning *et al.*, 2004).

In Chapter 3 (see 3.3.1) a working definition for *culture* from a CHAT perspective was suggested for this study. The definition was informed by the work of Artiles and Dyson (2005) and Moloi and Henning (2007) and reads as follows:

> Culture is a cohesive system of shared motives, values, beliefs, (group) identities and interpretations of meanings of significant events and rules and prescribed roles, resulting from the common experiences of individuals in the school community over time. Culture thus mediates the actions and emotions of the school as cultural community.

For this study it is further important to note that the culture of a school is seen as principally residing in the consciousness of people who share a workplace such as Sunset Primary School. Cultural knowledge is not distinct from teachers' professional and practical knowledge, but it acts as a lens through which such knowledge is interpreted and which provides meaning to teachers' experiences (Maynard, 2001).

For the critical ethnographer to come to know the culture of a school, the culture should be understood from the point of view of members of the school. From a Marxist and critical perspective, school culture should be investigated by paying attention to the interaction between a group activity or individual agency and the constraining or oppressive effect of the school and other social structures. In this study the important affordances and constraints to teacher learning as presented by Sunset Primary School as activity system and interacting activity systems were investigated. Not all members of a school community necessarily have the awareness that culture resides in the consciousness of its members, since much cultural knowledge is implicit, tacit and assumed. A continuing issue for ethnographers remains how to reveal this kind of cultural knowledge (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994). This was also a problem in this study.

According to Thomas (1993) and Bow (2002) in Williamson (2006), there is not a single way of doing participatory observation as it comprises a flexible set of techniques for doing research and combines a number of methods of data collection such as interviewing, focus groups, observation and questionnaires. The ethnographer also has the flexibility to emphasise some of the methods over others, depending on the requirements and constraints of the research itself. Ethnography is thus flexible in terms of its methodology with researchers seeking to be totally open to the research setting and to the participants (Williamson, 2006). The collection of data is the one area where flexibility is the most vital, as no study can be better than the data collected (Thomas, 1993). According to Thomas (1993), the critical ethnographer needs to be alert to informant answers that are salient, contradictory, that challenge previous observations or that might indicate cover-ups or gaps. It involves difficult work to pursue incongruities, but they often lead to surprising information.

Ethnography as research design tends to be nonlinear and iterative with the various aspects of the research process interlinked and one influencing the other. Data collection and analysis can be undertaken throughout the research process (Williamson, 2006) as was the case in this study. Data was collected and analysed during the duration of the Index for Inclusion process and also after the formal termination of the project. Since my first meeting with the principal of Sunset Primary School on 22

July 2004 until my last formal visit on 1 December 2006, I was involved at the school on a regular basis. I also organised additional teacher training workshops for 2007 and 2008. My involvement mainly centred on building a relationship of trust, first with the coordinating team and later with the majority of the staff who chose to become part of the project, as well as on facilitating change by conducting and organising teacher training workshops. This demanded hard work, perseverance and a ‘bulldog mentality’ (as previously explained).

4.3.7.2 Observation and field notes

Field notes are kept as the written account of what the researcher observes (hears, sees and experiences) and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on data. The successful outcome of participatory observation relies on detailed, accurate and extensive field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). LeCompte and Preissle (1994) argue that qualitative research is based on observations in answer to the fundamental question: What is happening here? This question can be asked about practically anything. In this study teacher learning during a time of change was underscored and observations gave attention “to the unfolding of events in the natural flow of human activity” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994:142).

In writing on fieldwork in educational settings, Delamont (2002) deals with four aspects of gathering observational data: “What to look at”; “How to observe”; “Where and when to look” and “What to record”.

What the participatory observer is to look at is determined by the research topic and questions. With regard to ethnographic research this will involve observing the way of life of an identifiable group of people within a social system such as a school, and with regard to this study in particular, it was about observing for possible affordances and constraints with regard to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School as workplace. With regard to *how to observe,* Delamont (2002) quotes Wolcott (1981) who proposes four strategies for deciding how to observe: (1) observations by broad sweep, implying to look at practically everything; (2) observations of nothing in particular, indicating that when something unusual happens against the backdrop of the mundane it will force itself upon the researcher; (3) a strategy, where the participatory observer is particularly interested in spotting paradoxes; and (4) a strategy that implies searching for problems facing the group.

With regard to *where* and *when* to look, Delamont (2002) calls for systematic and reflexive decision-making that will once again depend on the research topic and questions. The general idea is to look at everything that can inform one’s study and can provide good research data. With regard to *what to record* it is suggested that one should record as unobtrusively as possible. Short notes can be made just to remind the ethnographer when she wants to record her observations in full. But the participatory observer can only capture what is available to her observation and this would be either limited or afforded by her current knowledge and understanding (Henning *et al.*, 2004). Gould (in Angrosino, 2005:743) concurs and emphasises that

> [n]o faith can be more misleading than an unquestioned personal conviction that the apparent testimony of one's eyes must provide a purely objective account, scarcely requiring any validation beyond the claim itself. Utterly unbiased observation must rank as a primary myth and shibboleth of science, for we can only see what fits into our mental space, and all description includes interpretation as well as sensory reporting.

Keeping field notes is a continuous process. Henning *et al.* (2004) point out that field notes should be captured as soon as possible. Field notes can help the observer to keep track of the development of the project and to remain aware of how she is influenced by the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

One of the secondary datasets consisted of meticulous notes of all the meetings and workshops conducted at Sunset Primary School. These notes were kept by the research assistant who concentrated on the activities that were conducted and the responses of the practitioners. My own notes were more reflective. They recorded the subjective side of the journey with the teachers. I mostly wrote about my feelings, ethical dilemmas and conflicts and my own frame of mind, but also from a critical stance about the hidden agendas and the barriers to teacher learning as caused by certain constraints in the school as activity system (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Regular project reports to UNESCO during the duration of the project also contributed to the processes of reflection and planning for new initiatives.

4.3.7.3 Group discussions

In the spirit of the more recent emphasis on collaborative and dialogical approaches in critical ethnography (Horner, 2004; Lofty, 2004) and in my role as interventionist, data was generated, among others, through collaborative group discussions with the coordinating team that was appointed by the school during the first phase of the Index for Inclusion process, as well as in collaboration with the majority of the staff members during later stages of the process. The coordinating team at Sunset Primary School that participated in the initial processes of data generation comprised of two male teachers as members of the management team, the learning support teacher and three other classroom teachers. The school principal was not officially part of the coordinating team but was represented by the deputy principal.

Data generated through collaborative group discussions was mostly employed to determine the existing assets of the school, as well as the barriers to the learning and participation of students, in order to identify priorities for transformation and to facilitate processes of change. According to Carspecken (1996), researcher-facilitated group discussions stimulate the production of 'dialogical' data, which is a distinctive type of data... Participants are given a voice in the research process through group discussions that invite them to talk about their feelings and life and, in the context of this study, about their workplace experiences. They are listened to, taken seriously and supported in the exploration of their practice. As interventionist I took on the role of a facilitator and constructed a supportive and safe environment that allowed the participants to explore issues with their own vocabulary, metaphors, and ideas (Carspecken, 1996). I found that when a group discussion was well facilitated, much was revealed, as indicated by Carspecken (1996). It occurred very frequently in my study that when a teacher found it difficult to articulate a particular cultural theme that he or she understood tacitly, the group of colleagues assisted in producing more powerful formulations through bouncing ideas (Carspecken, 1996). Dialogical data generated through group discussions was a rich source. All the workshops that were conducted also used a group discussion format. The different group discussions and workshops are indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Group discussions and workshops

Date:	Phase of Index for Inclusion process	Meeting with the:	Details of group discussions
19/08/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Defining inclusive education
13/10/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Developing a language for inclusion and discussion Education White Paper 6 of 2001
21/10/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Explaining the review framework and the dimensions
1/11/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Explaining each INDEX indicator
3/11/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Explaining the INDEX indicators and questions
11/11/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Working through the INDEX indicator questions: exploring existing knowledge
24/11/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Working through the INDEX indicator questions: exploring existing knowledge
25/11/2004	Phase One	Coordinating team	Working through the INDEX indicator questions: deepening the inquiry
22/02/2005	Phase Two	Coordinating team	Discussed the questionnaire results in general.
01/03/2005	Phase Two	Coordinating team	Reported and discussed as a team the results from the more structured part of the questionnaires.
06/04/2005	Phase Two	Coordinating team	Reported and discussed as a team the results from the open questions.
13/04/2005	Phase Three	Coordinating team	Identified tentative priorities for 2005 as part of an inclusive school development plan.
11/05/2005	Phase Three	Staff	Reported results from questionnaires and tentative priorities to the entire staff. Identified priorities in collaboration with the staff.
18/05/2005	Phase Four	Staff	Creating a shared language for inclusion in collaboration with entire staff
25/05/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Sunset Primary School in transition and shared leadership practices
31/05/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Preconditions for successful collaborative problem solving

Date:	Phase of Index for Inclusion process	Meeting with the:	Details of group discussions
14/06/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Collaborative problem solving: looking at a video
16/08/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Applying collaborative problem solving to bullying
30/08/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Applying collaborative problem solving to bullying (continued)
6/09/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Anti-bullying policy
13/09/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Anti-bullying goals
11/10/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Anti-bullying goals (continued)
25/10/2005	Phase Four (Training Workshop)	Staff	Constructivist approaches to student learning
10/05/2006	Additional engagement with school	Staff	Discussed priorities for 2006: workshops on reading and mathematics. As a group discussed a transcribed interview conducted with a successful teacher from another school to demonstrate how they could work collaboratively and learn from one another's practice.
14/06/2006	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	Continued working with the transcribed interview. Staff discussed more positive attempts at the direct teaching of values as part of life skills education. Consistency in the implementation of policies needed attention.
8/08/2006	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	A session on changing teaching practices to more effectively respond to learner diversity was facilitated. Used the UNESCO document (2004) "*Changing teaching practices: using curriculum differentiation to respond to student diversity*".
11-14/09/2006	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	Workshop presented by an expert on teaching Mathematics to junior grades. Workshop took place every day for two hours after the students had left for home.

Date:	Phase of Index for Inclusion process	Meeting with the:	Details of group discussions
7/10/2006	Additional engagement with the school	A group of 28 Grade 6 students who were identified as possible leaders for 2007	Interactive workshop on important values such as acceptance of one another, respect, collaboration and caring for one another. Role modelling was also explored in depth. Action plans were developed collaboratively. The researcher promised the students to take their tentative action plans back to the teachers.
2/11/2006	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	Gave feedback to staff on workshop with students. As the concept of an inclusive school community and students as important role-players in such a community was emphasised during the workshop with the students, the researcher explored this further with the teachers. It was important for the students to be acknowledged for the contribution that they could make to an inclusive school community. They wanted to work collaboratively with the staff in addressing barriers to learning such as bullying that was still a problem and the untidiness of the school buildings and grounds.
13-17/11/2006	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	Additional workshop presented by expert on teaching Mathematics to junior grades. Workshop took place every day for two hours after the students had left.
1/12/2006	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	The termination of the project was discussed after a short presentation on the school as a learning community. The inclusion of students as partners within such a community was emphasised. The teachers requested that the project should not be terminated. The research team had to make a decision in this respect.
18-22/06/2007	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	Workshop on reading support presented by an expert in the field. Workshop took place every day for two hours after the students had left for home.
11/10/2008	Additional engagement with the school	Staff	Workshop on challenging student behaviour presented by the researcher. Used the film *Freedom writers diary*.

4.3.7.4 Questionnaires

Although questionnaires are not the most recognised method of data collection in critical ethnographic studies, they can be employed should it be the choice of the ethnographer given the flexibility of participatory observation and ethnography as research genre (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994; Bow, 2002 in Williamson, 2006). As indicated in Section 4.3.6 questionnaires were used in the needs analysis phase (Phase 2) of the Index for Inclusion process. Three separate questionnaires for teachers, students and parents, as compiled by Forlin (2004), containing a generic set of questions based on the indicators of the Index for Inclusion and linked across all participating groups (parents, teachers and students), were employed to collect data to gain a reasonable understanding of the cultures, policies and practices at Sunset Primary School. (See Addendum A.) The three questionnaires were translated into Afrikaans (the language of instruction at Sunset Primary School and one of the 11 official languages in South Africa) and contextualised for the local school context. They were also computer formatted. The questionnaires were administered to the staff, parents and students from Grades 5 and 6. The respective questionnaires were completed by 20 staff members, 378 parents and 152 students. The teachers' and parents' completion of the questionnaires was done on a voluntary basis. The questionnaires recorded responses to items using a four-point Likert scale from 1 (definitely agree); 2 (agree to some extent); 3 (disagree); to 4 (need more information). Mean responses were calculated from 1 (definitely agree) to 3 (disagree) with a higher response indicating less agreement with an item. Questionnaires ranged from 21 items for students, 26 items for parents and 38 items for the staff of the school. All questionnaires included items pertaining to the cultures, policies and practices at Sunset Primary School (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2006).

Two open-ended questions were added to the closed-ended questions of the three questionnaires. The two open-ended questions asked the three groups of informants to name three things that they liked about Sunset Primary School and three things that they would like to change about the school. These questions generated a surprising wealth of data about the school and enriched the data generated by the closed-ended data considerably. The two open-ended questions were specifically designed to determine the informants' perceptions of Sunset Primary School with regard to the assets on the one hand, and possible barriers to learning and participation of all students on the other. The responses were thus coded accordingly. The data analysis of each group of informants was completed within-case before a cross-case analysis was undertaken to determine the main themes from both the quantitative and qualitative data. From the data generated by the open-ended questions it was possible to gain more insight from different perspectives into the complexities, assets and problems of the school and the local community in which Sunset Primary School was situated. The data richly contributed to the needs analysis phase and informed the next phases of the Index for Inclusion process (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2006).

Towards the end of 2005 a questionnaire for teachers with open questions was also employed during the review phase of the Index for Inclusion process. The questionnaire included 14 open questions with sub-questions. The teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire voluntarily and anonymously. Ten teachers completed the questionnaire (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Engelbrecht *et al*., 2006). (See Addendum B.)

4.3.7.5 Interviewing as a process of collaborative data construction

Interviewing as method of data construction is widely used within critical ethnography studies and is seen as one of the most common and powerful mediums through which we endeavour to understand other humans (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In critical ethnography, interviewing is "part technique, part ethics, part theory, part method, part intuition, part collaboration, and part openness to deep vulnerability" (Madison, 2005:35).

Two types of interviews were employed in this study: the individual interview and the focus group interview. Whilst group discussions formed the backbone of my work as interventionist at Sunset Primary School, as researcher I formally employed both individual and focus group interviews in trying to understand the processes of change in the school and also the affordances and constraints with regard to teacher learning. Interviewing occurred throughout the process of engagement at Sunset Primary School. I draw heavily on the contributions of Fontana and Frey (2005) and Henning *et al*. (2004) in my discussion on interviewing, as their ideas are very close to my own understanding of the process of interviewing which informed my research work at Sunset Primary School.

I realised from the beginning of my research engagement with the staff of Sunset Primary School that interviewing "is inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically, and contextually bound" and that "this boundedness refutes the whole tradition of the interview of gathering objective data to be used neutrally for scientific purposes" (Fontana & Frey, 2005:695). As critical ethnographers we should be concerned with the influences of subjectivity. The meaning of an action or experience cannot be devoid of the participants' subjectivity (Madison, 2005). Henning *et al*. (2004:60) also emphasise that "[w]e need to be able to 'decode' some of the *local meaning* - the way in which participants categorise and symbolise their interaction - if we want to get to the heart of the research matter."

Interviewing does not imply the neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers. According to Fontana and Frey (2005:696), the dialogical exchange between the researcher and the participant "leads to the creation of a collaborative effort called *the interview*". The emphasis here is on the active nature of this process: both the researcher and the participant are actively involved in constructing knowledge. Interviewing is thus not a neutral tool of data collection, but involves active interactions between two or sometimes more participants leading to negotiated and contextually based data (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Drawing on Holstein and Gubrium (1995), Fontana and Frey (2005) further argue for researchers to be reflexive about the *what* the interview accomplishes, in the sense of a richly mutually constructed data source, but also with regard to *how* the interview is accomplished and data as text is created. The researcher should thus also explore the actions involved in making "the communicative event of the interviewing happen" (Henning *et al*., 2004:57). As data is being constructed in interview talk, the researcher should be deeply aware of both the culture and the discourse that are in action when the participant is talking (Henning *et al*., 2004).

As can be deduced from the discussion up to this point, a more symmetrical positioning of the researcher and participant(s) is suggested. However, Henning *et al*. (2004) warn that the researcher is still the one that is accountable for the process of interviewing and that he or she needs to guide (not control) the procedural elements such as time and the depth of exploration of the topic under 'construction'. A more symmetrical positioning for researcher and participant thus implies that the researcher and participant are both allocated positions of honour in the process of collaborative knowledge construction without forfeiting the position of the researcher as inquirer, whilst the participant's part in the knowledge-constructing process is confirmed. I will first discuss the two interview types separately and then present a table listing both individual and focus group interviews conducted with informants at Sunset Primary School.

- **The individual interview**

Although the individual interviews conducted in this study were at times purposeful, by appointment in order not to disrupt the informants' working schedules, and were conducted by means of an interview schedule that was compiled before the interview, the interview often turned into a conversation with friends, given my prolonged stay at the school. These deviations from the interview schedule most often led to the construction of a richer data base. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) concur that even when an interview schedule is employed, a qualitative interview offers the researcher considerable leeway to follow a range of topics and gives the informant a chance to influence the content of the interview.

Qualitative interviews conducted in this study varied in the degree to which they were structured, as the style in use depended on particular research goals and the stage of the Index for Inclusion process. Some interviews, although relatively open-ended, were focused around particular topics and guided by some general questions. When the interview became even more open-ended the teachers played a stronger role in constructing the data. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) call this type of interview a guided conversation. According to Thomas (1993) one of the greatest skills of an ethnographic interviewer is the ability to be prepared to use probing questions effectively during interviewing to dig below surface appearances in order to reveal implicit assumptions and beliefs. Probing can enhance dialogue, but it requires patience and understanding and should be undertaken with respect (Madison, 2005). Interviewing requires flexibility and the explicit acknowledgement that the interviewee is the expert on his or her own perspectives, beliefs and activities or experiences. Good interviews can produce rich data filled with participants' own words that reveal important perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007)

- **The focus group interview**

The focus group interview has always been a key part of qualitative research and its use seems to be expanding (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). It can assist the researcher in better understanding how informants feel or think about an issue such as teacher learning *in situ* as phenomenon under discussion in the context of this study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). As data construction technique it relies on the systematic questioning of several participants simultaneously in either a formal or informal setting (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Focus groups usually consist of seven to ten participants and the researcher as facilitator (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) focus group interviews permit researchers to explore the nature and effects of ongoing social discourse in ways that are not possible through individual interviews or observations. Complex problems cannot be solved by individuals alone, but require the richness and complexity of group dynamics. Focus group interviewing allows for multiple perspectives to be explored and for researchers to see the complex ways in which people position themselves in relation to each other as they process questions and issues in a focused way (Heck, 2006; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). Focus groups are thus very useful in attempting to understand diversity as they can help the researcher to focus on the multiplicity of informants' experiences (De Vos *et al*., 2005).

Focus group interviewing generates large quantities of data from relatively large numbers of people in a relatively short time. Focus groups are fairly inexpensive to conduct and often produce rich and extensive data. They can also be stimulating and support recall within a non-threatening and permissive environment (De Vos *et al*., 2005; Fontana & Frey, 2005). Focus group interviewing can be used purposefully to reduce the authority of the researcher and to hand some authority over to the participants in order to 'own' the interview space (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). The purpose is to stimulate talk and to promote discussion on a subject that the informants might not be able to talk about so thoughtfully in an individual interview, as participants can stimulate each other to articulate their views or even to realise what their own views are (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The strength of numbers might make informants less reluctant to talk about their experiences (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). According to Fontana and Frey (2005), focus groups can vary considerably with regard to their purposes and may be structured or less structured. De Vos *et al*. (2005) contend that focus groups draw on three basic strengths fundamental to qualitative research: exploration and discovery, context and depth, and interpretation. Exploratory focus groups create a process of sharing and comparing and are thus designed to tap intersubjective meaning with depth and diversity with questions usually open-ended and unstructured (De Vos *et al*., 2005; Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Relative to individual interviews the focus group interviewer may experience problems to prevent participants from dominating the group. Furthermore, the interviewer should encourage the more passive informants to participate and needs to obtain responses from the entire group to ensure the fullest possible coverage of the subject under discussion (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Informants may feel self-conscious and it is then the researcher’s task to reassure and support them (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

In this study two focus group interviews were conducted with teachers at Sunset Primary School at different stages of my engagement at the school: one during the implementation of the project and the other after the termination of the Index for Inclusion process. The data generated was analysed with a view to understanding teacher learning resulting from the Index for Inclusion process. During the first focus group interview some of teachers were reluctant to share their views, which could be contributed to the teachers’ positioning within the school, as well as to the extent of previous engagement with me. At that stage of the research process I had spent more time with the coordinating group and they were also more inclined to share their perspectives than the others. As the interview progressed the others gradually joined the discussion and in the end the data richly contributed to the multiple data base.

- **Interviews and informants**

In Table 4.2 a list is provided of the type of interviews and the dates, as well as the informants implicated and the phase of the Index for Inclusion process during which the interviews were conducted. Interview schedules have been attached as addenda with regard to certain interviews. (See Addenda C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J,)

Table 4.3: Interviews conducted

Type of interview	Participant(s)	Date	Phase of Index for Inclusion process
Individual, unstructured	School principal	22 July 2004	First interview to meet with the gatekeeper
Individual, unstructured	School principal	10 February 2005	At the beginning of second year of the project: first phase of the Index for Inclusion process
Individual, unstructured	School principal	18 March 2005	Second phase of the Index for Inclusion process: finding out about the school
Individual unstructured	Learning support teacher	21 July 2005	Fourth phase of the Index for Inclusion process: implementing priorities
Individual, semi-structured	School principal	4 November 2005	Fifth phase of the Index for Inclusion process: reviewing the process
Individual, semi-structured	Deputy principal	7 November 2005	Fifth phase of the Index for Inclusion process: reviewing the process
Individual, semi-structured	Learning support teacher	15 November 2005	Fifth phase of the Index for Inclusion process: reviewing the process
Focus group interview, semi-structured	Five teachers: two teachers as members of the coordinating team and three teachers who joined the process at a later stage.	15 November 2005	Fifth phase of the Index for Inclusion process: reviewing the process
Individual interview, unstructured	Fourth year counselling student: after her practicum period of three months in Sunset Primary School	December 2006	After the formal termination of the project
Individual interview, unstructured	Learning support teacher	16 October 2008	Teacher learning was explored as an outcome of my engagement in the school
Individual interview, unstructured	A teacher	16 October 2008	Teacher learning was explored as an outcome of my engagement in the school
Focus group interview, unstructured	Five teachers	16 October 2008	Teacher learning was explored as an outcome of my engagement in the school
Two individual interviews	Two officials at the local Education District Office	March 2009	They were interviewed in order to verify some of the findings of the study

4.3.7.6 Documents as a source of data

Henning *et al*. (2004) contend that documents can be a valuable source of information and if they are available they should be included as sources of data as their omission can leave gaps unfilled with regard to the holistic picture of the phenomenon under investigation. Documents can be written, oral, visual or cultural artifacts. The strength of documents as data source lies with the fact that in many cases, except when the research design of a study asks of participants to keep journals, etc., they already exist and are readily available (Merriam, 2002). Hammersley and Atkinson (in Delamont, 2002) list several types of documents that may employed as sources of data: published sources about the research site; mass media sources; public documents inside the institution; semi-public documents such as minutes of meetings; semi-private documents such as students' written work designed for one teacher to be seen; private documents such as from the school principal to a parent; and documents that the researcher has asked for such as diaries or journals. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), documents can be used to thicken the description of the phenomenon under investigation, but it is important to note that the documents should be used in a manner that is naturalistic, inductive and true to the meaning construction for those who produce or use them. It is important to understand the context in which data has been produced, for without a deep understanding of the context, documents may not have much potential.

The selection of documents as data is done purposefully with the research questions in mind (Henning *et al*., 2004). Schools such as Sunset Primary School produce documents for specific kinds of consumption, which can lead to a profusion of written communication and files. These official documents may include minutes from meetings, newsletters, policy documents, students' records and news releases, amongst others. Official documents can be used for internal and/or external communication. Internal documents are circulated within a school system and follow the hierarchical course, from the central office to teachers and staff. They seldom flow the opposite way. Documents produced for external communication can be, amongst others, yearbooks, notes sent to the parents via the students, public statements of philosophy indicating the vision, mission and creed of the school, newsletters. Usually, it is easy for the researcher to access external and even internal documents, depending on the school as site of research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

In this study, apart from the documents collected from the school, a varied collection of documents were constructed during the period of research. These include regular semester research reports to UNESCO and minutes of meetings for the research and project teams. Minutes of the meetings and all the research reports had been kept and were available for use in this study.

Several documents relating to the running of the school were collected. Examples of such documents are the 2006 year plan, and documents presenting the school's vision, mission and creed, as well as their bullying policy that had been documented as a result of a workshop whilst working at priorities set with the staff during Phase 4 of the Index for Inclusion process. A document compiled to commemorate the school's ninetieth anniversary was also accessed. A video was made of a puppet theatre put together by the staff on the negative effects of bullying on the victims.

The corpus of raw material thus included primary and secondary datasets collected by observations and indicated in field notes, data generated through group discussions, data collected with the help of questionnaires, individual and focus group interviews and data from documents.

4.3.8 Data analysis

Research material was collected and analysed during the duration of the UNESCO project at the school and throughout my continued engagement at Sunset Primary School after the formal termination of the project. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1994), the cognitive processes involved in recursive analysis entail looking at things from a position of tentativeness and of not knowing, and with a keen sense of really wanting to understand the data.

In CHAT the inductive process of data generation and analysis that is generally an important principle of qualitative research is replaced by an abductive process, implying a movement between an inductive and deductive process of knowledge creation (Foley, 2002; Rautkorpi, n.d.). In my engagement with the secondary data collected during the duration of the project and the primary data generated after the termination of the project, I worked from an inductive stance and a position of tentativeness as a first phase of data analysis. I wanted the data to speak to me on teacher learning during a time of change (Holliday, 2007).

As indicated in Chapter 1 (see 1.4.3), data generated by the questionnaires with closed-ended questions at the initial stages of the research project at Sunset Primary School was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics, produced by SPSS 11, a computer software option available for use in quantitative data analysis (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Engelbrecht *et al*., 2006). As explained before, the statistics were only applied to determine mean responses in order to identify broad themes with regard to prevailing cultures, policies and practices at Sunset Primary School to tie in with the choice of global analysis as tool for data analysis and presentation for this study (Henning *et al*., 2004). All the other data, where applicable, was transcribed verbatim to have it in text format. The corpus of raw material was in Afrikaans as this is the language of preference in the local community and schools and it was decided to translate the text into English where it was essential to quote it in the dissertation.

As indicated in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, global analysis was the primary method of primary and secondary data analysis chosen for this particular study. Although Holliday (2007) does not call his method of data analysis ‘global analysis’, it resonates with Henning *et al.*’s (2004) version of global analysis. Holliday (2007:94) favours “a purely thematic approach in which all the data is taken holistically and rearranged under themes which emerge as running through its totality”. The main themes of the data are searched for by intensive reading and by studying the corpus of raw data (Holliday, 2007). The data is, however, not disassembled or broken down into segments to be reassembled in a new way (Henning *et al.*, 2004). The text is thoroughly studied, staying close to the data, whilst the researcher obtains an overview of the thematic range of the text and searches for “meaningful patterns and themes that connect” (Henning *et al.*, 2004:110). By linking the data into meaningful themes and patterns the researcher is reformatting the data and putting it together in a new way. The data is thus interpreted, organised and transformed.

Holliday (2007) explains the process through which the researcher journeys from data collection to writing up the findings in several steps. The corpus of raw data already takes the researcher at least one step away from the lived experiences of the participants and can be seen as the first act of interpretation, despite the fact that the data is still ‘unworked’ by the researcher. It was also important to acknowledge that the narrative of Sunset Primary School will certainly extend far beyond any research attempt (Holliday, 2007).

As a second step the data is analysed and organised. The search is for natural divisions and then determining the character of each division. During this step it is important that the researcher should allow for a true dialogue between the data and herself. Principles of emergence and submission need to be applied to enable the data to take on a life of its own. The researcher is the designer of the research process and determines the central argument of the study as reflected in the research questions, but has to “submit herself to emerging patterns of data and be free to engage strategically and creatively with the complexities of realities that go beyond her initial design” (Holliday, 2007:93). These ‘realities’ may be counter to or hidden by the dominant concerns of the researcher. With this in mind the researcher should actively try for a balance between data as the major source and her personal process of knowledge construction, between on the one hand the researcher’s personal influence and on the other hand a true and moral desire to be as faithful and sincere as possible to what was found in the research setting.

The third step entails the creation of themes in finding headings that suit the natural divisions found in the data and determining how far the headings help to make further sense of the data. The themes and patterns identified often become the organising logic of the discussion to follow (Henning *et al.*, 2004). According to Holliday (2007) a thematic organisation of data may require a complete break from the chronology of how the data was collected. The written study itself takes on an agency of its own; its own story and argument. It is important to note that the story does not equal the reality of the lived experiences of the research participants as embedded in their contexts and cultures. It is a product that is completely removed from the original experiences and perceptions on which it is based (Holiday, 2007).

After the broad themes and patterns were derived from the corpus of data, the opportunity arrived for bringing in specific types of global analysis tool (Henning *et al.*, 2004). From the data that was organised in a new way, an ethnographic narrative was composed to tell the story of the collective learning activity of the teachers of Sunset Primary School during a time of change induced by means of the Index for Inclusion as a tool. Special attention was given to the constraints and affordances at the different levels as identified in the research questions. The deductive facet of the abductive process as suggested by CHAT was now invoked in using the mediational structure of an activity system created by Engeström to lend structure to the ethnographic narrative.

Worthen and Berry (2006) explain their use of Engeström's mediational model by invoking Freire's (1992) use of abstractions in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which resonates with the abductive process of knowledge creation integral to CHAT as described by Foley (2002) and Rautkorpi (n.d.). Freire (1992:95, in Worthen & Berry, 2006:125) explains this process as follows:

> In the event, however, that men perceive reality as dense, impenetrable, and enveloping, it is indispensable to proceed with the investigation by means of abstraction. This method does not involve reducing the concrete to the abstract (which would signify the negation of its dialectical nature) but rather maintaining both elements as opposites which interrelate dialectically in the act of reflection.

In the context of this study it was implied that the Engeström model, as an abstraction, could serve as a code that was decoded by moving back and forth between the themes as derived from the data (during the process of global and inductive analysis) and the model. The critical ethnographic narrative was thus told by employing the Engeström model in the hope that the outcome of this dialectical process was, in the words of Freire as quoted in Worthen and Berry (2006:125), "the supersedence of the abstraction by the critical perception of the concrete, which has already ceased to be a dense, impenetrable reality".

As a further phase of data analysis and presentation, pen sketches of two individual teachers were composed to trace their unique processes of identity learning since their first engagement with the Index for Inclusion process in 2004 up until the present. The pen sketches also served as a way of looking at two individual learning trajectories in order to address the critique that is levelled against Engeström that he neglects the subjective problematic in change initiatives (Avis, 2007; Langemeyer, 2006). In Chapter 3 I argued that the individual learner was an important factor to consider with regard to workplace learning and one of the research questions posits that certain features from the individual plane can significantly impact on teacher learning in the school as workplace. The data was employed to paint a portrait of each of the participants, as well as to see the story behind the image. In this study the emphasis was on the story as composed from the data. The story structure was thus derived from the data and told by the researcher as an organising mechanism. The participants themselves never intended the information as a story (Henning *et al*., 2004).

In the discussion of the findings, the critical ethnographic narrative and the pen sketches of the teachers will be examined in light of the research questions and the relevant literature. The critical lens was applied in the discussion of the data. Thomas (1993) asserts that the analytical discourse within critical ethnography aims to unshackle comfortable ways of viewing the world. This is accomplished by remembering that the story is that of the participants, and that the researcher translates their narrative into a conceptual and theoretical story of her own.

The process of data analysis will be explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.4 VALIDATION OF THE INQUIRY

In qualitative research the basic principles of validity and reliability are applied differently from those in quantitative research (Neuman, 2006). Many writers on the topic of qualitative research argue that validity and reliability should be considered from a perspective matching the philosophical assumptions fundamental to the paradigm and that the concepts should be named differently (Merriam, 1998). Drawing on Kvale (2002), Henning *et al.* (2004) accept this challenge and argue for a trio of craftsmanship, open communication and action to ensure validity in a research study, whilst also making the claim that reliability and generalisability are already subsumed in the trio.

In ensuring validity the researcher guarantees the truthfulness of the research (Neuman, 2006). According to Henning *et al.* (2004), the truthfulness of a research study is in the first place enhanced by good craftsmanship which means precision throughout the research process. Evidence has to be filed throughout the research process to ensure the quality of the outcome of the study. I tried to accomplish this by making known my own social and cultural position in Chapter 1. In Chapters 2 and 3 I engaged with the academic discourses relevant to the study and indicated my own positioning in these by framing my research study within an inclusive perspective on education and within CHAT as a theoretical framework to study teacher learning as a central activity under investigation. In Chapter 4 I aligned my way of working with my theoretical framework within a critical ethnographic research genre and the research questions and tried to explain in more detail the research process through which the data was generated that informed the findings of this study. Chapter 4 also provided information on how the data was analysed and the organising logic for the presentation of the data in Chapter 5.In Chapter 5 I discussed my way of working with the data as openly and transparent as possible. In the inductive phase of data analysis I tried to approach the data from a position of tentativeness and submitted myself to the data to enable the data to take on a life of its own (Holliday, 2007). The deductive phase of data analysis resulted in an ethnographic narrative and pen sketches of the learning trajectory of two teachers. In Chapter 6 I brought the threads together in a critical discussion of the findings of the study. The analysis was also lifted away from the useful detail of the micro-processes in an effort to discuss the significance and implications of the findings for research in school change and teacher learning. Throughout the research process I tried to ensure the quality of the study by reading widely and deeply to gain sufficient knowledge of the field of inquiry, the methodology and the philosophy of social science (Henning *et al.*, 2004).

Henning *et al.* (2004) argue for open communication as validity. One way of accomplishing this is by asking the research participants about the data and interpretations. Merriam (1998:204) explains that member checks are done by "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible". It is suggested that these checks should take place as a continuous practice throughout the study. In this inquiry data and tentative interpretations were checked with research participants at different intervals during my prolonged engagement with them. For instance, this happened at the end of the second phase of the Index for Inclusion process when the data generated by way of the questionnaires were taken back to the participants in order to formulate realistic priorities for change and again in the evaluation phase of the process. Later the data accumulated during the duration of the project was once again checked with the members in order to validate my own interpretations of certain aspects of their lived experiences. My promoter was the project leader of the UNESCO-funded project and was therefore well placed to verify my representation of the reality of Sunset Primary School (Henning *et al.*, 2004) and to act as a first peer examiner of my work (Merriam, 1998).

Taking action is the last of the trio and of key importance when conducting a qualitative study as a form of critical analysis aimed at social and political change (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002:548), "[t]he 'critical' nature of critical theory flows from a commitment to go beyond just studying society for the sake of increased understanding". Throughout this study the intention to work collaborative and in a participatory manner in ways that enable those involved to better understand their own situations and support future action aimed at political change was unequivocally stated (Patton, 2002). In my engagement with the staff of Sunset Primary School the overriding agenda was that of identifying the potential and building the capacity of those involved to take action to build their school into one that would be receptive of diversity in all its forms.

According to Wardekker (2000), in CHAT, learning and the resulting change are both the objectives of the research endeavour. In an attempt to develop criteria for studies conducted from a CHAT perspective, Wardekker (2000) further accentuates that the aim of such research is not purely to change a given practice, but for the changes to endure beyond the limits set for a particular research project. According to him the new practices should become part of their zone of actual development

(Wardekker, 2000), which implies that sustainability is a key criterion for projects conducted from CHAT as framework. In my work at Sunset Primary School sustainability, in the sense of the staff accepting ownership of the process of ‘moving’ the school to become more inclusive, was on the table right from the launching of the project in their school. They were invited to participate in the Index for Inclusion process as collaborators with the eventual outcome of taking the process further after the termination of the project. In the presentation and discussion of the findings of this study the sustainability of the project at Sunset Primary School will receive attention.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THIS INQUIRY

As indicated in Chapter 1 the practical implications of the four guiding principles for ethical research as highlighted in Wassenaar (2006) will be further explored here in their applicability to this study. To recapitulate briefly: the four guiding principles are autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice. The last specifically requires that research participants should be treated with fairness and equity during all the stages of research.

Wassenaar (2006) draws on a framework published by Emanuel, Wendler, Killen and Grady (2004) that embeds the four guiding principles mentioned above and their operational implications. This framework for ethical research, which was specifically developed for research conducted within the context of developing countries, is based on eight practical principles with several operational benchmarks. The eight practical principles are the following: collaborative partnership, social value, scientific validity, fair selection of study population, favourable risk/benefit ration, independent ethical review, informed consent and ongoing respect for research participants and study communities. All of the eight principles are allocated the same importance but not all of them will be applicable to every research study. Wassenaar (2006) adapted the framework for social science research. The principles will now be discussed as relevant to this study.

4.5.1 Collaborative partnership

The principle of collaborative partnership requires that research should be conducted in collaboration with research participants and that it should be driven by their needs and priorities. The Index for Inclusion framework is specifically developed as a way of improving schools according to inclusive values in a way that builds collaborative relationships and improvement in the learning and teaching environment. The suggested way to accomplish improvement in the school is collaborative inquiry. In this study I acted as a critical friend in a collaborative partnership with the staff of Sunset Primary School in order to support the Index for Inclusion process in the school. Priorities for improvement were determined in partnership with them and support was rendered in accordance with their needs.

This principle also requires the researcher to be sensitive to the values, cultural traditions and practices of the community. In Chapter 1 of this research report I declared my own social and cultural position and throughout my engagement with the staff and in writing this research report I tried to remain sensitive to their traditions and practices.

4.5.2 Social value

The research should address questions that are valuable to society or particular communities (Wassenaar, 2006). This research study engaged with the challenge of teacher learning for inclusion. Inclusion in education is about "an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students" and "about being recognised, accepted and valued for oneself" (Booth & Ainscow, 2002:3). Throughout my engagement at Sunset Primary School I tried to 'practise what I preach'. The entire staff was invited to participate and the choice of a few of the staff not to become involved was also respected. The outcome that was pursued was to learn how to better accommodate student diversity at Sunset Primary School.

4.5.3 Scientific validity

Wassenaar (2006:70) asserts that "[p]oor science is unethical. … The design, methodology, and data analysis applied in the study should be rigorous, justifiable, and feasible, and lead to valid answers to research questions." This chapter in my study was dedicated to describing and defending my research genre (critical ethnography), methodology (qualitative research) and methods of data analysis (global analysis) in order to submit it to the scrutiny of the research community. The subsequent chapters will illuminate the research findings in such a way that it would be possible to follow the 'audit trail' (Merriam, 1998) in order to determine the scientific value of the study.

4.5.4 Fair selection of participants

The staff at Sunset Primary School was selected as research participants for this particular study. This school was one of three research schools previously participating in a UNESCO-funded project. UNESCO advised that schools should be selected that were seen as historically disadvantaged by the apartheid system and that needed additional support in implementing inclusive education. The original three research schools were suggested by the two representatives from the Western Cape Education District Office who were active members of the project team from the beginning. The three schools declared themselves willing to participate in the research project. The staff of Sunset Primary School was thus the ones bearing the burden of the research, but were also the ones (together with their students) most likely to benefit from the outcomes of the research (Wassenaar, 2006).

4.5.5 Favourable risk/benefit ratio

Wassenaar (2006:71) contends that "[r]esearchers should carefully identify all the possible risks, harms, and 'costs' of the research to the participants, and specify means to minimize such risks and costs so that the risk/benefit ratio is favourable". Although this study was conducted from a critical perspective and specifically from the troublesome observation that it seemed as if the outcomes of the project did not measure up the effort that went into processes to facilitate teacher learning at the school, the study was carefully designed to look at both the affordances and the constraints that informed teacher learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process. It was hoped that the constraints would be identified in order to address them more effectively, but also to experience the joy of finding positive outcomes possibly overlooked and to strengthen these. In this way the study aimed to ensure that it was of benefit to the research participants and the school

4.5.6 Independent ethical review

The UNESCO-funded project was not formally subjected to the review of a university ethics committee, but approved as ethically acceptable by the Western Cape Education Department.

4.5.7 Informed consent

The four standard components of consent are (1) provision of appropriate information, (2) participants' competence and understanding, (3) voluntary participating and the freedom to decline participation or to withdraw from the study, and (4) the formalisation of consent in writing (Wassenaar, 2006).

Before the UNESCO-funded project was launched in the three schools, permission was procured from the Western Cape Education Department to conduct the research in the schools. The two representatives from the Education District Office were part of the project team from the beginning, and they suggested the three research schools and made first contact with the school principals. The principals were provided with all the necessary information on the project and they were allowed time and opportunity to share the information with their staff before finally deciding to participate in the project. Once the project started in the schools, the staff was allowed the choice to participate or to decline participation.

The staff of Sunset Primary was formally approached to become the research school for my study and were informed about the particular aims of my specific research study. Apart from the consent form providing all the relevant information, a PowerPoint presentation was also made to clarify the research questions and my reasons for the study. All the informants signed the consent form voluntarily.

4.5.8 Ongoing respect for participants and study communities

The principle of ongoing respect for participants and study communities requires that the participants should be treated with respect, that their individual information remains confidential and that the communities are not identifiable from the research report. In this study pseudonyms were used for the school and the participants implicated in the report.

I have kept in touch with the teachers from Sunset Primary School since the formal termination of the project and several additional workshops as requested by the staff have been conducted since the termination of the project. Students from our department at Stellenbosch University were also involved in the school for two consecutive years in order to further support the school with learning support.

4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter (Chapter 4) described my research design and methodology of choice to address the research questions guiding this investigation. By employing a critical ethnographic design and multiple methods I tried to make the familiar unfamiliar in an attempt to capture, by way of observation, documentation and the words and narratives of the research participants, their activities and experiences with regard to their learning processes during a time of change. I particularly wanted to understand the constraints and affordances impacting on teacher learning from within a school and local community, as well as those from the macro social and educational system. I also surmised that personal factors might contribute to either afford or constraint collective and individual learning processes in order to move a school to become more inclusive of diversity in all its manifestations. I hoped that a more critical stance would allow me to get to the essence of teachers' learning activities and experiences. In the next chapter I will explain the processes of data analysis in more detail and present my data as an ethnographic narrative, employing both the inductive and deductive processes of data analysis. By composing two pen sketches of teachers, I hoped to address the subjective problematic in change initiatives in the work of Engeström.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTING THE FINDINGS IN THEMES AND PATTERNS, IN AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STORY AND IN PEN SKETCHES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I first outline the steps involved in the various data analysis processes of this investigation and show how I worked with the data (Holliday, 2007) to arrive at the results. As explained before, cultural-historical activity theory CHAT prefers an abductive process of data analysis which implies a movement between an inductive and deductive process of knowledge creation (Foley, 2002; Rautkorpi, n.d.). To fit this type of knowledge creation, global analysis was chosen as primary method of data analysis for this particular study. Both primary and secondary data was analysed in an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the constraints and affordances for teacher learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process as change initiative at Sunset Primary School.

During the first phase of analysis raw data was approached from an inductive stance and a position of tentativeness. As suggested, principles of *emergence in the data* and *submission to the data* were applied to enable the data to take on a life of its own (Holliday, 2007). The corpus of raw data was taken holistically and rearranged under themes which emerged throughout the data sets. Meaningful patterns and themes were searched for by intensive reading and studying of all the data sets, whilst staying close to the data. By linking the data into meaningful themes and patterns the researcher reformats the data and puts it together in a new way. In this way the data is interpreted, organised and transformed (Henning *et al*., 2004; Holliday, 2007). The findings from the first phase will be presented in the form of broad themes and patterns regarding affordances and constraints to teacher learning.

During the second phase of data analysis the broad themes and patterns were used to create an ethnographic story of the collective learning processes and the teachers at Sunset Primary School. Here the deductive facet of the abductive process was invoked by using the mediational structure of an activity system created by Engeström to lend structure to the ethnographic narrative. The data was further employed to compile pen sketches of the learning trajectories of two teachers as one of the research question posited that certain features from the individual plane can significantly impact on teacher learning in the school as workplace.

In Table 5.1 the data sets explored in this chapter are listed with an indication of whether the data set was primary or secondary, together with the date(s) of data collection/generation and the phase of the Index for Inclusion process (where applicable) during which the data collection/generation took place.

Table 5.1: Data sets employed in inquiry

Number of data set	Title of data set	Primary/secondary	Phase and dates of data generation or collection
1	Closed questions from questionnaires	Secondary	During the second phase of the Index for Inclusion process The second semester of 2004
2	Open questions from questionnaires	Secondary	During the second phase of the Index for Inclusion process The second semester of 2004
3	Field notes from group discussions with coordinating group	Secondary	During the first and second phases of the Index for Inclusion process. From August 2004 to April 2005
4	Transcribed data from interviews with principal and learning support teacher	Secondary	The first four phases of the Index for Inclusion process From July 2004 to July 2005
5	Open questions from the evaluation after the implementation of five phases of Index for Inclusion	Secondary	The fifth and evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process November 2005
6	Individual interview with principal of Sunset Primary School	Primary	The fifth and evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process 4 November 2005
7	Individual interviews with deputy principal and learning support teacher and focus group interview with teachers during evaluation phase	Primary	The fifth and evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process 7 to 15 November 2005
8	Individual interview with student doing her practicum training as school counsellor at school	Primary	December 2007
9	Focus group interview with teachers and individual interviews with two teachers	Primary	November 2008

Broad themes and patterns pertaining to teacher learning as derived from each data set generated by the specific method of data generation will inform the first part of the exposition of the data. As far as possible the data sets will be presented chronologically.

5.2 NEEDS ANALYSIS PHASE

5.2.1 Introduction

The first three data sets covered the needs analysis phase. Data sets one and two included the data from questionnaires completed by teachers, parents and students in Grades 6 and 7 early in our engagement at Sunset Primary School and specifically during the second phase of the Index for Inclusion process. (See Addendum A.) These data sets originally provided valuable insights into the school community's stance with regard to inclusive cultures, policies and practices. The findings from the questionnaires also informed priorities for change (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Engelbrecht et al., 2006). Within the context of my study the two separate data sets of descriptive statistics and qualitative data derived from the closed and open questions respectively, allowed for a chance to re-engage with secondary data to identify broad themes and patterns highlighting potential affordances, constraints and priorities for teacher learning at the onset of the research process.

The themes from the closed questions will be presented first, followed by the themes derived from the open questions. The third data set was compiled from the field notes from group discussions with the coordinating group to determine priorities for change.

5.2.2 Questionnaires from the needs analysis phase: Data sets one and two

5.2.2.1 Data set one: Closed questions from questionnaires

From the available descriptive statistics on the closed questions from the three questionnaires, I compiled a table indicating the affordances and constraints with regard to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. These patterns in the form of these are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Themes indicating affordances and constraints derived from closed questions

Affordances	Constraints
The staff *aspires* to make the school a safe, happy and welcoming place where all students are valued	Parental and community collaboration *should be given* attention
The staff *makes* an effort to get students to behave and not to discriminate against each other or bully each other	Students among themselves, staff and students, and staff among themselves *do not show* respect for or *collaborate* with one another and this results in respectively bullying, challenging student behaviour; and conflict and dispute among the staff
Teachers *strive* to employ various good teaching practices to ensure quality learning for all students	The staff *experiences* difficulty in addressing student diversity meaningfully
	The school *does not seek* to make its buildings physically accessible to all

5.2.2.2 Data set two: Open questions from questionnaires

As explained before, two open questions were added to the questionnaire asking participants to list ‘three things that they like about the school’ and ‘three things that they would like to change about the school’ (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2006). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2006:124) indicated that “these questions generated a surprising wealth of data enriching the case study of each school considerably”. With regard to Sunset Primary School the responses to the open questions contributed to a better understanding of the school and of the affordances and constraints to teacher learning. It was possible to draw certain broad themes on potential affordances and constraints to teacher learning as evident from the data which is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Themes indicating affordances and constraints derived from open questions

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
School in general, management and transport	• Situated in rural town with beautiful surroundings and strong communal ties • 'Generation school': parents also attended school • Safe school: rules and no weapons or drugs allowed on premises	• School policies are not in place • Financial and administrative systems are in disarray • Some parents feel that the school fees are too high and ask for transparency with regard to financial matters at the school • Principal should be at school on a more regular basis • School has a temporary structure: needs a permanent structure • School grounds and buildings are not well maintained • Classrooms and toilets dirty: caretakers are not doing a good job • Needs paving outside classrooms to keep out the dust • Needs a school hall • Library is not well-stocked • Computers are outdated and not in use • New desks in classrooms sorely needed • Under-developed school grounds should be developed to give students a bigger area to play in • The school is in need of netball courts, a soccer field and a swimming pool in order to give students a wider choice of sport activities • The school has a major problem with vandalism • Too few buses to transport students from the farms - full buses result in unacceptable student behaviour
Staff	• Prepared to work hard • Years of experience • Busy upgrading qualifications • Can work as a team if they have to organise school functions • Under-utilised staff potential can be seen as a positive	• Staff members are negative and poorly motivated, do not respect each other and do not collaborate • Unequal workload • Unequal treatment of students, as well as labelling and discrimination • School has disciplinary problems which need attention desperately • Staff members misuse corporal punishment and verbally abuse students • Students are kept after school for punishment and are not safe when walking home • Smoking is a problem among students - senior staff not positive role models • Staff should work at establishing a relationship of mutual trust with students • Supervision on school grounds is lacking • Students' voices silenced - they need a say in changes at the school

Theme	**Affordances**	**Constraints**
Students and their behaviour	• Feeding scheme for poor students • Opportunities to participate in sport and cultural activities: holistic development of students • Transport students home after sport meetings	• Students show no pride in the school. • Learning culture is absent • Motivational problems - no ambition to succeed and excel • Challenging student behaviour and bullying need addressing (One of the students remarked in jest that he did not need television any more as there were enough fights at school to watch.) • Unsuitable behaviour includes swearing, disrespect for teachers and each other, discrimination and name-calling, littering, aggression and fighting, graffiti on walls and desks, stealing, under-performance in school work, as well as unchallenged absence from school • Not enough students participate in sport activities - more extra-mural activities are needed • Students do not appreciate the food provided by the feeding scheme
Teaching for learning	• Academic school: school work comes first • Try to support the learning of all students • Try to control challenging student behaviour and bullying • Try to develop students holistically	• Student diversity should be addressed and unique learning abilities acknowledged • Students under-perform academically and teachers should make the work more challenging and have higher expectations of students • Some students need extra classes and more support • Some parents want special classes back but it is not a very strong theme • Too much time wasted during the day that could be spent on academic work • Students need to be motivated to engage with academic work • In pre-primary classes more academic preparation should be undertaken • Teacher should be appointed for computer classes • Physical education should be presented as part of the curriculum
Parental and community collaboration	• Parents appreciate certain teachers that uphold good relationships with parents • Some parents invited to participate in school functions • Parent meetings organised and parents can also organise to see teachers individually • Community members are allowed to use school's facilities for their functions	• School has to reach out more to parents, but parents should also be more committed • Parents are not involved in or supportive of the learning process of their children • Parents need training to support the teachers more meaningfully with the learning of their children (according to teachers) • Attendance and collaboration at school functions should be better - some parents contribute a lot whilst others are not involved • Parents do not pay school fees

5.2.3 Data set three: Field notes from group discussions with coordinating group

During the first and second phases of the Index for Inclusion process group discussions with the coordinating group generated further data that was captured in field notes and could be re-investigated in order to identify affordances and constraints to teacher learning. The findings from the field notes allowed for the same themes to be employed as in Section 4.2.1.2 identifying both the affordances and constraints to teacher learning. These are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Themes and short summaries indicating affordances and constraints derived from field notes (group discussions with coordinating group)

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
School in general and school management	• There is hope for the school despite many things that need attention	• Discontent and a power struggle in the school • Gender issues • School leadership problematic: principal not present at meetings of coordinating team • School policies in disarray and not all on paper as expected by WCED • School has a crisis management style • School development plan has been compiled but has gone missing • School does not promote inclusivity
Staff	• The majority of the staff are involved in further studies • They acknowledge that they possess certain skills and knowledge that they can share. • Teachers from the Foundation Phase do collaborate	• Staff is negative • Have given up hope – have withdrawn and not prepared to become involved • Hierarchy and division • Their expertise is not utilised • Teachers do not feel appreciated • Staff appointments and promotions not fair • Teachers often blame teachers from previous grades for students' lack of progress • The secondary school blames the primary school for sending them students that are not up to standard: number of students failing Grade 8 is high • No collaboration across boundaries: general lack of collaboration and no team spirit • Certain teachers bully students • Currently no platform for staff development activities • Staff does not easily share expertise
Students and their behaviour	• Students do have a code of conduct • The school tries to address bullying and aggressive behaviour	• Challenging and unsuitable student behaviour, bullying and emotional problems on the increase • Students lack social skills • Especially students experiencing learning difficulties react with challenging behaviour • Staff experience problems to address student behaviour • Lack of preventative approach to behaviour management • Some students left school due to bullying

Theme	**Affordances**	**Constraints**
		• Culture of competition and envious of others' success. • Students do not always feel appreciated • Not enough students participate in sport and cultural activities at school • Labelling of peers occurs: those that struggle to learn, those making use of the feeding scheme and those who are different from the rest • Lacks a platform for teachers and students to discuss problems with one another - not enough trust and collaboration between the two groups
Teaching for learning	• Teachers have the necessary awareness of barriers to learning and participation • Coordinating team members have come to understand that learning support was meant for all students, also those who are gifted - there are students that can be seen as gifted in the school • They started a prize-giving ceremony recently where they want to acknowledge academic excellence but also other positive qualities of students • The services of a full-time learning support teacher is at the disposal of the school	• Learning culture is absent in school • Teachers have no knowledge of gifted education • Find it challenging to plan for student diversity - lack of time and knowledge • Student progress is seldom acknowledged and celebrated • Learning support is a problem in school - not enough is done to alleviate barriers • Pull-out system of support is currently in use - learning support teacher. • No teacher to manage library or computer room - students receive no training in computer science • Students not used as resources in the school or classroom: lack of knowledge on teachers' side • Students with isiXhosa as home language must be prepared to learn through Afrikaans as language of instruction in the classroom: some left school
Parental and community collaboration	• Certain communal activities in school such as art classes as an extra-mural activity • Community helps with feeding scheme	• Parental involvement in coordinating group was problematic – no representation from parent body • Lack of collaboration between teachers and parents • Parents not invited as resources into the school • School needs help from parents to address student behaviour • Teachers do not visit parents regularly • A lot of violence in households in the town - also prominent in the school- • Community involvement is lacking school does not draw on resources of community • Close-knit community – not very accepting of outsiders – students and teachers alike experience this

5.3 DATA SET FOUR: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPAL AND LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER FROM JULY 2004 TO JULY 2005

During the implementation of the first four phases of the Index for Inclusion process individual interviews were conducted with the school principal and learning support teacher at Sunset Primary School. (See Addenda C and D.) This secondary data set allowed for a re-investigation of the transcribed interviews focusing on possible affordances and constraints to teacher learning. Several themes resulted from the exploration of data set four. These themes and a short summary of each theme identifying both the affordances and constraints to teacher learning are presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Themes and short summaries indicating affordances and constraints derived from individual interviews with school principal and learning support teacher

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
Leadership	• Principal has theoretical knowledge on good leadership	• Principal not involved in Index for Inclusion process • Teaching not the first choice of career for principal: loftier ambitions • Status and power important to principal - at least a certain amount of power and status associated with position of principal • Principal has top-down leadership style: everything should be on his terms; others are to blame; self-centred and emotional; manipulative • Deputy principal cannot control staff **(perception of principal)** • Misuse of resources **(perception of learning support official)** • School does not start on time: planning, organisation and consistency need attention **(perception of learning support official)**
Staff	• The majority of the staff including the principal are currently upgrading their qualifications at nearby universities	• Low morale • Lack of trust and support between principal and staff; Index for Inclusion is contributing to this **(perception of principal)** • Staff not prepared to collaborate and contribute **(perception of principal)** • Staff not prepared to voice their opinions - may be due to the principal using it against them **(perception of principal)** • Lack of knowledge to address diverse learning needs of students, behaviour problems such as bullying • Lack of resources and large classes are barriers to teaching • Corporal punishment is still in use • Teachers are not prepared to share expertise
Students		• Unmotivated • Lack of learning culture in school • Lack of parental input in children's learning contributes to the low motivation and lack of learning culture • Students do not make good progress • Students with emotional and learning challenges in school due to neglect, poverty and alcohol abuse
Parental involvement		• Parents are not involved in the school • Governing body does not support the school and motivate parents to become

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
		involved in the school **(perception of principal)** • Governing body wanted to develop sport and playgrounds for the students, but it was not supported by principal **(perception of learning support teacher)**
Transformation in education		• Came as a shock for teachers • Process of change was not adequately supported • Existing skills and knowledge not acknowledged
Learning support	• The learning support teacher is supported by the officials from the Education District Team: receives training and support material from them on a regular basis • Learning support teacher collaborates well with teachers in Foundation Phase • The learning support teacher trains teachers in the Foundation Phase in all the new skills that she acquired through training by officials from the Education District Team • The learning support teacher has regular meetings with parents of students that she supports and also refers students to other support officials when necessary	• Pull-out system is used in school • All students experiencing challenges impacting on their learning are the responsibility of the learning support teacher • Learning support does not happen in the classroom: teachers do not accept ownership of the learning of all students in their classes • Education District officers are not satisfied with lack of interventions in class • Teachers experience problems with multi-level teaching and assessment • Membership of Education Support Team in school is contrived • Cooperation between learning support teacher and teachers from the Intermediate and Senior Phases is challenging: time and motivation a problem • Learning support teacher not confident enough to observe in classrooms - not sure that teachers will welcome her in their classrooms • Lack of computer programmes to support students with mathematics and reading: teachers have no skills

5.4 EVALUATION PHASE OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION

5.4.1 Introduction

The fifth phase of the Index for Inclusion process entailed the evaluation of the implementation of the first four phases. From the evaluation phase as conducted towards the end of 2005 several data sets were available: some as secondary and others as primary data sets. Data sets five, six and seven were derived from data generated during this phase. Data was generated by way of open-ended questionnaires completed by a group of staff members, an individual interview with the school principal**,** individual interviews with the deputy principal and learning support teacher, as well as a focus group interview with certain teachers. The data sets will be introduced and a summary of the data from the evaluation phase will follow.

5.4.2 Data set five: Open-ended questionnaires from the evaluation phase

The first data set to be presented was derived from a questionnaire with 14 open questions. (See Addendum B).The questionnaire was voluntarily completed by a number of staff members. The rationale for the questionnaires was to determine the success of the process to date. As secondary data set the findings from the questionnaire could be re-investigated for affordances and constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. Themes from the data are presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Themes and short summaries indicating affordances and constraints derived from the evaluation questionnaire with open questions

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
Leading the change initiative	• Embryonic awareness of the value of **teacher leadership** in a school as a democratic institution: teachers were prepared to lead aspects of change process; realised that everybody can make a worthwhile contribution; and became aware of the power of teamwork	• **Staff's perception of leadership:** principal as leader, teachers as followers; principal as rescuer of school; principal invested with power to make changes • **Principal of school unwilling to lead change initiative and incapable of doing so:** principal has not bought into the process; principal does not possess the necessary competences and leadership qualities; authoritarian leadership approach; intimidation and crisis management part of his leadership style
Current perception of inclusive education	New understanding of inclusive education as about: • perceiving students as embedded in a wider context • acknowledging that all students can learn with support • accepting and working with others • solving problems in a collaborative way	• Need fewer students to a class for inclusive education to work • Teachers need more training to realise inclusive practices in class • School needs more resources and a better infrastructure
Role of coordinating team		• Working with coordinating team took too much time off project – slowed the process down • Coordinating team did not accept responsibility to inform the rest of the staff
The Index for Inclusion process set the tone for a climate of learning and growth	• Successful learning outcomes include: how to address bullying and not to bully students; to realise the value of collaboration and collaborative problem-solving; to reflect on own practices; to consider the perspectives of students and	• Teachers still struggling to support each rather than competing against each other • Need to implement new collaborative skills in order to overcome isolation and learn from one another • Teachers find it easier to prioritise initiatives than to implement actions

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	their potential contributions; and to be a positive role model - Reflection on the project brought recognition of and joy for transformation that happened without their being aware	- Teachers find it difficult to replace old practices that that they have grown used to with something new and different
Prolonging the Index for Inclusion process	- Staff requests that the project be prolonged - Meaningful priorities have been formulated on paper - Sincere in their effort to make a difference for students so that students will have a positive view of school - Majority of teachers prepared to contribute to process of change	- Experience the implementation of the priorities as challenging - Accepting ownership of the process remains problematic - Short on enthusiasm and dedication - Experience difficulty to move out of comfort zone - Rescuer from outside to motivate and help - external motivation - Certain challenges remain: to restore communication with parent body; to put systems and policies in place; to develop own planning skills; to address the poor language and mathematical skills of students; to teach students interpersonal skills such as tolerance; and to establish a platform for student voices

5.4.3 Data set six: Individual interview with school principal during evaluation phase

On 4 November 2005 an individual interview was once again conducted with the principal of Sunset Primary School as part of the evaluation phase (See Addendum F). At the time the transcribed interview was not formally analysed and could thus be viewed as primary data for the purposes of this study. The transcribed text of the interview was investigated for themes on affordances and constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. They are presented in Table 5.7

Table 5.7: Themes and short summaries indicating affordances and constraints derived from an individual interview with the school principal

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
Leading the change initiative	• He revealed theoretical knowledge on teamwork and shared leadership • He pointed out that he was receiving more support from the staff - felt more accepted and secure • ***Felt that these changes were due to his initiative***	• Top-down approach evident in way he talks - everything to happen on his terms • Traditional, authoritarian concept of leadership still evident in his talk • Strained relationship with governing body they - position themselves as *inspectors* and not as *managers* (want to control and not support - unhappy with his frequent absence from school).
Current perception of inclusive education	New understanding of inclusive education: • Invite members of broader school community to participate • Shared leadership • Inclusive school wants to enhance quality of life for everybody	• Has more knowledge, but not evident in actions (as narrated by himself) • Knowledge not acquired through participation in Index for Inclusion process but through private studies
Role of coordinating team	• Acknowledged that needs analysis undertaken by coordinating team was a good effort to give voice to everybody, especially students • Realised that he could have benefited from attending the meetings - ***his studies could have benefited***	• Too much critique from participants during needs analysis and not enough positive comments • No representation from parent body in team - declined invitation
The Index for Inclusion process set the tone for a climate of learning and growth	• He changed his perspective on the Index for Inclusion process - now more positive - realised that it could be to his benefit • More aware of the benefits of teamwork	• Democracy is new to education system and acknowledges that it is difficult to accept the implications for teaching and make the changes in the school • Teacher voice on his terms • Tentative with regard to the place of student voice

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	- Index for Inclusion opened the way to better relationship with parent body - parents more willing to pay school fees - Municipality offered help with garden	- Unwilling to engage with broader community in which school is embedded to help with school buildings and grounds - waits for help from formal structures
Prolonging the Index for Inclusion process	- Willing for project to continue as part of staff development initiative - once a month - Realises that ownership of process by school is important - objectives should be realistic, interventions monitored	
Impact of educational transformation	- Change was necessary - Indications are that the National Education Department now seems prepared to listen as they have come to realise that the situation needs to be addressed	- Too drastic and pace too hectic, not well-planned - Change was necessary but not at the cost of a previous model that worked - good practices were just discarded - Resulted in bad teaching practices and students' academic development suffered

5.4.4 Data set seven: Individual interviews with deputy principal and learning support teacher and focus group interview with teachers during evaluation phase

During the period 7 to 15 November 2005, as part of the evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process, individual interviews were conducted with both the deputy principal and the learning support teacher of Sunset Primary School. (See Addenda F and G.) A focus group interview was held with a group of teachers. (See Addendum E.) The transcribed interviews were not formally analysed during 2005 and could thus be viewed as primary data for the purposes of this study. As the themes identified from the three interviews corresponded and could be juxtaposed with those of the school principal, it was decided to present the integrated findings on the affordances and constraints to teacher learning in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Themes and short summaries indicating affordances and constraints derived from individual interviews with deputy principal and learning support teacher and a focus group with teachers

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
Leading the change initiative	**Role of management** • Principal is now more positive about the Index for Inclusion process - understands the benefits of inclusive education • He realises that staff want changes - his hand is forced • It is the ideal that the management team should give strong guidance and help with planning **Teacher leadership** • School is very important for the majority of the teachers • Staff members have the potential within themselves to lead and work for change • Teachers want to change the bad reputation of the school • Staff should just work together and proceed without expecting support from the principal	• **Principal of school unwilling and incapable to lead change initiative:** principal has not bought into the Index for Inclusion process; principal has an authoritarian leadership approach; manipulative and shifts blame on others; not prepared to change but wants to be accepted on his terms; cannot handle critique and supports the blaming culture in the school; controlling; stifles any initiative and innovation from the side of staff; disempowering and not dedicated to school • School in need of strong leadership and a vision for school change • Democratic leadership asks of the leader to hand over some control and to act for the common good-this does not happen in the school. • No structure in school • School has bad reputation with community due to school management team that has alienated the community from the school • School has bad reputation with education officials as they do not reach accountability measures • Temporary school building-bad for both the teachers and the students and the school principal seems not to worry • Students and teachers suffer because of bad leadership-despondency and loss of initiative, hope and energy
Current perception of inclusive education	New understanding of inclusive education: • Limited definition of inclusive education as about including students with disabilities was broadened • Establishing an inclusive school community means to include the teacher, parent, student and the community to the	• Limited understanding of inclusive education at beginning of process • Only received some knowledge of inclusive education when they were trained in the new curriculum-also received White Paper 6 as a hand-out • Large classes a barrier • Not enough communication or cooperation with surrounding community

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	benefit of the student - Inclusive education is about giving individual attention to students - Community does present art classes in the school and helps with soup and muffins for students that go hungry	
Role of coordinating team	- The staff were given the choice to become part of the coordinating team but they were involved in further studying and declined the invitation	- The staff is small and it would have been beneficial to include all from the beginning - Working with coordinating team took too much time off project – slowed the process down - Coordinating team did not have the confidence to take their new knowledge to the staff - Very difficult to get the principal to be more positive about the Index for Inclusion process-did not have his support - The teachers are often not prepared to become part of new initiatives because they are afraid of making mistakes and taking risks
The Index for Inclusion process set the tone for a climate of learning and growth	- Good and competent teachers on the staff that now want to make a difference - Staff understand the message that cooperation and collaboration will bring changes - Some progress was made with regard to teacher relations - More positive atmosphere in school - Relationship with governing body is a little better at this stage - Secretary is an asset to the school - knows all the students	**Challenges that still need to be addressed with regard to the staff:** - A small minority of teachers are still negative- distrust between some staff members, especially between teachers and management team - Staff still not willing to share new expertise - Learning support teacher tries to share knowledge but culture of competition and individualism makes it difficult - Staff needs more training in new initiatives - One teacher has given up completely-depression-not doing a good job - Needs a session where they can talk to each other with the help of a facilitator - Maybe exposure to other schools and how they think-old and set in their ways-difficult to get out of comfort zones

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	• Staff members are upgrading their qualifications • Staff are now doing supervision on the school grounds • Index for Inclusion process presented the space where teachers could vent their negative feelings in order to leave them behind • Helped to look at problems from a different perspective • Others' viewpoints became important • Growth experienced from listening to each other • Experienced the project positively - had a less favourable idea of researchers coming into the school and gathering data and then leaving without leaving something good behind - this project was different - gained a lot from the project • Good presentation to parents on bullying • Learned that it is best to level the playing field between teachers and parents • Can get experts in to give talks to parents • Realised that effective planning precedes good implementation initiatives • Project gave an awareness of challenges that needed to be addressed • Enriched their lives	• Struggle with implementation of initiatives • Feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness to make the necessary changes

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	• Gained a lot of knowledge • The learning support teacher receives training from the Education District Office in inclusive strategies and learning support that can benefit the school	
Prolonging the Index for Inclusion process	• Would like the project to be prolonged • The majority of the staff want things to change and are prepared to become part of the change initiative • School needs to accept ownership of the process • There are good ideas among the staff	**Priorities that teachers still want to address:** • Issues with governing body need to be resolved Collaboration with parents Student behaviour; • Academic standard of the school needs to be lifted; • Need help with administrative and financial planning • Need to present more worthwhile extra-mural activities to students to build positive memories • Learning support within classrooms needs to be addressed • Activities of education support team needs to become a priority **The way forward:** • Still need somebody from the outside as rescuer to enthuse and help teachers • Accepting ownership of the process remains problematic • Leadership from management team is desperately needed for change
Impact of educational transformation	• There are benefits to outcomes-based education	• Transformation happened too quickly without good training • Confusion and no support after initial workshops • Students' learning suffer • Too many administrative responsibilities • Stressful for teachers

5.5 DATA SET EIGHT: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENT DOING HER PRACTICUM TRAINING AS SCHOOL COUNSELLOR AT SCHOOL

At the beginning of December 2007 an individual interview was conducted with a student from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University who did her practicum training as school counsellor at Sunset Primary School. I supported her in her efforts to sustain the gains made by the Index for Inclusion process in the school. The transcribed interview forms part of the primary data of the study. The interview text was investigated for affordances and constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. The themes and patterns are presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Individual interview with university student in final year of training as school counsellor doing her practicum at school

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
Leading the change initiative	• Teachers are competent and have a lot of potential • They need to recognise themselves as important resources	• Principal is self-absorbed - high maintenance • Not dedicated to the school - divided interests • Does not enable or support teachers in taking on new challenges such as trying new strategies in class • He is part of the destructive cycle at school as he bullies and manipulates the staff and they take it out on the students who present with behaviour problems • Teachers lack insight in what he does to them • Everything that he undertakes fails • Management team has a laissez-faire attitude
Index for Inclusion process	• The teachers feel that they have benefited from the project	• However when they are in a flight or fight mode in class they fall back on old habits - they find it difficult to change strategies though they know that they are not working
Parents		• Teachers do not get support from parents • Community has a lot of social problems such as alcohol misuse that contribute to problems at school
Learning support teacher	• The student's work in the school and her modelling of positive behaviour and interpersonal skills contributed to positive learning experiences for the learning support teacher • The learning support teacher showed much change for the better • More positive and better self-image • Runs garden project and waste removal project efficiently	• Self-image was not good - barrier to learning

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	• More confident in her relations with the students • She is even considering studying further	
Staff and teaching strategies	• Lots of experience as a staff • They have good ideas	• Staff use traditional teaching methods • Administrative work that has to be done for accountability purposes keeps them from really teaching - students suffer • Teachers need to be motivated from the outside and need acknowledgement and support • They need to learn to support one another and share and learn together • Staff struggle with negative self-image • Motivation, culture and attitude in school not conducive to change • Teachers talk down to students and then do not get their cooperation • Are not positive role models - students just model teachers’ behaviour

5.6 DATA SET NINE: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH TWO TEACHERS

During November 2008 a focus group interview with teachers and individual interviews with two teachers were conducted. (See Addenda H, I and J.) As the themes and patterns from the data corresponded it was decided to combine the findings in one table. The transcribed interviews form part of the primary data of the study. The interview texts were investigated for affordances and constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School and the themes and patterns are presented in Table 5.10

Table 5.10: Focus group interview with teachers and individual interviews with two teachers

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
Leading the change initiative	• Have learned to handle the principal differently - more positive approach in order to get the work done	• School principal not consistent and does not have a vision for change in the school • Planning, implementation and monitoring of change initiatives remain a problem • Due to divided interests the principal is not dedicated to the school • The cleaners are not doing their jobs in school - not well supervised and the teachers suffer • Principal was to contact the Khanya Project for help but he failed to do it and nothing came from his promise • Principal is not prepared to change but wants to be accommodated - needs careful handling that takes away time from tasks • Teachers still find it difficult to cope with the idea of teacher leadership as there is no support from the management team or colleagues when a teacher is prepared to take on something new • No clear rules and structures in place
Value of Index for Inclusion process	**Changes with regard to physical facilities, and structures** • Toilets have been renovated • Library is functioning under school prefects that received training • Project in pipeline to clean school grounds to prepare more safe recreational space for students • A waste removal project is up and running, and the garden project has been revived **Teacher learning** • Knowledge base was enriched - they have benefited from workshops and have tried new strategies in their classrooms with success	**The following challenges still need addressing:** • Parents still need to be invited as partners into their school - the principal does not support initiatives concerning parents • They have computers, but they are outdated and will cost too much to upgrade • Students do not make enough progress for the effort that the teachers put in - they get despondent

Theme	Affordances	Constraints
	• Sometimes they are not even aware of the fact that they have gained a lot of knowledge as individuals - only realise it in retrospect • They have come to realise that parents can really make a contribution to the learning processes of their children	
Staff	• Professional people with good qualifications • Realise that they need to tackle challenges one by one • More positive relationships – cooperation is better - only a small minority still presenting problems • Certain individual teachers show learning spurts - they have really changed and are an inspiration • Better cooperation from staff for learning support teacher • Education Support team is functioning in a more meaningful way	• Some of the teachers find it difficult to leave their comfort zones. They just do the minimum - the rest is hard work • Intrinsic motivation in some incidences is lacking. They feel despondent and hopeless (learned hopelessness) • Still see the impact of apartheid on people - apathy, despondency and passive resistance and silent rage - blaming culture • Talk is cheap; action is difficult • School building still needs attention • Regular break-ins at school • Too few resources – in need of facilities • Teachers still find it difficult to share expertise • When an individual teacher takes on an initiative it is not supported by the management team or colleagues • Some teachers still struggle to handle learner diversity effectively in class
Impact of educational transformation	• Currently a new learner support official from Education District Team that acknowledges the teachers' contributions, is more helpful, prepared to listen and support the teachers - this helps a lot	• Previously there was not a good relationship with the Education District Team that was supposed to support the school - did not receive respect from the team - bad relationship between the two parties • Lots of confusion at the time that transformation was first introduced in the education system • Teachers had to discard all their previous knowledge to replace it with new strategies • Radical changes implied but training not well-planned and executed • Transformation seems to be ongoing - feel as if they have just mastered something when things change again • Currently the teachers do not take anything seriously any more – they just do what they can

5.7 CONCLUDING THE INDUCTIVE PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

In the above sections the data was presented as it emanated from the inductive phase of data analysis. The presentation of the themes and patterns followed the chronological progress of the implementation of the Index for Inclusion at Sunset Primary School and attempted to show the affordances and constraints to teacher learning in each phase of application of the Index for Inclusion process. The themes and patterns as presented in the last nine tables allowed a look into the complexity and multi-voicedness associated with a process of change in a particular activity system. It also showed the affordances and constraints to teacher learning presented by the particular context in which the teachers learned. In the following sections the deductive phase of data analysis and presentation will be undertaken. Data will be presented in the form of an ethnographic narrative depicting the collective learning trajectory of the teachers, and pen sketches of two teachers will focus on their individual learning trajectories.

5.8 INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING TRAJECTORIES

Teacher learning within the natural setting of Sunset Primary School was identified as the activity under investigation for this study. Transforming the object or problem space into an outcome through the Index for Inclusion as tool mediated the existence of teacher learning as activity (Foot, 2001). As researcher/interventionist I was brought into a dialogical relationship with the activity of teacher learning *in situ.* The expected outcome of the research engagement with Sunset Primary School was that the teachers would internalise the sign system of the Index for Inclusion (as presented at length in Chapter 3). It would lead to a process of externalisation revealed in teachers' actions both in and on the situation. In this respect Vygotsky and Leont'ev stress how people as agents might transform their worlds through their increasingly informed actions on those worlds (Edwards & Apostolov, 2007). CHAT acknowledges agency as mediated and as both individual and collective actions (Swachuk, 2006) which implies that changes due to teacher learning were possible at both individual and institutional levels.

As indicated before, my "vision of outcome" (Roth & Tobin, 2004:161) for the Index for Inclusion process at Sunset Primary School seemed not to have realised. There seemed to be a chasm between the 'input' of the intervention and the 'output' (in the sense of a process of externalisation). It left me despondent but also intensely curious about what acted as constraints to teacher learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process in the school. The research inquiry was eventually designed to explore both the constraints and the affordances relevant to teacher learning for inclusion at Sunset Primary School.

The aforementioned ethnographic story and the pen sketches are presented in this chapter. Teacher learning as the activity under study in its dependencies and interrelations within its different components and with other activity systems was analysed and will also be presented. The mediational structure of an activity system created by Engeström (1987, 2001) lent structure to the ethnographic narrative and the pen sketches of the teachers. In this chapter the Engeström model was used factually to identify how each component in the activity system was related to the findings on teacher learning in the school. This implies that the model was used as a diagram or flow chart in order to analyse and present the data. In this way both fixed reciprocal relationships and process were highlighted (Worthen & Berry, 2006). The components of the activity system were therefore not seen as static and in isolation, but as reciprocally "transacting" with each other and constituting each other while in dynamic relationships with other activity systems (Garrison, 2001, cited in Barab *et al.*, 2004:28).

The socio-cultural and historical embeddedness of teacher learning at Sunset Primary School was addressed in Chapters 2 and 4 respectively. The broader macro-social and educational context was provided in Chapter 2 and the local context in Chapter 4 (Lompscher, 2006; Schoenfeld, 1992, in Yamagata-Lynch, 2003).

Mediation by subject-subject relations (as tool) should receive attention (Engeström, 1999d). In the context of this study it was also necessary to explore the role of the researcher/interventionist with regard to potential affordances and constraints to teacher learning (Kozulin, 2003). As indicated in Section 4.3.5, self-reflexivity or critical self-consciousness is considered essential to good research practice (Wardekker, 2000). My own reflective comments as captured in field notes will be intertwined with the ethnographic narrative and the pen sketches of the teachers.

Yamagata-Lynch (2003) warns that to draw activity systems from a rich body of knowledge such as presented in broad themes and patterns in Chapter 5 is not a straightforward analysis technique, because it cannot claim complete objectivity. As the researcher/interventionist in this study I experienced the participants' activities over time at first hand, implying that a personal involvement developed between me and the participants that could affect the data analysis. On the other hand, my personal involvement with the research process and participants enabled me to enrich understandings and interpretations of the data sets.

5.9 NARRATING THE COLLECTIVE LEARNING TRAJECTORY OF THE TEACHERS

5.9.1 Introducing the narrative

Foot (2001) explains that it is the essential task of data analysis within CHAT to comprehend the systemic whole of an activity, not just its separate components. Engeström's model however makes possible the analysis of a multitude of relations within the triangular structure of activity.

As explained before, the researcher explores the activity system as if looking at it from above; from a meta-level. The analyst selects a participant (or multiple different members) of the local activity through whose eyes and interpretations the activity is then constructed. The process of data analysis becomes a collective, multi-voiced construction of the past, present, and future phases of development of the activity system (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999).

The ethnographic narrative of the collective learning trajectory of the teachers will first be presented in broad themes following the six components of the Engeström model. As explained in Chapter 1, the Engeström model introduces six important components, including the dynamics among them: subject, object (the goal of the activity system), rules (norms), division of labour, community and tools (Engeström, 1987). Special emphasis will be placed on the affordances and constraints to teacher learning.

As indicated before, all the participants in this study had Afrikaans as first language and all the interviews were thus conducted in Afrikaans. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. I translated the direct quotes used in the text after analysis and tried to stay as close as possible to the original words and meaning of the participants. As always when text is translated some of the richness of the original idiom and metaphor may be lost.

It is worthwhile to bear in mind that the activity system is constantly working through contradictions within and between its components and in this way innovations are produced. Except for contradictions within and between components, contradictions are also possible between different activities, between different developmental phases of a single activity, and between the object of the dominant form of the central activity and the object of a culturally more advanced form of central activity (Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, n.d.; Foot, 2001). (See Figure 5.1 in this respect.) Level 1 in the model depicts the inner contradictions in each component, while Level 2 indicates the contradictions between components. Level 3 presents the contradiction between the object of the central activity and that of a culturally more advanced form of central activity (the Index for Inclusion). Level 4 highlights contradictions between the central activity and neighbour activities in its social network.

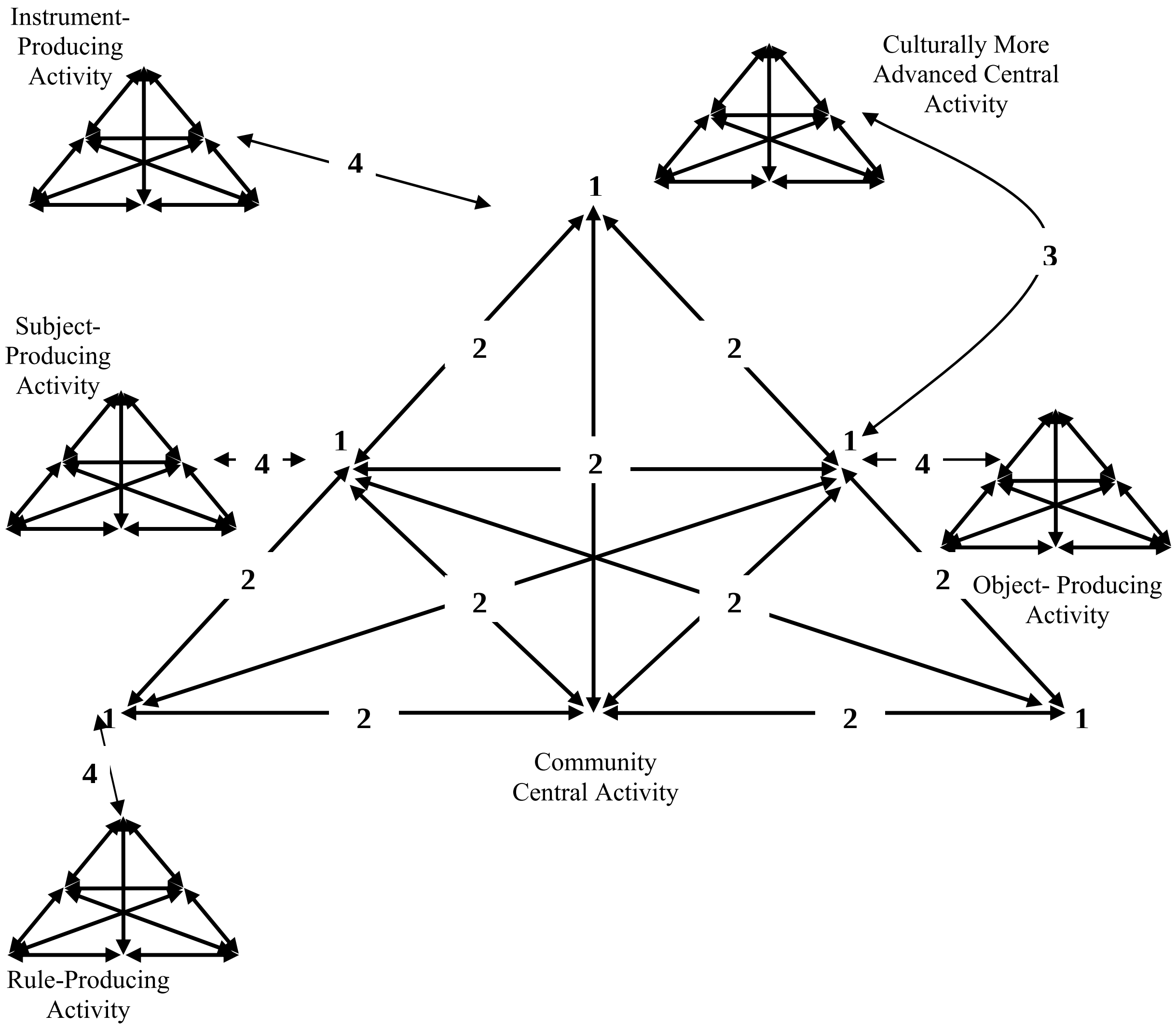
Instrument-
Producing
Activity
Culturally More
Advanced Central
Activity
4
1
3
2
2
Subject-
Producing
Activity
1
4
2
1
4
2
2
2
Object- Producing
Activity
1
2
2
1
4
Community
Central Activity
Rule-Producing
Activity

Figure 5.1: Four levels of contradictions (adapted from Center for Activity Theory and Development Work Research, n.d.)

5.9.2 Object and outcome

5.9.2.1 Introduction

An activity is identified and distinguished by its object or purpose. The main factor that distinguishes activity systems from one another is the difference in their objects (Edwards & Apostolov, 2007**)**. The object of the activity system is the 'raw material' or 'problem space' at which the activity is directed and which is moulded and transformed into an outcome with the help of mediating tools. The object of an activity gives it a horizon toward which it orients and in this sense the object keeps on evolving (Foot, 2001).

5.9.2.2 The first phase of object construction

The researchers entered Sunset Primary School with a certain view of the object and outcome in mind for the project. We wanted to apply one full cycle of the Index for Inclusion process in the school with the hope of mediating sustainable change for inclusion in the school. This implied a focus on the cultures, policies and practices of the school that needed to be reflected on and changed in order for the school to embark on a journey to inclusion. In Figure 3.1 the **object** as envisaged by Index for Inclusion project was identified as 'accommodating student diversity' and 'transforming Sunset Primary School into an inclusive learning community'. As **outcome** an inclusive school was envisaged as described in Section 3.3.2.3. The staff therefore needed to learn how to provide quality learning opportunities for all their students in a welcoming, accommodating and including environment. The complexity of this task compelled a journey of learning for teachers. Consequently they also needed to learn how to transform their school into an inclusive learning community that could support their own learning as well as that of the broader school community.

Researcher's reflection

As mediator of the Index for Inclusion process, it was of key importance to me to entice the staff to accept ownership of the implementation of inclusive education in their school. The project needed to be terminated at some stage and then the intervention had to prove robust enough for school members to proceed with the process. My object for teacher learning was therefore for them to internalise the sign system of the Index for Inclusion to the point that they could take the process further on their own in order to change their school to become more inclusive. I thought that the Index for Inclusion process offered them the opportunity to become more *reflective* instead of *reactive* in light of all the top-down change initiatives that they had been subjected to since 1994. Very often the object of the Index for Inclusion process with regard to the school accepting ownership of the change process seemed at odds with the school's need for a rescuer from outside to support teacher learning and change.

Contradictions (in this case between activity systems) were evident from the time I first entered Sunset Primary School. The two representatives from the Western Cape Education District Office who were active members of the project team negotiated access to Sunset Primary School. They struggled to find a third school that would be prepared to participate in the project. The school principal of Sunset Primary School later explained that he had been unwilling to make his school available for participation in the project at first. However, the two officials, who held more senior positions in the Western Cape Education Department, suggested that participation in the project would be beneficial to the school that was experiencing several challenges. He felt that the officials who held more elevated positions had coerced him into participation. He offered his own studies and those of several of his staff as significant constraints to participation in the project. The contrived way in which the research team gained access to Sunset Primary School initially placed serious constraints on the work of the research team and made it difficult to find common ground. Common ground in this respect implied object construction.

Foot (2002) explains that the process of object construction arises from a state of need on the part of one or more actors. The state of need is usually unconscious and thus not clearly definable. It is only when certain search actions result in an encounter between the need and an object that the need begins to be experienced consciously.

It was up to the research team to work toward making the need ’conscious’ by bringing about a meeting between the need and an object. This was accomplished by close collaboration with the coordinating team appointed by the school. The questionnaires that involved a process of systemic self-review within three interconnected and overlapping dimensions of school life, school culture, policy and practice, completed during the needs analysis phase of the project further contributed to this process. The coordinating team, the rest of the staff, parents and students had to reflect on their school’s cultures, policies and practices in light of the certain indicators and questions provided by the Index for Inclusion. Different reactions were evident from members of the coordinating team during the discussion of the findings from the questionnaires: in all cases they supported these findings. They regarded them as illuminating and realised that it was only possible to make changes once problems were identified; one teacher described them as an “eye-opener” and indicative of what the school could work toward; another experienced it as a shock; one was “sceptical whether the school would be able to make the changes”; while another teacher warned that “the staff should remain positive and not lose all hope as it would take a team effort to bring about much-needed changes”. Although the principal appreciated the fact that the parents and especially the students were allowed the opportunity to voice their opinions, he felt that “in some instances [there was] too much criticism and … not enough positive contributions have been made”.

The coordinating team listed tentative priorities that they wanted to address in response to the identification of needs: collaboration, respect, trust and appreciation among the staff, between the staff and the students and among the students; effective discipline in the school; effective support for the diverse learning needs of their students; discrimination and bullying among students; and crisis management, a lack of planning and consistency.

At a formal meeting the researchers presented the findings and tentative priorities to all the staff members. Affordances to teacher learning included the acknowledgement of teachers that several changes were necessary in their school in the process of becoming an inclusive school community. The majority of the teachers were prepared to participate in the Index for Inclusion process and explore the challenges for their school as identified during the needs analysis phase and explicated in Tables 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. They also named previous occasions when teamwork paid off as in the case of organising fund-raising occasions for the school.

The teachers supported the priorities as identified by the coordinating team and these priorities became the learning goals for teachers, and the object, ‘raw material’ or ‘problem space’ identified by the teachers at which teacher learning as activity should be directed. The Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research (n.d.) describes this process as one during which subjects construct the object by singling out those properties that they identify as essential for developing social practice. Once the subjects in this study had identified these learning goals, they admitted that they were in need of help from the ‘outside’ to support their learning for inclusion, as several challenges within the school system acted as severe constraints to teacher learning. In this way the research team was welcomed as a partner in the process of teacher learning for inclusion, despite our dubious introduction to the school.

When the research team initiated the Index for Inclusion project at Sunset Primary School, the teachers were struggling with feelings of hopelessness, even despair, discord and mistrust. The school and its people were not doing well. Several explanations for this were offered. One of the teachers voiced their emotions in that phase as follows: “I think when we started the process in May, the staff and myself were in a very deep pit; at the lowest point possible.”

The principal tried to explain the challenges from his perspective in terms of several factors. He mentioned the “shock” of 1994. Everybody (especially those who were excluded and marginalised by the apartheid dispensation) was relieved when “democracy eventually happened” with its strong human rights perspective, but were not prepared for the process of rapid transformation that accompanied the democratisation of the education system. The implementation of outcomes-based education was not a positive experience and they felt as if their previous accomplishments, knowledge and skills were not acknowledged and respected because they had to be discarded in order to be replaced with completely different theories and practices. The deputy principal corroborated the school principal’s observation in this respect and argued that

> training for outcomes-based education was presented as a crash course and when they [the trainers] were finished with us, we were totally confused and we really and truly did not know hither or thither. The implementation of the outcomes-based process was approached in a wrong way and now our children suffer. There are also a lot of administrative obligations for teachers and we have the large classes with which we have to cope; it really is a hopeless case.

The principal further explained that when he was first appointed to his position at Sunset Primary School he entered the troubled history of the school. The school was in turmoil due to “a swindle that was exposed and needed to be investigated". He "landed right in the middle of the unpleasantness as he backed the wrong horse". The deputy principal confirmed that somebody "was accused of taking money from the school. A group of teachers were on his side and, among other this caused the staff to fall apart." This affected the morale of the teachers adversely, to the extent that the principal tried to involve the Provincial Ministerial Office of Education to restore the morale of the staff. This helped in a way but vestiges of mistrust remained in the school and between the school and parent body, as well as between the school and the broader community. This was evident in the school's inability to locate any parents to join the coordinating team as suggested by the Index for Inclusion process. He explained that it "made him uneasy that the parents did not react positively to the invitation to become part of the Index for Inclusion process".

As the numbers of students were decreasing, a system of decentralisation followed by the National Education Department required of the principal to suggest a staff member for retrenchment. This caused much anxiety, unease and unhappiness among the staff as the majority of them had been at the school for many years (see Table 4.1). They even suggested that the principal should be the one whose services should be terminated as he was one of the more recent appointments. Eventually the most highly qualified teacher who had been teaching at the school for 10 years was named for retrenchment. The management team identified her as the cause of discord in the school and they wanted her out of the system. This met with resistance from her as well as from some of the other staff members, which caused even more unhappiness.

The voices/ perspectives of the teachers were most eloquent in the metaphors that they used to describe the school at the onset of several workshops to restore some trust and collaboration in the school. The following metaphors were offered:

A runaway bus on a downhill without a driver
A sinking ship
A big boulder of rock with many cracks
An injured bird that wanted desperately to be healed but was unsure whether it would survive
A statue with tears running down its face
An uncut diamond
A pupa that was trapped in its cocoon
A half-full cup
A bazaar without the cake
Home with too much activity
Usable yoke-pins lying on a heap of rubbish

When asked to explain their metaphors, they mentioned anxiety, sadness, worry, anger, and lots of activity but no structure. But they also wanted to believe that there was still hope as they felt that there was a lot of potential in the school. Their metaphors clearly voiced their despair and their profound sadness as especially evident in the metaphors of the "injured bird that wanted desperately to be healed but was unsure whether it would survive" and the "statue with tears running down its face". The latter was an interesting metaphor in light of the parents who identified the school as a "community" school in their comments on the questionnaires. The majority of teachers saw the school as an integral part of their own stories and the story of their community. During a later interview with the deputy principal he talked about the fact that he "attended the school as student, stayed in the community, worked in the community and was really part of the furniture at the school". He proceeded by telling about his love for the school and that he felt sad as the school seemed to be going downhill.

The teachers' unease with the obviously ineffectual management team was expressed in the first two metaphors ("a runaway bus" and "a sinking ship") and also in that of "the home with too much activity" [and nothing really happening]. Hope for the future of the school was embedded in the under-utilised potential in the school as suggested by the metaphors of the "uncut diamond" and "a pupa that was trapped in its cocoon", as well as to a certain extent by the metaphor of "usable yoke-pins lying on a heap of rubbish". The teachers had their own dreams (outcomes) for their school that they wanted to pursue. Two voiced their outcomes as follows:

> I will give my cooperation and do everything in my power as I want to make the school a place where parents want to send their children.
>
> We really want our children to be happy and that everybody should have a positive image of our school.

Engeström (1999:381, cited in Daniels, 2008:122) sees the construction of the object as related to the "creative potential of activity", whilst Daniels (2008) draws attention to the multivoicedness of activity systems reflected in the construction of the object. This implicates the notion of the school (activity system) as a community of difference (Shields, 2006). Since schools are always diverse and encompassing multiple realities (see Shields, 2006; Daniels, 2008) different subjects construct the object of the activity in "different, partially overlapping and partially conflicting ways" (Center for Activity Theory and Development Work Research, n.d.:2.). In this way the construction of an object can be both facilitated and constrained while coordination between different forms of the object is necessary to ensure continuous operation (Center for Activity Theory and Development Work Research, n.d.).

Object construction during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion at Sunset Primary School was not a straightforward enterprise. Several of the teachers were involved in further training and not initially prepared to engage with the Index for Inclusion process as members of the coordinating team. One teacher explained that she was not prepared "to get onto the wagon" as she was afraid that she would tie herself down. She added, "I regretted it afterwards." The school principal became ever more uneasy with our presence in 'his' school. At one stage he actively resisted the process and made things difficult for the coordinating team. One of the members of the coordinating team explained the situation as follows:

> From the top structure in the school we had a lot of resistance; it was difficult and it sometimes felt as if we had to go through a wall to get to the other side. This also made us less bold to inform the rest of the staff about what we had learned.

The school principal seldom attended the meetings of the coordinating team although he was routinely invited as a member. Various reasons were offered for his absence, such as classes or meetings he had to attend, illness, or death of a family member. This caused even more discord among the staff as they argued that they needed his cooperation to implement the changes they envisaged. Without his backing their plans of action would not be supported and might even be actively resisted. During a farewell function at the school in December 2006 the principal admitted to his initial negativity and that he had actively questioned our right to be in 'his' school. It was interesting to observe in reflection on the data how an aggravated secondary contradiction (Engeström, 2001) manifested at Sunset Primary School when the Index for Inclusion process was introduced into the school. The school as activity system was confronted with a new object that generated disturbances and conflicts which motivated and drove attempts for change in the activity system.

Due to the principal's resistance various members of the staff thought that the Index for Inclusion would not bring any changes and were therefore not prepared to participate. They had lost hope to the extent that they were not prepared to engage with any new initiatives. They argued: "Nothing has worked lately - why would this work?" A few of the more negative teachers attended the meetings, but a male teacher opted not to become part of the process at all. He was receiving treatment for depression and was away from school at regular intervals. At this stage the learning support teacher was also one of the more negative and reluctant participants. She struggled in her relationship with the principal and blamed him for not becoming a more constructive member of the process. She could not envisage any good coming from the project without his support. The members of the coordinating team and several other teachers were however so enthused that they were prepared to learn about inclusion and attended the meetings regularly. They were prepared to engage with the priorities (object) which they had identified as a team.

Both the coordinating team and the research team tried various strategies to get the principal to become part of the process as we understood that this was necessary to ensure continuous operation. As research team we met with him in his office regularly and promised to keep him informed about our progress should he not be able to attend meetings. At one of these meetings he gave us an ultimatum that he would terminate the project should his staff's body language not change for the better toward him. He perceived the situation at the school as detrimental to his health and said that he wanted to avoid being at school as much as possible as he could not deal with the stress and opposition any longer. As researchers we opted for the view of conflict as presented by Ury (1993, cited in Foot, 2002:136) who suggested that conflicts should be viewed as "not completely resolvable; constructing the goal of intervention not as ending the conflicts, but rather as transforming them from a condition of negative conflict to a conditions of positive conflict" by employing processes of dialogue and negotiation.

Researcher's reflection

My field notes of 25 April 2005 reflected our state of mind as researchers. We recognised that the principal perceived the Index for Inclusion process as a threat as he felt that the process increased his staff's hostility towards him. After his ultimatum we left without a word because we knew that as the gatekeeper of the school he had the power to terminate the project. We felt manipulated and disparaged but at the same time knew that we owed it to the coordinating team and the rest of the staff to continue with the process to address their priorities. This incident compelled me to refer to myself metaphorically as a bulldog in need of a strong grip just to hold on and not lose all hope as the project had to go on!

At this phase of the project the priorities were determined and we were ready to implement the fourth phase of the first cycle of the Index for Inclusion process. The priorities had to be implemented if we wanted to set the school in motion towards the outcome of an inclusive school. Given the scenario as described above we knew that our first priority should be to establish some ground for teamwork and trusting relationships. As a research team we appreciated that at this stage the importance of addressing student diversity appropriately and including the parents and broader community should take second place. Teachers struggled with a low sense of self-efficacy and had seldom experienced a sense of community, the satisfaction of collaborative learning and successful problem-solving as a team. Staff members first had to *learn* to *learn together* before they could bring about successful changes in their school and classrooms. We wanted to believe with Edwards and Apostolov (2007) that, should the teachers learn how to collaborate in working on an object, the outcome would be an enriched understanding of the problem or task and a greater range of possible responses to it. This called for the staff to be learners in a community of difference where the capacity to work with others despite certain differences, with the eventual goal of reshaping learning conditions for their students, was of key importance (Shields, 2006). This implied a complex journey for the school.

Several workshops were conducted during this phase, as indicated in Table 4.2. Collaboration, distributed leadership and teacher leadership received attention; the latter to enable the teachers, despite the fact that they were not supported by the principal, to take initiative in their classroom, in the school and in their interaction with parents and the broader community to bring about the envisaged changes. Our thinking on teacher learning was in line with that of Grant (2006) who suggested that teachers should be leaders in their classrooms, in collaborative working relations with their colleagues, in vision building and policy development for their school and in networking with the parents and community.

The teachers responded well to these workshops and slowly small changes were evident. The deputy principal told of the help he had received from other teachers which enabled him to prepare the school choir for a competition on time. He was hopeful that good things would come of the process. We proceeded with workshops on how to address bullying and also covered constructivist approaches to student learning, before the process was evaluated during the fifth phase in the Index for Inclusion process.

Researcher's reflection

My field notes at this stage reflected my own frustration at implementing the Index for Inclusion process in three research schools simultaneously. I felt distinctly overwhelmed and frustrated because I was not working with the necessary depth in any of the three schools. Time constraints on my side and on the side of the three research schools did not allow me to observe sufficiently in their classes and to attend enough of the different schools' activities. At this stage the deputy principal of Sunset Primary School invited me to attend his class and see for myself, but I could not find the time to accept his invitation. My own time constraints due to the extent of the research project and my duties as lecturer could be viewed as a constraint to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School.

5.9.2.3 Object conception during the evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion

During the evaluation phase learning gains became more obvious, as did the constraints to teacher learning. These are indicated in Tables 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8 and discussed in Section 5.4. From the data during the evaluation phase, at least two different object conceptions could be identified and juxtaposed: that of the principal and that of the rest of the staff.

It seemed as if the participating teachers had benefited from the Index for Inclusion process. It was interesting that the evaluation questionnaires and interviews initiated a further process of reflection that was beneficial to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. One of the teachers highlighted the joy of realising "how transformation happened over the last two years without us really being aware of what was happening”. Additional priorities were also identified as a result of the evaluation phase, bringing home the recognition that the object is constantly under construction and that it manifests itself in different forms for different subjects of the activity (Engeström & Escalante, 1996, cited in Foot, 2002). The teachers listed the following as challenges: communication with the parent body needed to be restored; issues with the governing body should be resolved; systems and policies should be put in place; planning skills should be developed; the poor language and mathematical skills of students should be addressed; students should be taught interpersonal skills; a platform should be established for student voices. They also wanted to plan more extra-mural activities for their students, learning support in the classroom needed attention, and the activities of the education support team in the school needed to become a priority.

The Index for Inclusion process brought a greater awareness of contradictions in their school and how to plan for action. It also honed their skills in collaborating to identify these contradictions. This promised well for innovative learning among teachers, although the sustainability of the learning gains had not been proven. Several of the teachers indicated that teamwork was a prerequisite to bring about change; “that unity is power”; that through “planning conjointly everything can be put in place for the following year” (2006); that “everybody’s role is important”; that “every priority should be scrupulously examined and systematically implemented by the team”; that “we all have a contribution to make, it does not matter how small it is”. One teacher suggested that “all staff members should be involved to make a contribution and then separate coordination teams can be established for different projects”.

It seemed as if teachers were now more willing to deal with the many challenges in their school as a team, but from their perspective leadership was still the predominant constraint. At this stage they were in need of endorsement, support and solid leadership to implement the priorities they had identified. Metaphorically they were now like the injured bird that had survived but needed encouragement to learn to fly once again. When asked in the questionnaire about the feasibility of prolonging the project in the school, a more negative teacher strongly responded as follows:

> Money is going to be wasted. For as long as the principal’s dispositions and priorities do not change, we can forget about the process.

Another teacher felt that transformation

> … is going to be a difficult process as leadership is not effective and crisis management is a big problem. What is needed is that the leadership component should change their perspectives.

Even after implementing one full cycle of the Index for Inclusion process, it was clear that the principal had neither understood nor engaged with the object of the activity. In the first place he expected that "the Index for Inclusion process could act as stimulus for his studies at the university". In the second place he wanted the Index for Inclusion process in the school to contribute to a positive relationship between himself and the staff. For him everything centred on the acceptance that he craved from *his* staff. During the evaluation phase, he professed to feel more positive and judged that he currently had more support from his staff: *"We are not totally on the same wavelength but I can report that it is better than six years back when I first started here."* During an interview in March 2005 he judged that he had the support of 30% to 50% of his staff while in November 2005 he stated, "I can now boast that I have the support of between 70% and 80 % of my staff." He ascribed this change to the fact that they were now more prepared to accept him for who he was. He also told of experiencing better cooperation from them. The staff acknowledged that he was now more supportive of the Index for Inclusion process as they had found different ways to handle him after first coming to terms with the fact that he was unable or unprepared to change.

Much of the staff's energy went into delicately handling the principal. They needed to do this in order to gain acceptance for their object of change in the school. The principal told about the following conversation with a teacher who said, "Sir, I have started making peace with the fact that I would not be able to change you." He responded as follows: "And I told her that I have been waiting for those words for a long time as I have discovered that I would not be able to change you [the staff]. Once we know this we can more successfully approach each other." He further explained that acceptance was the bottom line: "We should not expect too much of each other. Once you do this, you will corrupt the product".

As a result of his frequent absences from many of the initial introductory sessions on inclusive education and subsequent staff development initiatives his knowledge of inclusive education did not necessarily correspond with that of the rest of the staff and the initiatives of the Index for Inclusion. He had mostly gained his knowledge from his own course at a different university and admitted that he did not understand everything. Yet, from the data it became clear that he had sufficient theoretical knowledge of inclusive education to be a source of support and inspiration for the staff. Successful application of the knowledge however remained the issue. The energy, will-power and ability to lead a process of transformation on a whole school level seemed lacking.

In light of the above the school struggled to accept ownership of the change initiative and implored the research team to prolong the Index for Inclusion process in the school. One teacher was very despondent about the school's inability to take ownership of the process:

> I am in favour of the priorities that have been identified, but no interventions have been put in place. The staff only met on one occasion to put together the anti-bullying policy. No initiative was otherwise taken by the staff to get together and discuss the way forward.

They indicated that they needed a rescuer from outside. The learning support teacher emphasised that "should we terminate the project at this stage, nothing will come of all the hard work". She further explained the issue as follows:

> The principal wants to control everything and then a person cannot push your own initiatives, but when it comes to planning and those things, then it will have to happen from the side of the teachers. If anything needs to be pushed, the teachers will have to do that.

The deputy principal acknowledged that they needed somebody to assist with strategic planning and the implementation of the priorities that they had identified. One of the teachers commented that she "felt as if they were still somewhere floating; we have not reached a conclusion; the end". They felt that a plan had to be put in place and that they needed to give each teacher a project to manage if they wanted to make a difference. They recognised that they had to accept ownership of implementing more inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

5.9.2.4 Object conception and outcomes during the final phase of the project

From 2006 to 2008 several training initiatives were conducted at the request of the teachers to address the priorities identified towards the end of 2005. These have been listed in Table 4.2. More interviews were conducted with some informants during 2007 and towards the end of 2008. The broad themes and patterns are presented in Tables 5.9 and 5.10.

According to the observations of one of our students in the final year of her training as school counsellor and who was doing her practicum at Sunset Primary School, the status quo with regard to object conception prevailed during 2007. The teachers were still struggling to bring about certain changes and not always succeeding. She thought that they were in need of a safe haven and supportive structures to allow for risk-taking and learning, which was lacking. Certain changes were however evident despite these constraints. The majority of teachers were working well together and only a few teachers were still resisting cooperation – the latter mainly the two Grade R teachers who were actively opposed to the management team.

She mentioned new opportunities in South Africa to gain funding for school development that she had discovered in her quest for financial support for her project in the school, but was worried about the principal's reaction in this respect (object conception). She explained her reservation as follows:

> But then you wonder if it would be about the school or for him. He would more likely go for funding to develop his own career before he enhances the image of the school.

She also experienced him as “high maintenance as he wanted me to sit in his office and to listen to all his personal problems and stuff that was bothering him”. She managed to uphold a good relationship with him but made keen observations about his management style. He always “wanted to be in charge, but nothing that he agreed to do, work”.

The learning support teacher confirmed the students’ observations, but emphasised that things were better at school. The teachers were collaborating as a team with the exception of the few teachers who were still opposing cooperation. Although all the teachers were really working hard, it was still those with the most initiative who were handling the main bulk of the work. The learning support teacher was still worried about multi-level teaching in certain classes and felt that several teachers needed further training in meeting the diverse learning needs of their students. The male teacher who refused to attend the Index for Inclusion process was also not coping well – to the detriment of his students. He refused to learn and apply new initiatives to enhance his students’ learning. The learning support teacher was in charge of several projects that she worked hard to sustain. She confirmed that the principal was still high maintenance and that he needed careful handling before he gave his support for new initiatives. Leadership was therefore still problematic but they had learned new ways to approach the principal.

According to the teachers certain outcomes had been reached since our engagement with the school. These were indicated in detail in Table 5.10. The teachers acknowledged that they had made certain learning gains. They had benefited from the various learning opportunities that the project offered and had tried some of the strategies in their classrooms with a certain amount of success. A teacher commented that they had grown as teachers as a result of the workshops. Another teacher explained:

> Sometimes you think that you have not learned anything at a workshop but when you reflect on it, then you realise how much you have learned. From each learning opportunity you take something with you. You do not throw away the knowledge that you have but add onto that.

A third teacher confessed that “the more you learn things from people and implement these, the more you experience that it works”. They acknowledged that they had benefited from both the reading and the mathematics workshops and explained how they were implementing their new-found knowledge in their classrooms.

5.9.3 The teachers as subjects

5.9.3.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 1, Engeström (2001) suggests five principles that are fundamental to CHAT. When looking at the teachers as the subjects whose agency was chosen as the point of view in the analysis, all five principles of CHAT bear significance. The multi-voicedness of an activity system, as well as its history, is of particular importance when discussing the teachers as subjects in this study. With regard to historicity as the third principle, Engeström (1991, cited in Daniels, 2008) claims that we cannot avoid history in our analyses of data when we work within a Vygotskian framework. Daniels (2008:124) suggests that "history needs to be considered in terms of the local history of the activity and its objects, but also as the history of the theoretical ideas and tools that have shaped the activity". As indicated before, activity systems change over long periods of time and their assets, problems and potentials can only be understood in terms of their own history. In the Engeström triangle the subject-object relationship is represented by the top part of the diagram. But the subject-object relationship is related to the larger cultural and historical context by the relationships represented by the other triangles. This means that the local history of Sunset Primary School was also embedded in the broader national history of the country and its educational system. Sunset Primary School and the collective learning trajectory of its teachers would thus also be implicated by "its network relations to other activity systems" (Daniels, 2008:124). It should therefore be interesting to explore how the narrative (derived from the data) of the teachers chosen as subjects of the activity system bore witness to the above.

5.9.3.2 Positioning the subjects

In light of the above, I considered it necessary to present a short summary of the historical and cultural positioning of the subjects. More extensive discussions on the topic have been presented in Sections 2.5 and 4.3.2. In Section 4.3.2 I explained that Sunset Primary School was situated in a 'coloured' community. All the teachers were of mixed origin with Afrikaans as their mother tongue. During the apartheid dispensation they were classified as coloured, which had an impact on every aspect of their lives.

The institutionalisation of apartheid after 1948 had a major impact on education (see 2.5.2). Nineteen separate education departments, governed by specific legislation and fragmented along racial lines, reinforced the divisions in the education system (Naicker, 2005). South African teachers were repressed and had very limited professional autonomy before 1994. Teachers' work was strictly controlled through a system of inspection that undermined their autonomy and they came to rely on the agency of the state to direct them in doing their work. They lost confidence in their own ability to participate in democratic processes. Because teacher education was underpinned by a fundamental pedagogy that instilled passiveness and obedience to authority, they also expected the same from the students in their classrooms. Critical and independent thinking was not valued (Wits Education Policy Unit, 2005).

The new democratic dispensation that emerged in 1994 brought significant changes within all walks of life, including in how education was conducted and how teachers were trained. These changes were extensively discussed in Section 2.5.

The biographical details of the teachers of Sunset Primary School were presented in Table 4.2. As can be derived from their profiles, their ages varied between 28 and 53 in 2005, with 17 of the 19 teachers being over 40 years of age. It can be assumed that all the teachers experienced the apartheid regime firsthand and that their initial training as teachers was within the older and more conservative theories and educational practices. With the exception of the pre-primary classes, class sizes varied from 33 to 52. The teachers reported between eight and 35 years of experience in teaching and between five and 27 years of experience in teaching at Sunset Primary School specifically. Seven of the teachers had no experience of teaching in a school other than Sunset Primary School.

5.9.3.3 Teachers explaining the changes in their workplace due to the democratisation of the education system

The majority of teachers that participated in this study had been working as teachers for an extensive period of time. Up to 17 of the 18 teachers received their initial teacher training before 1994. One of the teachers explained that they were “all old teachers and we have been placed in this position [of transformation] now”. Another commented on their history together:

> We do have a lot of potential but we do bring a lot of history with us as the majority of teachers have been at the school 20 years or more and together we went through different phases, with different principals and different governments and even more that had an impact on us. A lot of the teachers have only been at [Sunset Primary School]. They do not know the rest of the world and they think the school is the beginning and the end.

An essential characteristic of the South African education system during apartheid was its conservatism. Williams (2001) claims that vestiges of conservatism are still evident in several aspects of current practice in schools. New teaching philosophies, approaches and practices are based on democratic, inclusive and participative relationships, reflective practice, experimenting and risk-taking. Since 1994 teachers thus needed to learn new theory and implement new practices in their classrooms (Welton, 2001). They were originally trained for mainstream education without any input on teaching students with diverse learning needs such as those with disabilities. When the Index for Inclusion was first introduced into the school, they ascribed to the narrow definition of inclusive education as only being about including students with disabilities who had previously learned in separate settings. They indicated that they were not trained to teach students with disabilities and that they felt incompetent to deal with the stress of inclusive education.

The teachers explained that the extent of transformation in education after 1995 had come as a shock. It was radical. It was difficult to make the shift. One of the teachers mentioned that "when the changes came it was not easy, it was not clear enough and we could not understand it. We did not know what to do. Everything was fuzzy." Another expressed it as follows:

> In the beginning we received training for only five days which was way too short as everything needed to change. There was nearly a totally new vocabulary that we had to learn. In fact we needed a year to really understand what everything was all about.

During apartheid education they received everything neatly packaged and they knew exactly what to do. Although they protested against apartheid education they felt safe. At present they are told that "you can do anything as long as you reach your outcome; you have to plan to reach your outcomes and it is very wide and open. You just felt that you understood something when they change it again." They explained that they found this very difficult to manage. The majority of teachers still preferred a system where somebody could take charge, tell them in detail what to do and then monitor whether they had done what they were supposed to do.

The principal felt that the initial culture of teaching was not necessarily obsolete, but was treated as such by the new educational dispensation. He thought that the change was necessary but not at the expense of a previous model that worked well. It is worthwhile to quote him in full:

> Many good things of the previous model were wiped off the table and it caused me sorrow. It can be seen in the commotion and unpleasantness surrounding education lately. Also the mathematical and language skill problems of the children are very difficult for me to accept. It is difficult to see how the children struggle in the high school when they cannot even read; it causes me a lot of sorrow. What does this tell me? The change was too drastic and too rapidly. We had to spend more time reflecting on the process before it was implemented. And all the many changes, especially in the learning areas. I am not hundred per cent sure that all the learning areas were well thought out before it was implemented. I think it is wrong. I hear on the television that they now want to implement something different for Grades 9 and 10. It gives me goose-flesh that they now start to take us seriously, but they must also do something for the primary schools. Why do they only now recognise that there might be problems [with the curriculum]? They need to go to the beginning where the foundation is laid in the primary school to prevent all the problems. Okay, now they have awakened to all the problems, but now it is very late, too late.

According to the deputy principal "the transformation to democracy is still very much with us". He argued that although democracy is more than a decade old in South Africa "there are still people who believe that the previous system was the best and unfortunately we need to work hard to get the people to change their paradigm". He thought that many people were unwilling to accept the changes in education and that the status quo had to change. With regard to the process of change necessary to realise the goals of the new democratic education system and curriculum on ground level, one of the teachers used an interesting metaphor to explain how teachers differ in their approaches to change:

> We have a saying … some people are like instant coffee. They work quickly but others are like slow-brewing coffee. They need to work through the whole process slowly. If you look at people you can see how change happens differently with each one.

In reflection on the teachers' resistance to change the deputy principal suggested that "the change came too rapidly, the one initiative following the other. It should have been done gradually." He explained that this caused stress for all teachers; some experiencing it more severely. The new democratic dispensation in South Africa had led to the recognition of human rights and a subsequent change in the attitudes of teachers, parents and students. Student behaviour had become more challenging and parents did not acknowledge the right of the teachers to discipline their children: "Our discipline in the school is pathetic. The school and the staff are not coping. We used to produce excellent students for the high school, but not anymore. The standard has fallen." According to him this happened although there were proficient teachers in the school with good track records.

One of the teachers indicated that there had been "an academic revival under the teachers". The majority of teachers were involved in further studies. When asked about their motivation for advancing their teacher qualifications, they explained that within the apartheid education system teachers of colour only needed to have Grade 10 to be appointed as primary school teachers. Now with the new democratic dispensation, the National Department of Education expected teachers to have a tertiary qualification in education. They received financial support to better their qualifications. They enjoyed the learning to such an extent that after receiving their first degree/diploma they kept on studying. In this way quite a few teachers acquired an honours degree in education.

But they still seemed to struggle to address the learning needs of all their students. The coordinating team members explained that they tried to plan lessons with student diversity in mind, but that "there is no plan B if plan A is not successful for the whole class". They argued that they would have to plan lessons for almost 20 levels of progress if they wanted to accommodate the learning of all their students. They did not have enough time or the necessary skills and know-how to practise multi-level teaching in their full classes and they did not know how to use student differences as a resource in the classroom. Therefore they preferred the pull-out system of learning support. The learning support teacher in the school used to be in charge of the special class in the school before the new education dispensation closed down all these classes, integrated the students into mainstream classrooms and appointed her as the learning support teacher in the school, directly responsible to the Education District Office and accountable for a completely changed set of tasks. In this respect the learning support teacher explained: "I think they still see learning support as the children come to me and I support them." The pull-out system was thus still the chosen tool in the school to address the needs of students who experienced learning challenges. They were still ascribing to the old idea of learning support as the liability of special services in the school and district.

Before 1994 teachers in South Africa were used to working in isolation behind the closed door of their classrooms (Stofile & Green, 2007). One of the teachers at Sunset Primary School emphasised her unwillingness to share her expertise as her lecturer at college used to tell them that sharing with colleagues was not to their benefit. She firmly believed this and was therefore not prepared to share with her colleagues. Clearly, schools in South Africa will not be able to function successfully and address learning diversity meaningfully without learning how to work within an ethos of collaboration and how to transcend cultural, historical and professional boundaries after working in isolation for so long. Although the teachers acknowledged that they owned certain expertise and subject skills that could be shared with other teachers there was not a sharing culture at Sunset Primary School.

There was also discord among the staff because the school brought into play the multivoicedness of an activity system as emphasised by CHAT. The deputy principal explained that "at some stage we had three staff rooms instead of one. There were three groups working against each other." It seemed as if teachers still needed to learn to see each others' differences as resources rather than as problems. Any attempt to establish a community is undertaken by fallible and diverse human beings (Grossman *et al.*, 2001). An interesting example to this effect was the story of the teacher whose services were terminated despite her good qualifications. One of the teachers shared as follows:

> She used to have a passion for teaching. Personal issues got in the way and you cannot see another's good qualities if that get in the way. In a way we all felt threatened by her qualifications and personality, but we shouldn't have felt that way. She had a way of doing things that was not always appreciated. I used to be cross with her at times as well, but I was lucky as I could move beyond that.

The deputy principal further argued that teachers did not understand what democracy was all about. "For them it is now only about your rights and not about love and not about responsibilities that you need to accept." He blamed it on the apartheid system that 'enslaved' certain groups such as the coloureds. They now struggled to understand what freedom really entailed. "You can say it is about a slave which has been a slave all his life. He does not know freedom. If you free the slave he cannot use the freedom." In the same vein a teacher explained:

> Our staff is often afraid to make a mistake, to be caught out making a mistake. That is why we find it difficult to take risks. We are afraid to be a failure. I don't know why this is the case; maybe all the things that had happened in the school.

The teachers were unsure of themselves. The teacher with the longest service record in the school explained that “we were even afraid to come and talk to you because we thought that you were going to call us in one by one and what was going to happen if I did not know the answer to a question.” Even after getting to know me and becoming used to my presence in the school, the teachers were still vulnerable and felt insecure despite all my efforts to put them at ease.

Researcher’s reflection

When the above comment was made the teacher cried and this really brought home to me how vulnerable the teachers felt and how we all struggled in our different ways to cope with all the changes in education and in all walks of life in South Africa. I felt honoured that they were prepared to share their uncertainty with me.

Historically, corporal punishment formed an integral part of the relationship between teachers and students in most schools. With the advent of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996c) corporal punishment was abolished and by law a teacher committing such an act is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence that could be imposed for assault. At Sunset Primary School the teachers suggested that respect between people had “become extinct, both at school and at home, but respect was a quality that students needed to be successful in life”. They linked this, among others, with the abolishment of corporal punishment. The school still used corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool as they claimed that it had worked in the past. The deputy principal explained that “we know that we are not always within limits but it is mostly seen as to the benefit of the child. There is nothing else in place with which to discipline the child. It is very difficult.”

5.9.3.4 Teachers articulating their workplace challenges during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion

Howell (2007:89) maintains that the new education dispensation in South Africa, including inclusive education, asks of teachers to think differently and to do differently. “In thinking differently … we inherently begin to draw from a different ‘set of tools’ to make meaning ...” This means that teachers also need to “begin to use this new set of tools to deal with the transformation challenges ...” This asks for more than merely changing attitudes and raising awareness. It involves “developing a completely new understanding of concepts, terms and practices that we have often taken for granted and that we therefore failed to question” (Howell, 2007:90).

It seemed from the data that the teachers in this study battled to come to terms with Howell’s (2007) different ‘set of tools’ that involved a major shift in attitudes, knowledge and skills. They explained that democracy in South Africa compelled them to move to a democratic education system which they experienced as very challenging. They were also disillusioned with their experience of many teachers, institutions and the media advocating democracy but not living by its principles. One teacher emphasised that "it is difficult to change what you are used to and to replace it with new things". Another corroborated and explained:

> We like to be in our comfort zone – that which I know, with which I am busy is enough. I enjoy doing that and I am at ease with it but as soon as something is added … then I feel it is extra and it is going to take up more of my time.

Ten Education District Offices in the Western Cape are central to service delivery in the province. Each Education District Office has several schools to support. Their brief is to build capacity and to support schools in recognising and addressing barriers to learning. They are also expected to assist the education support teams in schools (Johnson & Green, 2007). It appeared that the school had strained relations with the learning support officials from their Education District Office. The Education District officials seemed to believe that the teachers were not prepared to accept ownership of the learning of all their students. As explained before, the learning support teacher supported the students through a pull-out system and then the teachers were supposed to implement certain interventions with these students in their classrooms. Their forms with regard to students who were in need of individual attention and support were not correctly completed and it appeared as if the necessary interventions with these students were not undertaken. The learning support teacher explained that "there were mistakes in the way that we had done our interventions". The principal and the staff were very upset about the negative feedback.

The learning support teacher further contended that the staff was not prepared to work together and share their expertise and professional or subject knowledge. They always waited for the school's education support team provide the solutions, and were not prepared to do their own research or to serve as members of the support team. The education support team consisted of teachers who were obliged to be there because of their positions in the school. They were not necessarily those with the most knowledge and skills. She acknowledged the Index for Inclusion's emphasis on collaborative problem-solving, but had certain reservations about everybody being empowered enough to bring solutions to the table. She disclosed an incident of a teacher asking for help with two students who were unable to read. When she (the learning support official) suggested that she organise an education support meeting, the teacher answered, "Then you are going to make recommendations and then I have to do it and finish." She interpreted it as teachers feeling "disempowered, or I do not know if they can really help the child, because they still have the old studies or if they are just not prepared to try to help the child in the classroom". However, she felt that the teachers were not prepared to work hard with the students who found learning challenging and then expected her to give all the input with regard to learning support. The teachers were not prepared to accept ownership of these students or to change their practices to accommodate them successfully.

She felt that she was equipped to support the development of teachers with regard to the management of learning diversity in the classroom, but that there was never enough time. Opportunities for staff development were repeatedly postponed because there were always more pressing priorities that needed attention. The priorities of the education support teams were seldom on the staff meeting agendas. It was apparent that the education support team was not an integral part of the functioning of the school and rather managed as an add-on. Over and above these obvious constraints to teacher learning she also listed several other constraints in dealing with learning diversity in the school. The teachers struggled to address the diverse learning needs of the students despite enough support resources in the school. She thought that the reading difficulties and challenging behaviour of students needed urgent attention. There were also too many students in most classes. For instance, there were 50 students in each of the two Grade 7 classes. All students were taught in the same way.

Education White Paper 6 of 2001 recommended that special schools should be transformed into resource centres for schools in their close vicinity. The learning support teacher at Sunset Primary School acted as a mediator between the school and the Education District Office. She also contacted other support professionals such as psychologists and occupational therapists, as well as the special school in the vicinity, when the need arose. The special school was unable to accept all the students referred to them from the different schools and therefore chose to support the learning support teacher by providing certain resources to help teachers and students.

From the teachers' perspective they had "many problems but no solutions". They acknowledged that they were struggling with student diversity and challenging behaviour in the classroom. They put it down to, among others, the transformation of the education system. One teacher offered the following:

> The changes have never stopped; it just kept on coming. Then it is this system and then another. Especially the assessment of the children is difficult and the system is still changing. It seems to me as if the people who have designed everything do not have an idea what they really want. You get so confused and then later on you just choose the easiest way out.

I considered it worthwhile to quote the following teacher in full:

> We are supposed to receive new books for the Foundation Phase but apparently the books are full of mistakes and it is all very confusing. It seems as nobody really knows what is going on. They ask us to keep schedules for each term and each week and then you hear along the grapevine that we should not do this because new things are on its way. We are not sure what to do at this stage. Lately I have been feeling as if I don't care anymore. I am not prepared to take anything seriously any more. We just carry on with our work. We do what we have to do. We just do not stress about anything anymore. We do what we can.

The blaming culture in the school was apparent from many responses of the teachers. They blamed the National and Provincial Education Departments, but also each other. The teachers from the

Intermediate and Senior Phases blamed teachers from the Foundation Phase for not equipping the students with basic skills in reading and mathematics before they reached the senior classes. The teachers from the Intermediate and Senior Phases did not collaborate with each other and there was no collaboration between the teachers from the different phases. Similarly, the secondary school in the community blamed the primary school for not doing their work. The number of students failing Grade 8 was high and there was no attempt at collaboration between Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers in order to ease student transition from one school to the other. The teachers were despondent because they were not supportive of each other. On the contrary, it seemed as if they were actively undermining each other. The necessary respect among the staff and towards the students was lacking. A lack of trust was also apparent among teachers.

Teamwork was lacking and the teachers were unmotivated to attend to important tasks. The deputy principal argued that it was imperative for them to work in partnership if they wanted to bring about the changes that they wanted: “Even though we are unhappy, we are negative, but nobody does anything. All that they do is to blame the management team.” Mistrust between the staff and the management team was openly declared. Some teachers felt unappreciated. Teachers also felt that their expertise was not fully utilised. Since money had disappeared in the school there were regular official audits and “they were watched closely; put under a magnifying glass”. One teacher argued that there was still some misuse of resources in the school to the extent that she was not prepared to pay her children’s school fees. (This was before all the students at Sunset Primary School were exempted from school fees by the National Education Department in 2007.) It appeared that the teachers who were involved in further studies used the school’s Internet facilities and stationery for academic purposes. The principal apparently condoned such behaviour as he himself tended to use the school’s facilities for private purposes. Some of the teachers were not satisfied about this. One teacher felt that the staff was in need “of a session during which we can talk openly about the things that bother us. I sit with a lot of questions and no answers and no place to voice them and then the gap becomes wider for me.”

The teachers also indicated that structure and consistency were lacking in the school. School started late practically every day, which negatively affected learner progress. A positive learning culture was clearly absent. The students were often absent from school and according to the deputy principal they preferred to stay home. He recognised that they had to “think innovatively how to handle the students’ absence from school”. Tables 5.2 to 5.5 offer a more comprehensive picture of all the challenges in the school, also with regard to the teachers as subjects. Corporal punishment was one of the many persistent challenges in the school despite an open discussion on the undesirability of using it as a tool to control the behaviour of students. The deputy principal responded as follows:

> We want to try to change it, because in spite of all the beating that we know we are not supposed to do, the situation is not improving. Corporal punishment does not seem to be the answer, but I feel so powerless. I really don’t know what to do to change all of this.

Researcher's reflection

It was clear to me that no structures and policies were in place in the school on how to effectively deal with challenging student behaviour and bullying, apart from using corporal punishment. The school needed consensus on how to handle student behaviour and bullying on a system-wide level, but this was going to be difficult to accomplish due to the principal's absence from most meetings and workshops. I also found it disconcerting that when the priority of addressing bullying in the school came under discussion, the principal requested that the research team only focus on bullying among students.

5.9.3.5 Teachers telling about what happened as a result of the Index for Inclusion process

Several contradictions could be identified from the previous discussion. Contradictions were evident in the subject-producing activity. Relationships among the teachers as the subjects of the activity were not conducive to collaborative learning and problem-solving. Contradictions between the different components of the activity system were apparent. Relations between the management team (in particular the principal) and the teachers were strained and devoid of trust and respect. (This will receive further attention in the discussion on the social structure of the activity system). Contradictions were also obvious between the central activity and its neighbour activities. For some time the school had apparently, not been performing well against the criteria set by officials from the Education District Team. The researchers entertained the likelihood that the Index for Inclusion process would advance new qualitative forms of activity to emerge as solutions to the contradictions in the form of breakthroughs and innovations (Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, n.d.).

It seemed as if the Index for Inclusion process created awareness that change was necessary and that the teachers as individuals or as a group should take charge and produce the necessary changes. One of the teachers encapsulated this awareness in the following response:

> Democracy is also about your conscience. We need to understand that we cannot sit back. We all need to give of our best. We cannot keep on blaming others and waiting for others. If somebody wants to break down the school I need to take charge and do something better. I cannot sit back as the students will be those that suffer because of my perspective. We have to ensure that another person does not come and live within me without even paying any rent. I have to take charge according to my conscience.

In the same vein, another teacher explained that there was a general awareness that they needed to change as teachers: "We need to do something. We have strong personalities with us. They should just learn to use their energy in the right way and for the right cause. People do not always open up."

Another teacher explained that “it [the Index for Inclusion process] was just what we needed to become aware that everybody can contribute something, even though it is small”. The teachers committed themselves to working for change. One teacher said: “I feel that I can make a positive contribution. I will really give of my best for any change/aim/plan that is put on the table. I will be prepared to accept any form of leadership position when asked.”

One of the female teachers suggested that she had to “be a role model and do the work that is entrusted to me to the best of my ability”. Another one wanted to become part of the process and “help with the priorities to the best of my ability and to make a positive contribution”. A male teacher emphasised that action had to be taken as “it was best not to let it stay at talking but to actively do something about it”. After the Index for Inclusion process had been active in the school for nearly two years, the principal was also more positive towards it and in favour of prolonging the project as a staff development initiative.

One of the teachers made the following comment with regard to a colleague and to show how people differ with regard to handling change:

> I have one colleague that I see as an inspiration to me. When we started the process, she was in a particular place and now I can see how much she has grown. Some people do not want to change or are slow at changing. We go through the same things but certain people just do not grow. Some of the colleagues at the school want to see immediate changes and then they get despondent if it does not happen but then they are slow to make a contribution for the change to happen more quickly.

More than one of the informants mentioned their discontent with the teacher diagnosed with depression who refused to attend any of the training sessions. He was apparently not prepared to change and they thought that his students suffered because of this. The learning support teacher shared that one of his students struggled with mathematics. Consequently the other students bullied her in his classroom to such an extent that she complained of headaches, cried frequently and regularly wanted to go home. The learning support teacher suggested that this was caused by the teacher’s mismanagement of his classroom. He was not coping.

It seemed as if the teachers had “learned and grown from the different workshops”. One of the teachers commented: “I will be an example for my learners and will make them aware that we need to respect each other and that every child should empower himself.” An interesting contribution came from another teacher:

> One of the more difficult challenges was to try to look from the child’s perspective at the classroom and what is offered in the classroom. As teachers we tend to see what we do in a positive light all the time and forget that the children can experience it differently.

They had also come to recognise the value of teamwork and that they could make worthwhile contributions as a team. One teacher learned that “every case should not be handled in isolation but that the staff should be informed and asked for inputs to address problems that are experienced in class in order to improve and learn”.

Initially the deputy principal was very despondent about the school. According to him positive changes were however evident after the Index for Inclusion process started in the school.

> Something positive has happened since you have been in the school. It was much worse than what we do have lately. Maybe there has been a drastic change because we do get together and it is very companionable. The vibe is better. There is still some who want to be negative, but it is a small group. We need to stay positive. There are those who believe that nothing good will happen from the process, but I choose to be positive. I choose not to give up. I try to come to school with a song in my heart, but most often the children take the song away. It does however depend on your attitude.

Towards the end of 2005 it seemed as if he was trying with positive self-talk to cope with the challenges. However, it was apparent that he was not always succeeding. He still struggled to deal with student diversity and in particular with those students with more profound learning challenges and challenging behaviour.

The learning support teacher agreed that they had grown and that they were working better together – except for a small minority of teachers who were still opposing the management team. Apparently the small group of teachers was from the Pre-primary (Grade R) Phase and the Foundation Phase. This was problematic in the sense that there was no cooperation and thus no integration between the Grade R and Grade 1 levels of schooling. This could potentially cause barriers to learning for the young students who had to make an important transition from the pre-school level to formal schooling. According to the learning support teacher the departmental head of the Foundation Phase was “nearly too afraid to go to the Grade R teachers to get them to work together with the other teachers. She tells them what she expects of them but she cannot do anything if they choose not to listen. They do not want to accept her authority.” The learning support teacher had also tried to work with them but they were not prepared to cooperate. Since she was not obliged to work with them she was not prepared to push her initiatives because she did not want conflict.

Success stories were thus shared, but also certain constraints that still needed attention as they could present barriers to learning for students. One of the challenges that seemed evasive was that of corporal punishment. The learning support teacher told of one of the teachers who always questioned the other teachers’ complaints about disciplinary problems in their classroom. She was apparently very strict:

> I think the children are afraid of her, but she gets results because she is prepared to work with her weaker students. She works very well with them and gets good results and good feedback from the Education District Team. She does her interventions and works hard. She believes in corporal punishment.

The teachers were still unhappy with their school building and with certain aspects of the infrastructure. They found it challenging to keep the classes clean. Since there was no paving, the students brought a lot of sand into the classrooms on their shoes. The teachers were upset about the vandalism at the school, which they experienced as degrading. The cleaning staff at the school was obviously not coping with the work. "I was ill last week but I had to come in to help clean up the mess and you can talk, but nothing gets better. We have to do the cleaning ourselves."

The main challenge in the school that still needed attention even towards the end of 2008 was that the group still struggled to implement initiatives The learning support teacher was despondent about this: "We work and try things but I don't know what we do wrong that nothing comes from it." One male teacher voiced his confusion about this:

> It is not that I want to complain, but I find it hard to understand. We are a group of professional people together and then we get a problem that needs addressing and then we get together and discuss the problem. We offer solutions for the problem that we know could work and then it is not implemented. We know for instance that we need to empty the rubbish bins before the children leave for home in the afternoons to prevent the dogs from entering the premises and overturning the rubbish bins, but we do nothing about it. In six months' time the parents or members from the community will again complain about the school grounds being untidy and then we have the same discussion all over again. Nothing gets done!

Initiatives were still initiated and borne by individual teachers. The staff found it frustrating that all staff members were not prepared to collaborate. They also confessed that they preferred their comfort zones. One of the teachers shared her frustration in this respect:

> We still struggle to take action and implement initiatives. At this stage it is difficult. Once you have accepted an assignment in the school, it is yours and all the heads turn to you. It is your job but you do not have the support and cooperation from the others. The people that you need to come on board to help you make a success of the assignment are not there.

When questioned on this, a female teacher remarked that they found it difficult to move from talking to taking action: "You talk and talk and then you just leave it because nothing happens …!" Another teacher explained that this had a negative impact on her and some of her colleagues. They were dissatisfied with the school and their careers in teaching. They would consider leaving the school and teaching in general if they were not financially dependent on their monthly payments. Here constraints were evident within the teachers as individual subjects. Some of them chose to stay in teaching for the money and were no longer passionate about their careers.

Despite their discontent they acknowledged that they had learned much from the workshops. Certain teachers, including the deputy principal, were attending a series of additional workshops in mathematics presented by the same expert that had previously assisted with the workshop in the school. During the introduction of the Index for Inclusion process in the school, the departmental head of the Senior Phase was obliged to teach mathematics to the senior students without any training in the subject area as the deputy principal, who was a trained mathematics teacher, was "finding the task too stressful". The presenter of the workshops reported that the deputy principal was now once again prepared to become involved in teaching mathematics and was attending the training workshops diligently.

The teachers could recognise the value of what they were learning from the workshops, but commented: "[W]e get despondent because we do not see results in the classroom. We attend workshops and give up our private time because that is where we learn but nothing happens." They felt that student progress did not match their efforts to develop professionally. Students at Sunset Primary School were not doing well academically when measured against the National Standards for Grade 3 and 6 students. The staff seemed baffled and despondent about this. The teachers were used to better results during the previous education dispensation and just did not know how to cope with their failure to ensure student progress.

The student from our Department who did her practicum training at the school during 2007 suggested that the teachers reverted back to their old ways of teaching when under pressure from the Education District Office. It seemed as if they found it difficult to change. It was like a bad habit. Their administrative responsibilities were so comprehensive that teaching, which they identified as their real work, was suffering. The teachers had been in teaching for a long time. Risk-taking became a problem as they had less energy and were more afraid of making mistakes. The teachers were now more aware that they needed cooperate and support each other should they want to make changes. According to the student "the teachers have good ideas on discipline. They have meaningful ideas. I think if they can just learn to share. They need to learn that they can learn together – you are not alone and you can support each other when the going gets tough."

The staff related how they had previously been dissatisfied with the multi-functional team from the Education District Office who visited the school:

> We made certain suggestions regarding children who had to repeat their grades but the team did not even listen. They just decided that the children had to go to the next grade. They did not even negotiate anything with us. They just look at the children's books and

> the intervention forms that the teachers have completed and make their decisions and leave. Now we are unhappy with the decisions and want to discuss it with them but they are never available. They want you to just accept their decisions.

A new official was appointed to oversee their school and was more accommodating and prepared to collaborate with the staff. As one teacher said:

> But lately it has changed. We have a new official now. He is working in a different way with us. His way of working makes more sense to us. He listens to the teachers. We know the child and the child's work.

It was interesting to note how well the teachers responded when approached as equals, and when their contributions were positively valued and recognised.

We started this section on the teachers as subjects of this study by referring to the importance of history in the analysis of data. This aspect was upheld in the discussion on the impact of educational transformation on the working lives of teachers at Sunset Primary School.

5.9.4 The mediating tools for teacher learning

5.9.4.1 Introduction

Vygotsky (1981, cited in Wertsch, 2007:178) contends that "a central fact of our psychology is the fact of mediation". The concept of mediation emphasises the role played by human and symbolic tools placed between the learner(s) and materials to be learned.

As explained before, Artiles and Dyson (2005) argued that the Index for Inclusion can be considered for tool use in South African schools if the emphasis falls on learning rather than transfer as teachers (as learners) internalise new knowledge and skills in the context of their own life histories and systems of meanings, as well as in the context of their particular school as workplace. The researchers trusted that the Index for Inclusion as tool would mediate the implementation of inclusive education at Sunset Primary School by causing certain contradictions between the object of the dominant form of the central activity and the object of a culturally more advanced form of activity that could result in teacher learning for inclusion. In this sense the Index for Inclusion was therefore employed as a catalyst for change in Sunset Primary School (Artiles & Dyson, 2005).

As a human tool I was allocated the task of mediating the Index for Inclusion process in the school, bearing in mind the particular context of the school and the life histories and systems of meaning of its inhabitants. This was a complex task that compelled periods of intensive reflection. (My reflections will again be indicated in separate boxes intertwined with the text.) As indicated before, I explained my role as team partner to the staff at Sunset Primary School and worked hard at building a more equal relationship. However, I realised that my positioning as a university lecturer (supposedly coming with a superior knowledge base), as an advocate for inclusive education with the Index for Inclusion as a tool at my disposal and as a researcher, put me in a privileged position with regard to them. There are various ways to explain my positioning within the central activity of teacher learning for inclusion at Sunset Primary School. In Figure 51 the Index for Inclusion as a tool is presented as "a culturally more advanced central activity" being brought into the school to enhance teacher learning as the central activity. This presentation is suitable to position the Index for Inclusion, but my own positioning is explained rather well in a model that Wells (2002) developed from the Engeström triangle to depict the relative inequality in expertise with regard to the activity under investigation. In this model I am positioned as a member of the community but one with the greater toolkit at my disposal. See Figure 5.2 in this respect.

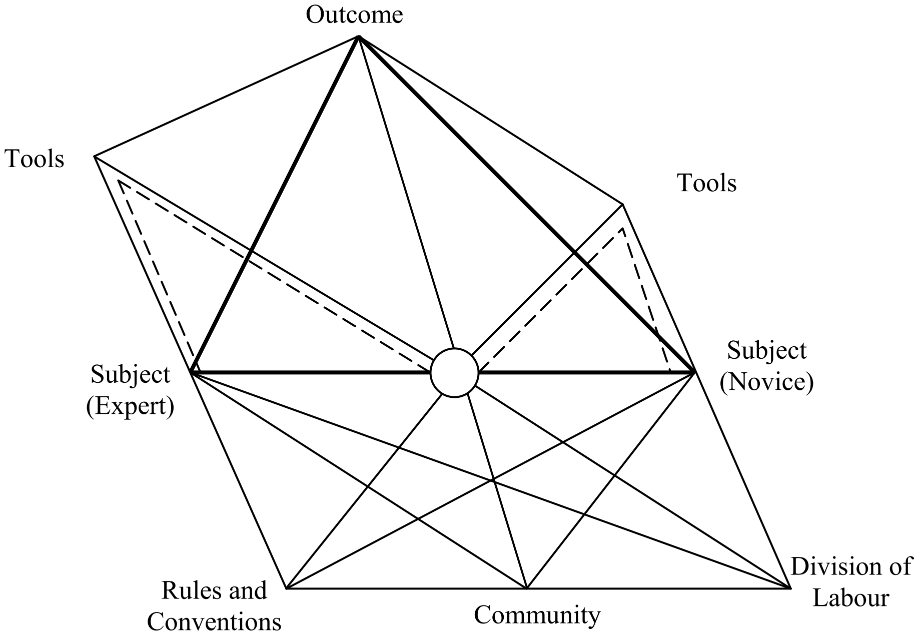

Figure 5.2: Positioning in the zone of proximal development (adapted from Wells, 2002:61)

My particular positioning in the central activity of teacher learning therefore placed me as a relative expert in the zone of proximal development. The focus for the staff of Sunset Primary School was that

> by participating in an action undertaken jointly, in which the deployment of the resources by the more expert is made overt, there is the opportunity for the less expert to appropriate (some of) these resources and thereby to become more able to participate effectively (Wells, 2002:61-62).

As indicated before, Wardekker (2000) correspondingly explains that participatory research tries to use the dialogue between the researcher and the practitioner to its fullest extent as the dialogic process is itself change-inducing. The status quo at Sunset Primary School needed to be interrogated, but this process required that the staff had a *friend* to support them in trying to change deeply-ingrained assumptions, theories, practices and identities.

5.9.4.2 How the mediating tools contributed to learning and change at Sunset Primary School

Education White Paper 6 of 2001 provided the official map for the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa and therefore the Index for Inclusion process needed to be embedded in the principles and practices recommended by the policy document. This was not difficult to accomplish as the two documents were compatible. During our initial engagement with the staff of Sunset Primary School it was apparent that the principles and practices of Education White Paper 6 of 2001 were not integral to the cultures, policies and practices at Sunset Primary School. The staff was aware of the policy document but it was never discussed in any of their meetings; the implications for the school were not considered and inclusion was not actively promoted in the school and community. The staff had gained some rudimentary knowledge of inclusive education through further studies at nearby universities and workshops on the implementation of the revised curriculum for Grade 7.

From the needs analysis phase it became apparent that diversity was not appreciated at Sunset Primary School. Contextual factors, culture and language differences were acknowledged but not considered important or utilised as assets. Teachers were aware of barriers to learning and participation in the school but strategies were not in place to address these meaningfully. There was no initiative or effort to ensure that all students from the community attended the school despite the fact that the staff was aware of several cases of non-attendance.

Researcher's reflection

The Index for Inclusion process allows for a close scrutiny of the cultures, policies and practices of a school, which can result in a whole-school evaluation involving every aspect of the school. Such a process can therefore serve well as a catalyst for change. Although the Index for Inclusion also suggests the uncovering of resources in a school, the danger is ever-present that a school which is experiencing severe challenges can focus on problems and deficiencies to the exclusion of possible assets and strengths. In the case of Sunset Primary School the challenges seemed overwhelming and it took a lot of energy and effort from my side to get the school to acknowledge the positives as well. The staff was so desperate for change that it was difficult to get them to identify assets in the school community and even their own strengths. They tended to return to the challenges that they wanted to address. I would prefer to work from a more positive stance and can suggest that the Index for Inclusion emphasise the identification of assets and strengths in a school more strongly before identifying the challenges. To prove my point the learning support official from the Education District Office indicated in an interview that Sunset Primary School was not listed as a dysfunctional school and despite all the challenges was still performing better than certain other schools in the district.

My mediating role in the school entailed explicating the initiatives of Education White Paper 6 of 2001 as well as contextualising the aims and materials of the Index for Inclusion for use in the South African education system and particularly in the context of Sunset Primary School. I translated all the material of the Index for Inclusion in Afrikaans as preferred by the staff. This was time-consuming but necessary to enhance dialogue and facilitate participation. This was in line with the finding of Booth and Black-Hawkins (2001; 2005) that considerable work was necessary to remove jargon relevant to the English system and replace it with corresponding features of the South African system. These authors also suggested that the diversity of school contexts in South Africa had to be considered when the material was translated and adapted.

At the beginning of the Index for Inclusion process we struggled to negotiate a suitable time for the meetings of the coordinating team and we arrived at a deserted school at least twice. As mentioned earlier, it proved impossible for the school to procure parental representation on the coordinating team. Moreover, the principal was never an active member of the coordinating team. On 17 March 2005 it was arranged that the research team would mediate the results of the needs analysis phase to the members of the governing body. Time constraints did not allow them to become part of the Index for Inclusion process but they were positive towards the implementation of the process in the school.

Researcher's reflection

Time constraints on my side prevented me from negotiating further contact with the governing body. There was discord between the staff and the governing body that complicated relations and negotiations. In retrospect, further contact with the governing body could have been conducive to the Index for Inclusion process, but the staff needed to be supported and all my time and energy went into their learning and support.

As suggested by the Index for Inclusion and discussed in Section 3.3.2.4 the role of the coordinating team in the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process was to aid the exploration of the school's particular approach to school development and to connect the Index for Inclusion process with current working arrangements in the school. The school principal and other senior staff, as well as the learning support teacher and the parents, were to act as members of the coordinating team. The coordinating team needed to raise awareness of the Index for Inclusion process and explore existing knowledge by employing the concepts and review framework and deepening the investigation with the help of the indicators and questions. The coordinating team had to model inclusive practice within the school by working collaboratively and eventually including all school members at the end of the first phase when they introduced the framework to the rest of the school community.

From the data it was evident that there were multiple points of view on the role played by the coordinating team at Sunset Primary School. According to a member of the coordinating team the staff was initially not eager to become part of an inclusive project in the school. From a later interview with some of the staff members, it became clear that they had originally understood inclusive education as only being about the inclusion of students with disabilities. Initial resistance to the implementation of inclusive education in the school was evident in the following responses:

> To realise inclusive education is not always possible in practice. In theory it might be possible. The school cannot keep up with everything and inclusive education will just complicate everything.
>
> I am sceptical. Currently there are many problems regarding language and mathematics. Students cannot read or write properly and cannot solve simple mathematical equations. Teachers are not capable of handling inclusive education and schools do not have the necessary infrastructure.

The teachers also highlighted their overcrowded classrooms. One teacher indicated that "inclusive education can work when the number of students in the class is decreased to not more than 25 to 30". Another mentioned that "the school does not have money to buy in extra teachers to allow for smaller classes".

Some teachers proposed that it was meaningful to start the Index for Inclusion process in the school with a smaller group whilst the majority was in favour of training the whole staff together as such a process "would have saved time and then we could have been further with the process". The learning support teacher experienced being a member of the coordinating group positively as she thought that "something good could come from it". However, she lost faith in the process later because of the non-participation of the principal. She suggested that he set a bad example for the staff through his non-attendance of the meetings of the coordinating team. She also felt that "it would have been better to get the whole staff on board from the beginning". As suggested by the Index for Inclusion the coordinating team had to cascade the message of inclusion to the rest of the school members at the end of the first phase. Due to several constraints (as indicated before) this did not happen and it was left to the researchers to introduce the framework to the rest of the staff. One of the teachers commented that "there might have been a good reason for the coordinating team, but I really do not know why there needed to be one". It was apparent from several other responses that the coordinating team did not involve the rest of the staff. Throughout the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process at Sunset Primary School care was taken to emphasise that school members needed to take the initiative and accept ownership of the process. This did not seem to happen on a collective level, but small sparks of individual effort kept the process on track.

Much energy and hard work went into the training of the staff. Several workshops were conducted, as indicated in Table 4.2. The project's research consultant also visited Sunset Primary School and told of her experiences and the progress made with the implementation of inclusive education in several countries. She tried to enthuse and motivate the staff to get involved and stay involved. Another accomplished researcher from overseas who worked within the focus of inclusive education visited the school and informed the coordinating group of successful inclusive practices in her country.

Researcher's reflection

The staff needed all the encouragement that they could get. Teachers in South Africa, and particularly those from historically disadvantaged communities, have been at the receiving end of a lot of criticism and negativity. The Sunset Primary School staff felt that they were failing as their students were not meeting the accountability measures set up to measure school and teacher performance. This left them with a lot of questions about their own practice and efficacy. They tended to close ranks and avoided reflection on own practice which they experienced as threatening. The staff was aware of the value of reflection but afraid to risk further labelling.

As a result of the Index for Inclusion process certain gains were evident. The school principal commented, "You made impact, I can assure you. I think since you started coming to the school something positive happened, some awareness was created". The teachers indicated certain changes as well. One felt that "the project created the opportunity for an 'outlet valve'. We could get rid of all these things …" Another indicated that "there were so many gaps that we could talk about and many ways to look at problems differently". It seemed as if the teachers enjoyed the process, learned a lot that they could apply in the classroom, that good instruction was given and that everything was well explained. One teacher said, "Something has changed with regard to better relations among the staff, but there is still space for change". Another indicated that she had learned that "it is good when a person has the confidence to talk to others on the staff; to know where you can go when you have a problem". The teachers also indicated that they had come to understand that students also have something to contribute and that their interests should be accommodated.

The staff now adhered to the broader definition of inclusive education; they saw it as being about the successful inclusion, participation and progress of all students. One of the teachers commented that "[i]nclusive education is about including everyone despite their differences and abilities and that each child should be seen as part of an environment (home, town, and country)". Another teacher commented that she felt "good about the implementation of inclusive education as it is a fact that every person has something in himself that he can do". They indicated that inclusive education expects of them to work individually with each student and that it was about all the students in the classroom. They also indicated an improved understanding of an inclusive school community as being "made up of different components, namely teachers, students, parents, the community and all of these should play an important role in the school". The school principal was "surprised to learn that inclusivity is in effect an important aspect of education". He continued:

> Now I understand that inclusive education is about the involvement of various role-players within the circle of cooperation – individuals, organisations, welfare and psychological services. It gives me the idea of a 'one stop shopping centre'. Such a school can address the quality of life of all people. This is how I see inclusivity; an inclusive school. It is an organism that will help to enhance the quality of life of people.

Several teachers indicated that inclusive education was about an attempt to establish community between the students, the teachers and the parents in order to have better cooperation to the benefit of all three parties. All members of the school community should be included - "even businesses and the farms in the community".

The school managed to compile their own anti-bullying policy that was integrated into their year programme for 2006. One teacher remarked that "problems were identified, parents were informed and the puppet theatre was implemented as the place to start". The principal delivered an example of the policy to our offices and it was also sent to the parents. Three teachers put together a puppet show on the effects of bullying on victims. It was presented to all the students. Another teacher borrowed books on bullying from a university library and made it available to all the teachers. The teachers experienced the workshops on bullying as meaningful and realised that they should actively work for better relations in the school and also teach their students tolerance.

An interesting discussion on the value of the Index for Inclusion process was prompted by the video recording that the research assistant made of the puppet show as evidence of good practice resulting from our intervention in the school. This caused some concern for one of the creators of the puppet show. She felt that we were taking their expertise away with us. Another teacher reprimanded her by pointing out that the Index for Inclusion process was different because it gave a lot back: "It was not a process of take but a process of give." They explained that in the past they were often not prepared to engage in research initiatives because they gained nothing from the process. This discussion highlighted the aim of Booth and Ainscow (2002) with the Index for Inclusion process in schools. These authors suggest collaborative inquiry as a way of working where participants are invited to be researchers and, at the same time, the subjects of the research process in their aim to bridge the worlds of practitioners and scholars. Collaborative ways of working are concerned with processes of school and teacher development to facilitate developments in teaching and the learning of students.

The principal suggested that it was "a lovely thing that was done" when we addressed a parent meeting on bullying. At the meeting the principal agreed to make less use of corporal punishment. He also stressed that the school would start on time and that the school grounds would be patrolled during break-time to ensure the safety of the students. Supervision on the grounds before school and during break-times had previously been neglected. Towards the end of 2008 supervision on the school grounds was one of the practices that proved sustainable since the introduction of the Index for Inclusion process in the school. It subsequently became an integral part of schooling at Sunset Primary School.

Furthermore the principal realised that something needed to be done about the school building and school grounds:

> I have one big dream. I want to give the school, the parents, the governing body, the teachers and the children a better school building and better school grounds for the children. You have seen the condition of our hall. The Department does not want to do anything. These requests have been sent to them even before I joined the school. Nothing happens. I have written quite a few letters to the Department. The school grounds should receive first priority.

It was disconcerting that the principal left the process at letters to the Provincial Department of Education and blamed them for not responding to his requests. We had witnessed how the principal from another research school worked to procure funding from the community to realise their dream to build a school hall that could benefit the school as well as the broader community. He did not leave the process to chance and refrained from placing any blame. Today the school hall stands as a monument to their active involvement and perseverance. In 2008 Sunset Primary School suggested a project to clean the school grounds in order to allow for more playing areas for the students, but the governing body still needed to approve the initiative when the last interviews were conducted.

The teachers found the workshop on reading support meaningful and tried new strategies in their classrooms, which seemed to help. A female teacher enjoyed the mathematics workshop and the emphasis placed on problems that the teacher needed to give their students on a daily basis. She proceeded to explain that the new curriculum advisor from the Education District Office also supported this practice. The teachers also made the link between the ability to read with insight and the skill to solve and mathematical problems. One teacher explained that the workshop on mathematics had taught her the importance of understanding that certain things can act as barriers to learning for children. Her comments to this effect were considered worth quoting in full:

> If you use an unfamiliar name in a problem sum then the problem can become too difficult due to the unfamiliar name. If something is not known to the child, he will experience problems. We accept that they know and they do not know. I also learned from the workshops that the context of the child is very important. You come to me and you talk to me and I am going to react to you from my background, from the knowledge that I have acquired along the way. This is going to have an impact on what I say to you. The experiences that I have been subjected to along the way … What is going on in my head is different from that of other people and the children. But most often we forget this

> with regard to the child; we just put the child there and we do not consider his context. I learned that the child comes to the classroom with a certain amount of knowledge and I take it for granted that the child does not know anything, but he enters class with certain knowledge. I need to know what the child knows to be able get the child to understand what I want to teach him.

The above comment indicated some awareness of the importance of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) in teaching and learning.

The school had a computer room and library that had previously been run by a teacher appointed by the governing body. The staff agreed that she was very good at her job. There was some confusion about her reason for leaving the school, but when the project was initiated, nobody was responsible for the library or computer classes for the students. During 2005 students affiliated with a leadership organisation at Stellenbosch University were approached to help organise the library and this task was continued by another student doing her practicum at the school during 2007. Grade 7 students were trained as library prefects and a teacher supervised the team of prefects. During 2008 students who acted as library prefects were taken for training at a nearby municipal library in order to run the school library more effectively. The librarians promised to give the school their old card system as they had recently implemented an electronic system. The library also undertook to send their old books to the school. On a small scale certain initiatives seemed to be in progress.

5.9.4.3 The researchers as mediating tools portrayed as rescuers from outside

As indicated before, the school struggled to accept ownership for moving their school towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices despite our continuous effort in this respect. During the evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process towards the end of 2005, one of the teachers proclaimed that more "support from outside is necessary [from the University] in order to ensure that progress is regularly monitored to combat the habit to procrastinate in the school that will impede the success of the project". They thought that by prolonging the Index for Inclusion process the school would be afforded the opportunity to be involved with more training opportunities to equip the school to operate as an inclusive school in due course. The deputy principal suggested that the school was in need of specific methods and strategies that could be implemented. The impression prevailed that the school and its staff needed to be told what to do in clear and concise terms and that they would like recipes to assure success. His contention was: "We know what we want in place but we struggle to put it in place. We need to know how to put it in place; how to take action. We also need help with strategic planning." One of the departmental heads indicated that "the process should go on until we can say that the school is ready to compile a team that can take the process further with the rest of the role-players, otherwise all that we have done until now will all be for nothing … It needs to go on."

Towards the end of 2008 the same refrain was evident in the majority of responses despite all the input since 2005. It seemed as if they were now aware of what needed to be put in place and even how to accomplish this, but somehow the energy and enthusiasm were lacking. Blaming, passive resistance and even a sense of bafflement and incomprehension were integral to their responses. One of the teachers encapsulated as follows: “We can discuss problems and come up with answers but we struggle to act on our ideas.” Another teacher contributed the following*:* “I think the project made us aware of our problems, but it also enriched us; the knowledge that we have gained. We just need to go and implement it. We struggle to accept responsibility.”

Researcher’s reflection

In my reflective notes from 2008 I indicated that it seemed as if the majority of the staff was still waiting for a rescuer, a magic wand that could make everything better ostensibly without any commitment and perseverance from their side. They admitted to more knowledge and skills that they had gained from participation in the Index for Inclusion process, but seemed disinclined to become involved in the collective aims of the school. I often felt as if I had failed to make a difference on a collective level.

5.9.5 The social unit of the activity system

5.9.5.1 Introduction

The bottom half of Engeström’s (1987) triangle depicts the fundamental social unit of teacher learning at Sunset Primary School as activity under investigation. All three of the components along the baseline simultaneously relate to the components higher in the model as discussed in the previous sections. In this study the group of participants constituting the dimension ‘community’ would be the management team of school, the governing body, the parent body and the community in which the school is locally embedded, as well as all the students attending the school.

Worthen and Berry (2006) argue that a school community has certain rules that allocate different roles to its members; different kinds of work or different positions. As indicated in Chapter 1, the concept of positioning within a school community is considered of key importance, despite limited work done within a CHAT perspective (Daniels, 2007). When discussing the social unit of teacher learning *in situ* as activity, it becomes important to explore social positioning and the distribution of power and work. Daniels and Warmington (2007) and Daniels (2008) suggest that the way subjects in the activity system are positioned with respect to another holds implications for engagement with tools and objects as well as for the ways in which rules, community and the division of labour regulate the actions of individuals and groups. In light of this suggestion, the discussion on the three components of the

Engeström model making up the social unit of the activity, namely community, rules and division of labour, will be analysed in conjunction with each other by exploring the ways in which the different members of the school community were positioned in the data.

Daniels and Warmington (2007:382) further quote Holland *et al.* (1998:41) to emphasise that "the identities we gain within figured worlds are thus specifically historical developments, grown through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those world's activity". From a historical perspective the schooling system in South Africa during the apartheid system took a conservative stance and allocated certain fixed positions to the principal as leader of the school, and to teachers, parents and students as members of the school community. After 1994 the new democratic disposition introduced a completely transformed education system that also held important implications for positioning within the schooling system. Change did not come easily and residues of conservatism were still evident in many of the rules for social positioning at Sunset Primary School when we first introduced the Index for Inclusion process in the school. In Section 3.3.2.3 the transformation in positioning of the different groups in a school community as suggested by the Index for Inclusion and in supportive literature was explored. In this section of the dissertation the positioning of the school members by the participants/informants will be described.

5.9.5.2 Positioning of leadership at Sunset Primary School

In compiling the narrative on leadership at Sunset Primary School it was evident from the data that the voice of the principal could be juxtaposed with those of the rest of the staff despite some reference to the management team as a unit that was not coping. According to the deputy principal the current principal's predecessor was an authoritarian: "He said something and everybody had to do it." He was a resident of the town in which Sunset Primary School was situated and started as a teacher at the school as early as 1961. He left the school during 1993 and thus before transformation in education in South Africa started. The school was a vibrant community and had a good track record during his term as principal. The deputy principal indicated that when he left the school the structure fell away and "everything just collapsed". In the mean time the new education dispensation, which was built on a strong human rights perspective, was implemented. The deputy principal explained:

> The teachers were now aware of the fact that they could refuse to do certain things. They were affiliated with teacher unions and were more aware of their rights. If the teacher did not want to help at a function, then he or she just had to refuse. Nothing and nobody could do anything about it; not the governing body nor the principal. It was your democratic right to withdraw your cooperation.

- **How the principal positioned himself**

The current principal started his term at the school during the period of intense transformation in education. At that stage many tasks were decentralised to schools, which implied that the management teams from schools were allocated a certain amount of freedom in managing their schools, but as one departmental head explained, it had to be "strictly within the rules of the Department". The freedom increased but it brought increased workloads and accountability for formal leadership in schools.

The principal was not a member of the community in which the school was located and positioned himself as "the man from the outside and not one of the family". He also chose to stay on in his house in an urban area quite a distance from the school. This created a geographical distance between him and the school community and operated as a barrier to the effectiveness of his leadership in the school. He further asserted that "the staff experienced problems to accept that an 'outsider' whom they did not trust had the power to decide about their future".

It could be gathered from the conversations with the teachers that there were some problems when the current principal was appointed in his position. The deputy principal also applied for the position but later withdrew his application, as the governing body was looking for expertise from outside the school community. According to an official at the Education District Office, the expectations were very high when the current principal was appointed as he had some status in the broader coloured community. He was seen as the rescuer from outside as they had experienced many challenges in the school since the previous principal left the school. The current principal however never fulfilled their expectations, according to one of the officials of the Education District Office.

From an interview conducted with the principal on 18 March 2005 it became apparent that teaching was not by any means his first choice of career but that his father and the political circumstances of the country during the apartheid dispensation had forced him into teaching as career. He started his tertiary education in theology at his father's demand but was soon caught up in the student politics of the day without a clear idea of what he was protesting about:

> I did not really understand what it was all about; it was only at a later stage that I realised that a liberation struggle was happening. You wanted to be part of it but you were also afraid of the consequences. In the end my parents ordered me home because they became aware of the fact that I was now part of the struggle.

His father had recommended teaching as career because financial support was available from the government to obtain the necessary qualifications. After qualifying as a teacher, he had a complicated career in teaching with short periods in a variety of positions. At some stage he left teaching and held a public service position for a specific political party for three years. He explained his current career aims as follows:

> One of my aims in life was to end up as a minister in the government. I still have this dream. If I receive an invitation to join a political party I would not think twice. I am on the look-out each day and I do hope that my dream will realise. This is really my ultimate aim in life. If I do not accomplish this, I would at least have reached my minimum aim; to be the principal of a school.

He employed certain metaphors, such as “a driver of a car taking everybody with you”, to describe the position of a principal in a school:

> As principal of a school, you should also be a safe driver who knows the road. As driver of the car you should expect jolts in the road; you will go through potholes in the road. You cannot expect your road to be tarred all the way. But you should try to sidestep the potholes.

Other metaphors that he employed included that of an oarsman of a boat and the captain of a ship who had to be the last to abandon ship when problems were experienced. According to him a principal should also show direction to the group. A strong show of leadership was thus necessary. He also indicated that a principal should be a role model. He emphasised the ethos of the town in which Sunset Primary School was located with its strong religious values and thought that a principal should understand and honour this. Cooperation was also highlighted as important because work cannot be done as “loose identities”.

He further asserted that your colleagues should be aware of the fact that you as principal was working at your weaknesses. As a principal you should also be able to handle criticism. He explained that he welcomed criticism if it was constructive: “You should not disempower the leader because then you take the wind out of his sails. It will not pay to be negative towards the principal.” He did not like his staff talking behind his back. He preferred them to confront him directly, but knew that they thought that he did not handle criticism or direct confrontation well. He also stated, “I hate the fact that when I suggest something it is not taken seriously or acted upon. I think that this is the wrong attitude.” According to him participatory democracy did not succeed as the staff needed monitoring when work was allocated. Not everybody in the school was conscientious.

Researcher’s reflection

As explained before, the management team was allocated the power to determine whose services should be terminated when the number of students at a school dropped below a certain minimum. I often reflected on the role that the termination of the services of the teacher who openly resisted the management team played with regard to mutual trust between the management team and the rest of the staff in the school. The staff could have felt threatened by her dismissal as they knew that the student complement was not stable. The teachers indicated that they did not feel safe and appreciated in the school. Although the staff was often negative about teaching at Sunset Primary School they did not want to risk losing their positions in the school.

The school principal resorted to manipulation when the teachers were not prepared to participate. He explained how he gave them an ultimatum that he would stop netball as sport for the students when the teachers were not prepared to represent the school on the schools' netball committee. He further blamed the Provincial Education Department for the crisis management style in the school and argued that it was not the management team who erred in this respect.

He was more positive about the Index for Inclusion process after the interview in March 2005 and also after subsequent interviews. During the evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process towards the end of 2005 the principal talked at length about the cooperation between himself and the staff that was better as *they* now understood his way of doing. He ascribed this to his perseverance with them (while I wanted to claim better relations in the school for the Index for Inclusion process). They used to lag behind but now they were more prepared to work with him and not against him. He implored them to take him as person out of the equation as he realised that "as long as you see me as person, you will not do anything". He called on them to work as a team and commented, "I have these talks with them on an individual basis and I call this staff development."

The principal thought that the implementation of inclusive education could enhance democratic processes in the school. He indicated that the staff found it challenging to accept that they had to take responsibility as they were used to the principal and the governing body making the decisions. The deputy principal corroborated this by explaining that due to democratic education, the management of the school had changed in many respects, but emphasised that the teachers were not keen to accept responsibility. He thought that they were competent but chose to be negative and unwilling to cooperate.

Nevertheless, the principal indicated that in his position he should be available for the teachers and they should be able to look up to him. The teachers did consult him from time to time, especially when they were unhappy with the interpretation of the curriculum by curriculum advisors at the Education District Office.

> Then I tell them that they should be able to use their own discretion. In the classroom you should be flexible and change your practices when necessary; you should be able to think further. The teacher and the student should enjoy what is happening in the classroom.

The principal reacted positively to the quantitative statistics from the questionnaires that were presented to them before the less positive qualitative results were made available. He was surprised that the parent body and some of the teachers viewed the school more positively than he had expected:

> I thought that I, as leader of the school, as manager, have done such a lot of things wrong that I was afraid when you handed out the questionnaires … Oh! I was afraid of what will come back. I have had so much criticism and poor cooperation from certain teachers and

> the members of the governing body that I thought my death sentence was here … Oh! Now I feel more positive.

He was more disturbed by the results from the qualitative section of the questionnaire as indicated before, but still thought that the Index for Inclusion process should proceed:

> The report back [to the teachers] should also happen and I am even comfortable with the questionnaires. I do not mind if you ask personal questions, but it rankles me when certain teachers, particularly the core group, want to get at the management team. You should be very cautious [when reporting the results]. In these sessions they can voice their opinions.

Researcher's reflection

The above comments clearly revealed the principal's fear of exposure. The way in which he presented himself and the manner in which he communicated often shrouded his deep uncertainty as he was aware of the fact that he was not coping. I often wondered whether his many absences from meetings with the coordinating group and the staff were not also indicative of a fear of exposure.

- **How the rest of the staff positioned the principal and the management team**

Power issues in the school were clear from the beginning of our engagement at the school. Strong opinions prevailed on the principal's non-involvement in the Index for Inclusion process and it raised serious questions, such as: "What good can come of the process should the principal not be involved? The principal is after all the leading force in decision-making."

Researcher's reflection

The principal was furthering his qualifications and this was his main objective, often to the detriment of the school. He was often not at school due to illness, doctor's appointments and death in the family. This caused the research team many problems as we wanted to conduct the process in a transparent way. We were forced to keep him informed about the progress of the process behind closed doors. We implored him to attend the feedback session on the qualitative data from the questionnaires, but he again exempted himself from the meeting.

One of the teachers commented as follows:

> The principal should play an important role in the implementation of inclusive education, but the principal of our school's heart is not in his work. He does not have the necessary leadership qualities to lead the staff. Structures that are not in place, I ascribe in totality to the inability of the principal and his management team. The school functions on crisis management.

Another teacher felt that "if a principal has the necessary attributes then inclusive education can be successfully implemented" while another one indicated that "if the head is not right then we have a disaster at hand because everybody follows the leader". One of the teachers also talked about "the inability of leadership in the school [that] is going to make it [the implementation of inclusive education] a slow and laborious process". Another teacher remarked that "the principal should be open for transformation and this approach should be important to him as without him the process will not succeed", whilst others suggested that "the leaders of the school need to lose their 'positions of power'"; and "the leadership need to change their way of thinking". A teacher also longed for "enthusiastic and dedicated role-players to lead the initiative".

The coordinating team suggested that the school was run as if there was no leader in the school and that each teacher was only liable for his or her own work, whilst the learning support teacher indicated that

> the principal still thinks that he is the head of the school and that he will do things his way and he does not allow anybody telling him differently. He will organise and manage the school as he prefers. If he does not want to change, he will not. It is because of this that he does not get the team behind him.

This might be seen as a paradox, but it could be ascribed to the principal assuming the position and status of principal of the school, but not fulfilling all the expectations allocated to the position to the satisfaction of the staff. The coordinating team also indicated that there was a negative atmosphere at the school because the teachers' expertise was not utilised. They suggested that the expertise of teachers should be utilised regardless of position and that responsibilities should be rotated.

On several occasions the staff members indicated that the principal did not have a vision for the school and the school's policy documents on language, religion, HIV/AIDS and the curriculum had not been completed as expected by the Education District Office. Their admission policy had also not been written. The school's development plan had been compiled at an earlier stage but had been lost. A suggestion that the school development plan be revisited again raised questions on the principal's non-involvement in the Index for Inclusion process. One of the teachers indicated that there was no structure and consistency in the school. It had become a pattern in the school and caused disciplinary problems: "If you mention this, you get into trouble." Another teacher explained that "the governing body wanted to start clearing more ground to enlarge the playing area of the students but it was vetoed by the principal". It seemed as if the principal succeeded in crushing any initiative that was not his own.

The school seemed stuck and was not moving forward. One of the teachers suggested that this was caused by the staff's unwillingness to move from their comfort zones due to the mistrust between the management team and the rest of the staff. One of the teachers explained it as follows:

> The management team is on the one side, this is the feeling in the school, and then the teachers are on the other side. The management team has a specific role to play and if the team does not fulfil this role, then they do not fulfil my expectations and I withdraw, despite all my good qualities. I withdraw, because I feel ... it is not my concern, it is not my work to do, and I think this is one of the problems in the school. Even though I have all these good qualities, I will not do anything, because it is their work. They are the senior management team. I get this feeling among us.

During a workshop on democratic processes in the school a teacher commented that the school was not being managed in a democratic way. She was not sure about her rights in such a process. In certain areas the school seemed to be managed more democratically but in others the need existed for greater transparency.

The deputy principal reported that the school principal had initially been negative about the Index for Inclusion process as he suspected there were hidden agendas behind everything, but was gradually changing his perspective:

> He cannot feel about the school as I do, but I think he is becoming more positive about the process. I think so, but he can be more dedicated than what he is. He can be more dedicated. I think he sees that there are people who want the change. We are busy pushing him for change. He does not have a choice any more. If we do not accept ownership of the process of transformation of the school, it is not going to realise. The majority of the people want to cooperate.

The deputy principal suggested that strong leadership was now necessary in the school and described somebody that he knew who had all the good leadership qualities that Sunset Primary School needed:

> You know what we need; we need a strong leader; somebody who can lead the school and can give direction where he wants to take the school and then he also needs to convince us to go with him. I know such a person that is doing good work in a particular school. He works miracles at the school. He has a good vision for his school. He knows exactly what he wants to accomplish. He does everything according to the rules. He will tell you exactly what you should do and what you are not supposed to do. He is not afraid to call a spade a spade. He keeps his side clean and therefore he can hold others accountable.

He acknowledged that the management team should give strong guidance with regard to planning, as no structures were in place. They needed to learn to plan effectively: "We do not have any systems of control in place; we have a lot of work to do, but the potential is there. We have competent people on the staff." He mentioned how impressed he was with the way another school (one of the other research schools in the UNESCO project) worked together as a team to plan work schedules and learning programmes: “They identify a theme and then work progressively and integrate. They are in control.” He wanted to organise a meeting for the management team and the senior teachers with the principal of that particular school in order to learn from them. He was also concerned about the school’s relations with members of the Education District Office. He felt that these members did not have a high regard of them.

The learning support teacher reported that the school and teachers received a negative report from the Education District Office and that they did not handle it very well. The principal reinforced their negativity and even wanted to write letters of complaint. He tended to position himself as blameless and as always in the right. He did not lead the teachers to learn from their mistakes and he reinforced their negative and blaming attitudes. One of the departmental heads argued that when a principal

> sees that my style as leader causes problems, it causes discontent and resistance, I need to change my style. If people have got it all wrong and my style is the only right one, it is another story, but there are times when my style is more destructive than constructive.

Another teacher suggested that she was believed the principal did not listen to others’ viewpoints: “You can say anything but he only hears what he wants to hear. He does not mind about anything else that happens around him.” From the perspective of another teacher it seemed as if the school still worked in the traditional way; from the top down:

> It is often very difficult to give away power, because very often it is the only thing that I do have. I even talk about power in the classroom. If I have been a teacher who was always in control, as soon as I have to hand over power, then I feel as if I do not count anymore; I am not important anymore. You need to give something of yourself away. It needs small steps.

Towards the end of 2005 the teachers again referred to the principal who was not involved in the Index for Inclusion process. They wanted the process to be prolonged in the school and were afraid that he would terminate the project.

Researcher’s reflections

The principal was good with words and knew all the right answers, but his actions belied his words. It seemed as if his loyalties were not with the school and as if his private agendas were in conflict with those of his career in teaching.

Towards the end of 2008 the teachers stressed that the school was not the principal’s first priority and even calculated how long it was before his retirement. One of the teachers suggested that “the problem with the principal is his personality”. Another suggested that “a good leader should have a vision for the school. If it is only about me, about my issues, then it is not going to work. He needs a vision for the school; to give direction.” One of the other teachers extended the argument by suggesting that “a good leader is for me somebody who has a vision for the school, who can keep the school moving but who can also take the people with him”.

- **How the student who did her practicum at the school positioned the principal**

The student who did her practicum at the school during 2007 mentioned the principal’s divided loyalties and added that she thought he was not a good role model. She suggested that he looked after his own career to the detriment of the well-being of the school. Teacher learning could only happen in an inspiring and supportive environment. She implied that the principal was not able to inspire and motivate the staff:

> There are so many resources but how does one mobilise these resources, also those inside themselves, because I know that they are clever people and they have a lot to give. I think empowerment is important. This is what they do not get from the principal. They need to be supported. If you feel that you are not supported … they do not have this. They need to get some recognition and acknowledgement. You need to know that you are going to make mistakes and that it is okay, somebody needs to say that it is alright and we need to go on together … the school needs a vision to get everybody on board. What is important from a leader in the school? A vision, support for the staff, leadership, empowerment of the staff and modelling. Risk-taking is important; you need to jump in and then you are going to learn.

She also emphasised team learning because then “you are not alone because everybody is learning with you and sometimes it would be difficult”.

The principal was away on sick leave from school for three months just before she joined the school. The teachers told her that they were less tense and prepared to voice their opinions when he was not at school. They found it difficult to oppose him. She modelled another way of working with him; a less opposing way, because she discovered that he was more amiable when not opposed but rather acknowledged and even flattered.

The student was of the opinion that he tended to bully the teachers:

> The teachers become frustrated and then they bully the children, then the children get demanding at home and frustrate their parents who have worked all day and then beat the children. This is a bad cycle, because now the children come to school and they are even more demanding at school. The cycle repeats itself. Teachers then feel out of control because nothing works.

However, she reported that the teachers felt that relations were better at school, although she felt that there was still room for improvement and ascribed 70% to 80% of the school's problems to bad leadership:

> He does all of this in a very subtle way. You think that you have his support but he is very sly. The teachers have not learned to be critical and do not always know what he is doing; they do not have critical skills. He manipulates them. They feel unhappy but cannot pinpoint the reason for this.

- **Teacher leadership in an embryonic phase**

Various comments indicated the staff's newly discovered awareness of the importance of teacher leadership for their school's well-being. This could be considered a learning gain from the Index for Inclusion process. A workshop, dedicated to democratic leadership processes in their school, was presented as part of the Index for Inclusion process, and in light of their newly acquired knowledge they conceded that inclusive education placed a high premium on leadership in a school and that all staff members were equal and equally responsible for change. They suggested that they needed "committees in which we can all make our contributions" and that the project should be prolonged and that they should "establish a platform where we can give our opinions freely without feeling unsafe and intimidated afterwards". One of the departmental heads was serious about not withdrawing his cooperation and about doing his part in the school:

> I cannot sit back because somebody else is not cooperating, because then I am contributing to the collapse of the school. I cannot make her the culprit if what she does is bad for the school. I need to change and just be the better person. I need to do it better and change the bad thing that she has done. In this way we can build up the school. I cannot cooperate because somebody else is not cooperating. At the end of the day the children are going to be the losers because of my perspective … This is how I reason about this.

One of the teachers indicated that she was prepared to become involved with the change process in the school and declared herself prepared to take leadership in any aspect of the process. Despite their willingness to take the process further they struggled with the implementation of priorities for change. One teacher indicated that planning was done, "but names and time are never linked to tasks". It seemed as if the management team was not allocating tasks, monitoring the progress or rendering the necessary support.

5.9.5.3 Positioning the parents and the community

As discussed in Section 3.3.2.2, parents and teachers in South Africa have historically participated in a system that divided and separated, which is incompatible with the notion of participatory democracy. What is currently considered necessary is that parents and the community be recognised as full partners of the school (Engelbrecht, 2007). This partnership has been formalised by legislation. Different leadership bodies for schools were introduced by the South African Schools Act of 1996, of which the school governing body (SGB) allows for parent representation in the governance of the school (Prew, 2007).

Apart from the formal structure for parent representation in the school, schools will also have to *work* to include the parents and the community in the school as an essential part of being an inclusive learning community. With regard to teachers' internalisation of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion, teachers will have to learn how to form inclusive, respectful and equal partnerships with the parent body and the community. Parent recognition and involvement in inclusive education implies that relationships need to be established between the schools and parents and that a commitment is necessary to overcome problems through communication and collaboration between parents and teachers (McKenzie & Loebenstein, 2007). This is seen as mutually beneficial and it is believed that especially the learning process of the students will prosper. Research has indicated that student attendance, attitudes and conduct improve when parents work with teachers in partnerships (McKenzie & Loebenstein, 2007).

Furthermore, schools need to establish sustainable relationships with their local communities. Such relationships can help schools to obtain outside resources and to innovate. Schools need to develop productive relations with the community in order to survive and become sustainable (Wai-ming Tam, 2007). This is especially true about schools in less affluent communities as are often seen in South Africa (Johnson & Green, 2007).

UNESCO (1994) further argues that establishing a school as an inclusive learning community is essential in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating welcoming communities and in developing an inclusive society. The successful implementation of inclusive education is thus expected to lead to a more inclusive society (Dyson, 2001). For this purpose all members of an inclusive learning community (teachers, parents, students and local community members) are implicated in a collaborative learning process for a school and community to become more inclusive.

- **The parents**

As an important first step the Index for Inclusion process suggests the inclusion of parents and even community members in the coordinating team. As indicated before, Sunset Primary School was unable to procure parent membership on the coordinating team, despite their willingness to conduct the meetings in the evenings to accommodate working parents. The principal mentioned that parental involvement was problematic in the school. He suggested that the parents were to blame. The following selection from one of the interviews with him is offered as evidence of his positioning of the parents:

> **Principal**: I would have preferred if the parents were keener to become involved in the Index. I now look at what the children are giving the teachers and I compare it to my own time at school. We were very proud in the classroom situation and we played the game of competition. I do not see anything of this in the new system any more. I ascribe this, among others, to the weakening attitude of the parents towards the child and the school. I think the majority of parents do not know what is going on.
>
> **Interviewer:** Because they are not informed?
>
> **Principal:** They are not informed. Maybe inclusivity can help to address this shortcoming.
>
> **Interviewer**: To get more information to the parents and the community?
>
> **Principal:** Correct. Correct. They have to become more involved with the child, be interested in what he has to do at school, assist him with his assignments and if the parent needs information, get into contact with the school. Ask the school what they should do.

It seemed from the data as if conflict between the school and the parent body was on the table since the principal's appointment at the school, implying contradictions between dimensions of the same activity system. It was evident that he blamed the parents for non-involvement in the school and wanted them to take the initiative to contact the school, while the parents, in turn, indicated in the questionnaires that they wanted more communication and transparency from the school.

The deputy principal also positioned the parents negatively as uninvolved and non-supportive of teachers. According to him parents felt that their children should not be unnecessarily disciplined and often took their part:

> At the moment we get that the child is telling the parent stories about the school, drawing a negative picture and when we do anything wrong, then they react strongly. Because we do not really get their cooperation, they make it so much more difficult for us to help the child in the right direction. They send the child to the school and then the teacher has to battle on his own with the child. And when you do things as teacher that is not within the rules, the parents will come and jump down your throat. They should rather come and talk to you to better understand what is happening, but now they threaten you with the police. And then we only try to do the best for the child.

From the responses of the parents during the needs analysis phase it was apparent that a distinction could be drawn between teachers that were more accessible and those that were less accommodative of parents. On the positive side parents acknowledged that they were invited to parent meetings and could see teachers at their initiative.

A teacher indicated that there was seldom collaboration between the teachers and the parent body and that parents were not used as resources in the school. Another acknowledged that she had less contact with parents than in the past and was aware of the fact that this was not conducive to student progress:

> We need to give them the opportunity to come to the school, understand. We need to tell them about the school. We do not invite them into the school to become part of the school. We tend to think this is my area; I work here and when the child leaves the school, then it is again the parents' responsibility. We do not really work together … We used to have parent evenings for different grades. As Grade 5 teachers we wanted to invite the parents of the whole grade, but the office did not want to allow that. Everything that we want to do, have to go through the office and this was one of the things that got lost along the way. We give the parents so little from the school's side. The principal did not want it. I do not understand his reason for this. I never went back to ask again. I do want to do it again.

The learning support teacher indicated that parents were only called to the school when their children presented with problems:

> They do not get pulled in to assist us with the learning of their children. I think they will get more involved if we should invite them …. I do not think that they know how to get involved with their children's learning. We even should do something about that as well.

In general the staff was aware of the fact that a greater effort was needed to reach out to parents and to invite them into the school as partners, but blamed the parents for not being committed to and supportive of the learning processes of their children. The general idea was that parents needed training in order to work in partnership with the staff to support their children. Some of the parents also refused to pay their children's school fees. Tension was evident insofar as only some parents were usually invited to participate in school functions. Whilst these parents felt that they were doing all the work, the other parents felt excluded. It was clear that a concerted effort was not made to invite the parents as partners into the school despite the fact that teachers indicated that teamwork between the two parties was needed to address challenging student behaviour that was on the increase.

Teachers rarely visited the parents of students, while one of the few teachers who did do home visits attested to the value of personal contact with parents:

> Our parents appreciate it if you make contact with them; they like personal contact. You get much more cooperation from them. At the moment the school's only contact with the parents is through letters to the parents. There is a certain distance between the school and the parents. If I have a problem with one of the students and go and see the parents, they will then give their cooperation.

Another teacher narrated a less positive experience whilst on a visit to one of the student's homes. This particular student was not making the desired progress at school. The teacher commented, "The parent was intoxicated and very disruptive and this placed me in a very difficult position in the presence of the student."

The community in which the school is located was a close-knit one. Members of the community cared for and supported each other on a regular basis. There used to be a strong feeling of community, and intermarriage was advocated to uphold the homogeneity of the community. Lately the community had been infiltrated by people from the neighbouring farms who had moved into town. The Department of Welfare had also placed orphans from outside the community in foster care at homes in the community and they now attended the school. These families were often negatively labelled and excluded and the children from these families were often discriminated against in the school. The school was confronted with increased student diversity and it was easy to label and categorise due to earlier homogeneity in the community and school. The staff felt that students were more subjected to unstable and dysfunctional families than in the past and testified that police records indicated a high percentage of reported cases of violence in households in the community. The staff suggested that this reflected in aggression and violence among students at the school. The learning support teachers confirmed that they had to accommodate challenging cases in the school:

> We mostly find that the parents of these students have problems. They are also not prepared to come to the school. They struggle with drinking problems. They are not prepared to do anything. We have two problem children in the school and their parents own a shebeen.[1] Those children have a lot of problems at the school. They do not make any progress. The parents are not interested. We even went to their home, but the parents are really not interested.

The principal blamed the parents for negative attitudes towards teachers and for encouraging their children to disrespect teachers. He suggested that disruptive behaviour was not appropriately handled at home and that this negatively impacted on student behaviour at school. According to his perception the town was such a close-knit community that teachers were aware of students' circumstances. Sometimes teachers argued with parents and then took it out on their children. The teachers argued that parental involvement in the school could help to address the problem of challenging behaviour in the school. They further asserted that students presenting with challenging behaviour in general experienced problems at home. They tried to address this by collaborating with the community clinic.

The research team addressed two parent meetings (one for the Grade 1-3 parents and one for the Grade 4-7 parents) on how to combat bullying in the school by working as partners with the staff. At the first meeting, presided by the principal, he addressed the meeting after our presentation and promised the parents that the school would in future start on time and that the teachers would supervise the playgrounds on a regular basis in order to combat bullying. He also explained that the school wanted to do away with corporal punishment and asked the parents for their support in this respect. As an alternative form of punishment he suggested that “the mouth is a powerful tool” and that sarcasm should be considered.

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[1] A shebeen is a previously illegal drinking house particular to South Africa. The owner of a shebeen is now required to apply for a licence to legalise the business. However, certain shebeens are still operating illegally in communities.

Researcher’s reflection

I was shocked at the idea that he could suggest that parents use such a demeaning form of punishment as sarcasm. I once again realised that because he had not attended most of the meetings and workshops presented as part of the Index for Inclusion process he had not been exposed to the full message of inclusion.

The deputy principal presided at the second parent meeting. My reflective notes on this meeting indicated that the parents seemed aware of the challenging nature of teaching as a career. Some of the parents had previously helped with supervision in classes and had empathy with the teachers. They indicated that it was difficult to manage student behaviour in the large classes. They also felt that the children of the community were always on the street and involved in undesirable practices because they did not have enough healthy leisure activities.

The principal was very positive about the contribution that we had made at the two parent meetings:

> I even saw some smiling faces that have never been there before. I thought that shots would be fired after you left the hall and then we had a good conversation. I was so surprised. I want to predict that the relationship with the parents will be better from now onwards.

During the 2005 evaluation phase of the Index for Inclusion process the principal reported that the parents were now more willing to pay the school fees:

> You never talked about school fees but just emphasised cooperation in order to enhance the general image of the school and look what happened; the parents were more prepared to pay their school fees. I am so happy that parents now understand that it was not only the school’s game but that they should also become part of the process.

The teachers also indicated a greater awareness of the contribution that the parents could make to the school. One teacher remarked, “We need to get our parents involved and get and use their input.” Another teacher suggested, “The parents should know our aims with the school and receive information on our aims.” The learning support teacher confirmed that she contacted the parents of the students that needed learning support on a regular basis and organised meetings with them, as well as with the parents of students presenting with challenging behaviour.

More importantly, the teachers talked about equalising relations with the parents. One comment was: "We will have to move away from those formal meetings, we need to equalise the playing field." One of the teachers again highlighted the importance of working with parents in a partnership and emphasised that they needed to do something constructively to get the parents involved in the school as well as in the learning processes of their children: "The other evening with the parent meeting, I thought it was a success and that we should try to get a special speaker for every meeting with the parents in order to give the parents something." According to the principal the subject of invited speakers at parent meetings had been on the table before, but they never seemed to manage to do something about it in time. He mentioned a few topics that might be of interest to the parents, such as a talk on HIV/AIDS or drugs.

- **The governing body**

Based on the guiding principles set out in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the school governing body at Sunset Primary School was responsible for the governance of the school while the school management team was in charge of professional leadership in the school. Parents, the principal and elected members of the staff had a seat in the governing body. Apart from certain responsibilities towards the school, especially with regard to the finances of the school, the mission statement and code of conduct, the governing body was also, among others, liable to "stand in a position of trust to the school" [Section 16 (2)] and to "promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school" [Section 20 (1)].

The principal of Sunset Primary School spoke openly about his conflict with the governing body. At one stage he indicated that they were supposed to play an intermediate role between the school and the parent body, and not an interfering one. From his perspective there were too many members of the governing body that trespassed on the terrain of the principal and the teachers. At a later stage he commented as follows:

> Cooperation with the governing body is not what it should be. We work as two separate identities. I had problems with them lately. They reported me to the Education District Office for not being at the school. I do not think that it is their task to check up on me. I think they should have approached me directly; make an appointment, come and see me and discuss the matter with me. They still need to learn the difference between control and manage. We very often have problems. Their support is lacking. They feel that they are in the position to dictate to the principal and to come and inspect the school whenever they feel the need. We need to allow each to have their own territory and respect each other. This is not the case in the school.

The deputy principal confirmed that the cooperation between the school and the governing body was not always to the benefit of the school.

Researcher's reflection

It was difficult to determine who was in the right. It seemed as if the principal was often absent from school and the governing body might have been worried about this.

- **The community**

It seemed from the data as if there was some community involvement at Sunset Primary School but not on the same scale as in the past. In one of the meetings with a group of teachers one of the teachers explained the status quo as follows:

> Often we sit on an island. In the old days we had a lot of contact with the farms in the vicinity but that happened when other principals were in charge and there were other farmers on the farms. They had close contact with the school. At the moment they are there and we are here. We have not done anything to approach them therefore we do not know how they are going to feel about helping us. Some people from the farms are helping with art classes, the soap kitchen and muffins; there is some contact, but we have not done anything to approach them on a wider front. Sometimes individual teachers will approach the farmers for donations when we have to organise a function for the school, but not everyone will do this.

The general feeling was that the management team should take the initiative and not the rest of the staff, but it seemed as if the school had estranged the community:

> With our community and with our resources we are not inclusive because we have chased them away. We do not have the cooperation of the farmers and the rest of the community. See the condition of the playground and they have all the resources to help us with the school grounds … to give the children a better place to play. We really chase people away. Even with the garden project … they help us and we do nothing. Some of the farmers told us directly that they were not prepared to help us due to the attitude of the principal. Our school suffers because of this; we all suffer …

We asked the principal for his opinion on involving the community in the school, but he was very evasive and only replied, "We cannot expect too much from the farmers in the community."

There was some communal involvement, particularly from a group of farmers' wives who established an organisation 'Imbali Western Cape' at the school. They worked in the community and presented art classes at the school, facilitated municipal involvement with the garden project of the school and also provided soap as well as muffins for the feeding scheme. The group also entered the school for the Woolworths Trust EduPlant[2] competition, an annual programme coordinated by Food and Trees for Africa. Teachers can attend free permaculture workshops where they gain knowledge of permaculture principles, hands-on gardening techniques and integration of food-gardening projects into the outcomes-based learning curriculum. On returning to their schools they are supposed to initiate a food gardening project. This includes designing a permaculture environment, starting recycling programmes, applying permaculture techniques and growing a food garden that includes fruit and vegetables. The learning support teacher became involved as representative of the school. She felt strongly that the project should prove that it could be sustainable.

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[2] Details on The Woolworths Trust EduPlant initiative can be viewed at http://www.woolworths.co.za/caissa.asp?Page=ITB4_RHContext&Post=CO-Community-EduPlant.

The community could also make use of the school's facilities for their meetings and the coordinating group suggested that farmers in the vicinity pay the school fees of their workers' children. Once when we arrived at the school for a session with the teachers, a group of students were practising in the principal's office – they were preparing to sing at the funeral of one the students' mothers who had passed away. Another time we witness to a career day organised by the police for the Grade 7s at which people from the community came to speak on different careers.

The data collected by means of the questionnaires during the needs analysis phase of the Index for Inclusion process at the three research schools indicated that vandalism was only particular to Sunset Primary School. Vandalism occurred on a regular basis and caused a great deal of inconvenience for the teachers. It often left them despondent and sad. From the interviews with the participants it seemed as if they accepted it as part of the daily hardship in the school. It seemed as if certain measures had been taken to combat the problem but without any success. They had never considered the possibility that collaboration with the community in this respect might help to address the problem in a more holistic, systemic and appropriate manner.

5.9.5.4 Positioning the students

The Index for Inclusion adheres to the broadened definition of inclusion which supports and welcomes diversity among *all* students. Inclusion in education recognises and celebrates diversity and the development of inclusive teaching and learning approaches built on these differences. It is therefore evident that to realise inclusion as a value in education will call for deep changes in what goes on in classrooms and on playgrounds as the aim of inclusive education is to eliminate social exclusion stemming from certain attitudes and responses of a school community to student diversity based on criteria such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability/disability. The participation of all students is accomplished when they learn alongside others, learn collaboratively in shared learning experiences and are actively engaged in quality learning (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). More deeply, participation means having your voice heard, being recognised, accepted and valued for who you are and what you bring to the learning environment (Ainscow & Kaplan, 2005; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). This means that democratic and enriching education takes place in the classroom with learning support available for all students (Bouwer, 2005). Dealing with the complexity of student diversity and rendering support to ensure quality learning for *all* students would entail that teachers have to ask whether their decisions allow for participation and inclusion or involve the exclusion and silencing of students' voices (Mariage Paxton-Buursma & Bouck 2004).

During the needs analysis phase the participants highlighted certain challenges with regard to the students. At Sunset Primary School approximately a third of the students came from surrounding farms and more rural areas, while the rest were inhabitants of the town in which the school resided. When black students with isiXhosa as home language chose to join the school, the school expected of them to adapt to learning through the medium of Afrikaans. The staff argued that it was the choice of black parents whether they wanted to register their children in the school knowing up front that the language of teaching and learning was Afrikaans, thus they were not prepared to consider language as a potential barrier to learning and participation at their school. According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996c) the governing body and the school were allocated the freedom of choice with regard to the language of teaching and learning at their school.

Certain children in the community were not attending school as legally required. One of the teachers suggested that bullying was the reason for certain students' non-attendance. Their absence from formal schooling seemed to go unchallenged by the staff.

The teachers acknowledged that students were not seen or used as resources at the school. They were also not receiving any training in computer skills and the library was not functioning at the school. One teacher called the library and the computers "white elephants". As previously indicated, the school could no longer afford the services of a teacher that use to manage these positions. The teachers indicated that students were eager to learn computer skills (as also indicated in the questionnaires that they completed) but the computers needed to be updated and the school did not have the necessary funds. One of the teachers highlighted the importance of computer skills for students and the staff's apparent inability to do something about this:

> The principal promised to contact the Khanya project[3] but he has to date not followed this up. Computer skills are so important for the students but we do not do something about it. It is now for quite a few years that the students do not have computer classes and it is really very sad. I do not understand why we do not make it a priority.

The playing area and sport grounds at the school were under-developed and unsafe. The school used the municipal sports grounds when necessary. Not enough students participated in organised sport activities and more extra-mural activities were necessary, according to the teachers.

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[3] Details on the Khanya Project of the Western Cape Education Department can be viewed at http://wced.wcape.gov.za/home/projects/khanya.html.

The responses of the parents and students on the questionnaires referred to bullying, disciplinary problems and the lack of respect between the teachers and students as problematic in the school. One male student remarked in jest that he did not need television any more as there were enough fights at school to watch. The participants referred to a lack of respect and appreciation in the school and suggested that relations among students were characterised by competition, envy, discrimination and exclusion. Collaboration was lacking between teachers and students and discrimination thrived in the school. Discriminatory practices led to the othering of certain students. A teacher offered the experiences of her own son at Sunset Primary School as an example of the negative effect of discrimination. She warned the teachers to be careful about stereotyping and discrimination against certain students. Her son was currently having a hard time in the local high school due to his perceived sexual preference. He was head boy at Sunset Primary School and had to hear that the school had two head girls.

Another teacher told about two girls who had been on their way to the principal's office because they had been fighting. She talked to them and tried to help because she knew that the principal was busy. The one girl apparently told the other that she did not have to wear the school's black tights because she was black enough already. The teacher asked the one who was identified as 'too black' how she felt about the other's comment. She said that she was very sad. The teachers then facilitated a class discussion on discrimination and the teacher also asked for forgiveness should she have harmed them in any way. Then they had a long talk about all the things that bothered them:

> Then I handed each one a booklet that they could keep as a journal; everything that makes them happy or sad has to be written in the book. I will look at it every Friday. I also implored them to go to the people that they have harmed and to say that they were sorry. One student was busy writing a letter and when I asked her about it, it was about her father. She cried because she has asked her friends for forgiveness but felt sad about something that she had said to her father. It is easy to talk to them about emotional stuff, but they do not want to learn.

The teacher introduced journal writing as an emotional outlet for students in response to the film Freedom Writers that was shown to the staff during the workshop presented on challenging student behaviour towards the end of 2008.

The National Education Department introduced feeding schemes in schools for students from poverty-stricken households. Although such a scheme is an asset to any school, the teachers at Sunset Primary School reported that the students did not appreciate the food. The feeding scheme, as a form of nourishment to pave the way for more successful learning, was also violated by certain students who discriminated against those who were dependent on the food to survive the school day.

The teachers suggested that the students struggled with low self-esteem and that this was an issue that needed to be addressed urgently. They also lacked social skills. The student of our department who acted as an informant confirmed this and suggested that their low self-esteem was detrimental to learning progress.

Challenging student behaviour was identified as a significant problem at Sunset Primary School. The deputy principal in particular seemed despondent and admitted to feeling powerless to make a difference. The children's destructive behaviour was affecting him. He felt that it was immobilising and draining him. He really did not have the answers:

> The transformation that happened in education since I was a child, it was not good for our children; our discipline in the school is pathetic. Our children do not want to learn. They are undisciplined. You try your best. I try my best to teach the children, but I think they do not have the ability to remain still and to listen. They cannot listen. If you give them work to do, they will do anything but their work. It is very difficult. It is difficult.

He blamed the students for being hyperactive, rowdy, noisy, and difficult to control, with abilities well below grade level: "I do work in Grade 5 that they were supposed to do in Grade 2. They do not understand the work. The Grade 7s do work that they should have mastered in Grade 5."

The deputy principal provided the following vignette as an example of student behaviour.

> I had to handle a difficult case of a gang that had beaten up another child. Some of the children are members of different gangs and then they fight and swear at each other. They get very aggressive. A lot of them were at the back of the school and did not heed the bell. There were quite a lot of other children watching the fight. This is now television for you! They did not even have to pay to watch television. There were five other students beating up one student. They accused him of swearing at their parents. I just did not know what to do. I had this feeling of total powerlessness. I really did not know how to stop the fight. I thought of sending them home with a letter to their parents but realised that this would not have the necessary effect. I then made them sit down and talk. But I really did not know what else to do. The five explained that the culprit insulted one of the student's parents and now they were retaliating. I really do not know whether this was true.

The teachers confirmed that student behaviour was out of hand. According to them the unsuitable behaviour of students included swearing, disrespect for teachers and each other, discrimination and name-calling, littering, aggression and fighting, graffiti on walls and desks, stealing and under-performance in school work. They wanted support and skills to address student behaviour in the school as current strategies to address unruly student behaviour had proved ineffective. Corporal punishment was still one of the methods that they used despite the fact that it had been illegal since 1996. Alternative ways of disciplining students were not working. The deputy principal felt strongly about finding "other methods to control our children, because an undisciplined child; academically they are going to get weaker, because they are absolutely undisciplined". The teachers sent the students that misbehave to the office:

> We do not know what happens there. Children are suspended and sent home for up to five days and then they come back and then they just carry on as before. They come to the school with their parents when they get suspended. There are many instances of challenging behaviour and emotional problems in the school.

The non-attendance of school was also a major problem. When we visited the school we often saw children of school-going age quite openly walking in the neighbourhood during formal school time. One of the teachers explained that "children are supposed to be in the school after the examinations are finished, but they choose to stay home. The Department is strict about the children attending school until the last day; there is such a rule." They realised that they needed to do something about this as soon as possible.

One of the teachers suggested that discipline should start with the teachers and then you could move to the students. This was the only incidence of a teacher indicating some awareness of the fact that teachers might be a contributing factor in the challenging behaviour of students. Shields (2006) argues in this respect that the implicit belief still holds that schools and classrooms are structured appropriately to meet the needs of all the students and that when students fail to prosper, there had to be something wrong with them and/or their families. According to the student who did her practicum at the school the principal indicated that challenging student behaviour was on the increase and that the staff (including the management team) was unable to curb the tide. She explained that she wanted to tell him that it was all about how behaviour was modelled in the school. They shouted at them and acted out of control. She suggested that the students modelled their behaviour.

Researcher's reflection

I often suggested to the staff that the school needed a preventative approach to student management on a school-wide level. During the bullying workshop several strategies were discussed on how to deal with difficult behaviour and towards the end of 2008 a workshop was conducted based on the book *The Freedom Writers* and the film with the same title. We hoped that the workshop would create awareness for more constructive ways of dealing with conflict and difficult behaviour in the school. Neither the principal nor the deputy principal was able to attend the workshop. The teachers indicated that they found the workshop illuminating but once again the leaders of the school were absent and I doubt if a system-wide intervention resulted from the workshop.

During our conversations with the staff it was clear that they did have a fair grasp of the 'policy talk' on how to teach a diverse student body. They talked about the fact that every student was unique and had to be accepted as such, that every student should have the opportunity to reach his or her potential, and that the school and the curriculum should be accessible to all students. In the same breath they confessed that they struggled to address the diverse learning abilities and needs of their students and blamed the students for not being interested in learning. One of the teachers explained how she tried to entice the students in her class to get them to do their work:

> They do not want to do mathematics. They want to knit and do practical things. Now I have them knitting. I do present the learning area Technology, and I can give them practical stuff to do. But I give them a lot of work and only when they have finished the work, they are allowed to knit. All the girls and boys knit in my class. They now finish the work quickly so that they are allowed to knit. We try to give them things to motivate them to learn and to finish their work.

Systemic Evaluation (SE) is a national system introduced by the National Education Department to measure the progress of students in Grades 3 and 6 respectively. Sunset Primary School’s results were in general poor when measured against the criteria set by the National Education Department for the two grades. The students underperformed in both literacy and mathematics. One teacher commented, “It is particularly with mathematics that the students struggle. Our children really struggle with mathematics.” Several teachers were unhappy with the procedures employed during SE and one made the following comment:

> They [the students] know the stuff but as soon as they are in a different situation with different people, they become afraid and confused and then they see a lot of things that seem the same and then they just write because they want to finish everything to get away from the situation. I do not like the way in which they test the children. I am not satisfied. I am sure that the children are better than is reflected in their national test results.

The learning support teacher identified reading as one of the more profound challenges of their practice. It was found that the students struggled to read. Since reading is fundamental to most learning in school, the students found all learning areas difficult. One of the teachers confirmed the students’ reading problems:

> We really have problems with reading and at times you get despondent. The girls seem to cope better with reading than the boys. The girls read paragraphs without struggling, but some of the boys, if they have to read one sentence out loud, they struggle. Most often I am so relieved when they get to the end of the sentence.

According to the staff there were students in all the grades who struggled with reading. They could not keep up with the rest of the class and the teachers found it difficult to accommodate them in class. The learning support teacher indicated that there were two students in Grade 3 who could not read at all.

Several stories were told of students experiencing severe learning problems. One of the teachers told of John who was then in his last school year. It appeared that he had never been able to progress academically and as a result presented with behavioural challenges in class. The teacher admitted that he had not been adequately supported throughout his time in school and was often expelled from school for up to five days at a time. The learning support teacher told the story of a little Grade 2 boy, one of twins, who was struggling academically to the extent that he could not even write his name despite having repeated Grade 1. He had been tested for neurological problems and was now awaiting placement in a special school in the vicinity. The parents had initially not been eager for him to attend the special school, but had relented and signed the necessary forms. His learning was supported by the Grade 1 teacher last year, but the Grade 2 teacher claimed that he tore up all his work and that she had nothing to show to prove that interventions to support his learning had been conducted. The learning support teacher suspected that he was not receiving the necessary learning support apart from the pull-out sessions with her. It was evident from these stories that teachers at Sunset Primary School were struggling to support the learning of their students with more profound learning needs.

Certain learning support tools were available to teachers in the school. The learning support teacher put a system of files with activities on language and mathematics at their disposal. A dispute however developed with regard to where the files would be stored so that all teachers would have easy access to them. At the time they were stored in the learning support teacher's classroom, with the result that her work was often disrupted. They had previously been stored in the school library with easy access to all teachers, but the principal removed them after he found that the teacher who was labelled as the one causing discord in the school, and whose services were later terminated, consulted the files in the library during periods when she was supposed to be in her classroom.

Group work was employed as a teaching strategy but teachers found it challenging to handle. It seemed as if they were not well informed about the many different strategies available when using cooperative learning in the classroom. Some teachers explained their understanding of group work by indicating that the students first read in groups, then in pairs and then individually. The buddy system was also employed when more able students were used to support those experiencing challenges.

During the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process several workshops were presented to address the priorities set by the teachers, as indicated before. In response to our work on bullying, the teachers prepared a puppet theatre on the negative effects of bullying and also addressed this topic in Life Orientation classes. The library was also re-opened and library prefects were appointed.

From the needs analysis phase it became apparent that a platform for student voice needed to be established. The staff and students did not trust each other and student voices were silenced and not included in any decision-making processes. Certain teachers indicated that they wanted more say for students. A teacher referred to "a space for students to give their opinions". One of the others remarked, "I have always tried it in my career as a teacher to give children a say but they also need to accept responsibility."

The principal was less positive about allowing greater student deliberation in the school. On the one hand he declared that he was positive about the opportunity the Index for Inclusion process afforded students to give their perspective on the school and suggested, "We need to extend a hand to each other; to the parents, the teachers and the students and they have to react positively to allow for positive energy in the school." On the other hand he said that he was being wary of allowing students too much say in the school:

> The younger the child, the more he thinks with his emotions and not with his head. We have to be careful because the children are manipulated by older people, they can bully the children. We have bullies here. We need to listen to the children but then their opinions should not be influenced. I believe in student voice, but we cannot pull the very young child into the circle. If we want to work with the child and teach him how to take responsibility for his or her actions, then I am happier. We need to strengthen their voices to help with change but …

When questioned on the same topic, the deputy principal also seemed less enthusiastic about establishing a platform for student voice in the school. Although we explained that by allowing students to make a contribution and work in collaboration with the staff, their pride in the school might be restored and their work might improve, the principal and deputy principal were not prepared to take the risk.

During October 2006 I presented a workshop on values and leadership to a group of 28 Grade 6 students who had been identified as possible leaders for 2007. This was done at the request of the researchers and endorsed by the teachers. The workshop was presented interactively and explored values such as respect, collaboration and caring for one another. The modelling of these values was unpacked, as well as the problem of bullying in their school. Tentative action plans were developed and I promised to take their action plans back to the staff.

Researcher's reflection

I was impressed by the eagerness of the students to participate in the activities developed for the workshop and by their level of participation. I was particularly impressed by their insight into the challenges that their school faced and by their willingness to become part of the solution. Although I realised that all the students attending the workshop were academically from the top half of the class, I still thought that the staff of Sunset Primary School was underestimating the potential of their students to become worthwhile collaborators in an inclusive school community.

As the concept of an inclusive school community and students as important members of such a community was emphasised during the workshop with the students, the researcher explored this with the teachers and presented the students' action plans. It was considered of key importance for the students to be acknowledged for the contribution that they could make to an inclusive school community as they were prepared to work collaboratively with the staff in addressing the needs of their school. I underscored my favourable impression of the students and implored the staff to use the students as resources in the school. The teachers did not seem very convinced about this and were slow to react to the students' action plans. The students later conducted their own meeting and a delegation of students went to the teacher in charge of the student council to offer their help. The teacher later recounted that she had been astounded and had felt out of her depth, but she accommodated them. Apparently the school leaders did well for themselves during 2007. This workshop could count towards a small victory for the Index for Inclusion process.

5.9.5.5 A summary of the social unit of Sunset Primary School

The activity system of the Index for Inclusion was presented in Section 3.2. With regard to the rules of the activity system, flexibility and inclusivity were underscored and with regard to the component 'division of labour' democratic and inclusionary structures and processes were envisaged as potential outcomes for the Index for Inclusion process at Sunset Primary School. The possibility for change in the school was premised on the belief that the introduction of a tool such as the Index for Inclusion into the activity system would enhance transformation in all the components of the activity system and bring about substantial changes at a collective level, propelling the school forward towards becoming an inclusive learning community. Collective learning resulting in changes in the rules and division of labour in the system, as well as in the positioning of members of the school community, was thus envisaged. These changes would consequently afford further and continuous teacher learning for inclusion in a cyclic movement. According to Wells (1996) the Engeström model does allow for the possibility that rules may be changed or the division of labour may be modified or other semiotic tools may be valued in creating different activity systems; ones that can for instance encourage rather than constrain teacher learning.

This discussion on positioning at Sunset Primary School, as derived from the data, emphasised the significance of the role that the social unit of the activity system played with regard to affording or constraining teacher learning. It became apparent from the data that leadership presented profound challenges for developing the school as an inclusive learning community. Rules and the division of labour in the school acted as key constraints to teacher learning in the school despite our hard work in the school. Notwithstanding gains such as a heightened level of awareness and an improvement in knowledge and skills, several constraints were presented by the components of the social unit of the activity system. These constraints contributed to the positioning of the school as "an island"; a less safe and welcoming environment for teachers and students alike, and acted as barriers to teacher and student learning at Sunset Primary School.

5.10 PEN SKETCHES OF THE PERSONAL LEARNING TRAJECTORIES OF TWO TEACHERS.

5.10.1 Introduction

The section on the learning trajectories of two teachers of Sunset Primary School was partly presented in answer to Hodkinson and Hodkinson's (2003; 2005) critique of Engeström's contribution to workplace learning. As indicated in Section 3.4.5, they claim that Engeström only recognises the individual as a small part of something much wider. They propose a combination between learning as social participation and learning as personal construction. They see this as a more effective way of studying and improving teacher learning. Billet (2008) also argues for a refocus on the individual learner.

According to Edwards and Apostolov (2007) CHAT locates individual learning in contextual affordances for both thinking and acting. They thus consider the social context for learning as important. A school as a workplace is a diverse entity with dissimilar and unequal voices and perspectives represented in the activity system, which implies that not all members will necessarily react to change initiatives in the same way. According to Engeström (2001) it may happen that when contradictions of an activity system are aggravated, some individual staff members of a school may begin to ask questions that may result in deliberate and collaborative change. Teachers are thus not passive receivers and can learn and change and therefore act in new ways in the school (Edwards & Apostolov, 2007).

However, Edwards and MacKenzie (2005) argue that settings will vary in the scope of change they offer. With regard to Engeström's (1987) use of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) at the level of the system in which people are operating, Edwards and MacKenzie (2005) contend that teachers' individual ZPD may be restricted by the school contexts in which they work. Expansive teacher learning will involve a repositioning of teachers in relation to their world of work because they will interpret their practices in new and often more complex ways. Each teacher's ability to act on his/her novel interpretation is, however, directly related to the capacity of the school to respond to his/her repositioning.

It therefore becomes clear that little distinction is made between learning and shifts in identity. Identity is closely aligned with a disposition towards particular forms of action and school affordances to support such action. Worthen (2004) claims that through learning the teacher changes his/her position in school and learning can thus change both identity and the self. According to Geijsel *et al.* (2001) the type of learning that is necessary during periods of change in a school is that of identity learning. Without changes in teachers' personal identity, sustainable changes in schools are not possible.

Section 5.2 indicated that several constraints to teacher learning were evident at Sunset Primary School throughout our four-year engagement with the school and that the school struggled to move towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices. However, the data indicated that certain individual learning gains did take place. In this section I focus on the learning trajectories of Francelle and Hannah, who had both been teaching at Sunset Primary School for a long time. In tracing their engagement with the Index for Inclusion process it was possible to put together pen sketches of their learning trajectories over a period of four years.

5.10.2 Francelle's learning trajectory

I explored Francelle's learning trajectory from her own perspective, as well as from the perspective of the student who worked closely with her and from my own observations. I had the privilege to gain glimpses of her learning trajectory on numerous occasions of personal interaction, during the activities with the coordinating team and in the workshops, as well as in the interviews I conducted with her.

Francelle, who was born in 1963, was the learning support teacher at Sunset Primary School. She was a respected resident of the town in which Sunset Primary School was situated and also a wife and mother. She was originally trained as primary school teacher and also held a Diploma in Special Needs. Towards the end of 2008, when I conducted the last interview with her, she had been working as a teacher for 21 years of which 14 years were spent at Sunset Primary School. As explained before, she was first employed as teacher in the special class in the school and mostly worked in the isolation of her own 'special' classroom. Since the transformation in education in South Africa her role changed to that of learning support teacher in the school and she was placed on the payroll of the Education District Office. Her affiliation with the Education District Office placed her in a more elevated position as she became responsible for all the learning support in the school. In this way she found herself even more on the periphery due to her affiliation with the office with which the school was often in conflict, but she had to 'infiltrate' the system of the school and work across boundaries with all staff members. This called for a major repositioning as she had to render support to both teachers and students.

When we entered the system of Sunset Primary School, Francelle was not a very happy person and her self-esteem was low. Certain expectations were attached to her new role that she had to fulfil and this called for engagement on a wider level with all her colleagues in the school, but also with the school management team that included the principal, the deputy principal and the departmental heads of phases. She became a member of the coordinating team of the Index for Inclusion process in the school. From the beginning of the Index for Inclusion process she questioned the principal's non-involvement and the feasibility of the process in the school if it was not supported by the school principal. Involvement in the coordinating team of the Index for Inclusion process demanded dedication and time on her part. Although she was prepared to make the sacrifice as she believed that the Index for Inclusion was valuable to the school, she did not want to waste energy and time on a process that she saw as less likely to succeed due to the principal's half-hearted engagement.

During our first interview with her it was apparent that she did not want to say anything derogatory about the school principal. She indicated that she was afraid of intimidation, but it was obvious that she held him personally responsible for many of the challenges that the school experienced. From her perspective the education support team was not operating to its maximum potential in the school because it was seldom even on the agenda of staff meetings. The principal did not support it properly and he was definitely not making any contribution to the professional development of the staff as related to the support of the diverse learning needs of the students. She tried her best to cascade the knowledge, skills and resources that she received via the Education District Office to the rest of the staff but felt that she was not really accomplishing enough. She worked well enough with the teachers of the Foundation Phase but indicated that she had less opportunity to support the more senior grades. These teachers did not do the necessary interventions and struggled with multi-level teaching in class with the result that students were not well supported and not making the necessary progress. She commented that the teachers wanted her "to take over all their problem children and do not want to give any input". She went on to say, "I have to do all the learning support and make and the recommendations. They do not want to be part of the TST" [education support team]. Francelle also emphasised that the teachers were not prepared to engage in collaborative learning and share their expertise. There was not really any indication of teamwork. She also acknowledged that she "did not have the confidence" to support teachers in their classes: "At the moment I do not have the confidence to go into their classes, but maybe if I get invited ..."

She attested to becoming despondent and critical of the Index for Inclusion process mostly due to the negative attitude of the principal but also because of the inability of the school management team to push for change in the school notwithstanding the principal's reluctance to engage with the process. Towards the end of 2005 she had lost all hope that they would be able to make the necessary changes and started withdrawing from the process. At this stage of the process we asked for a second interview with her. We acknowledged her despondency and she conceded that in the beginning she thought it "a good process" and she "was very positive". Then she felt that "something good could come from it". She suggested that the process could have been a positive one should "the principal have been a part of the coordinating team from the beginning as it would have been easier to get it to everybody in the school. Due to his absence from the meetings there was not enough progress."

Researcher's reflection

It was difficult to explain to her that we were well aware of the challenges presented by leadership in the school, but we realised that we had to keep up good relations with the principal to be able to continue with the Index for Inclusion process in the school. We explained that we still hoped to get him on board. The principal's reluctance to engage with and take charge of the change initiative in the school adversely affected our positioning in the school, as well as our integrity, making the facilitation of the process more difficult. At times I too became despondent.

Despite her despondency she was so desperate for change in the school that she went to the principal to tell him that she had realised that she could not withdraw from the process. At this stage she commented:

> I have realised that I need to go in stronger; I cannot withdraw my cooperation. I told the principal this morning that I cannot sit back; I need to do more than the work allocated to my position. I need to tackle the system from the inside out.

She also conferred with her senior at the Education District Office because she was not sure whether she was allowed to "take initiatives in the school" apart from her role as learning support teacher. According to the official in charge, she did give Francelle permission to become more involved in the school although it was not part of her role description.

After a team from the Education District Team visited the school in 2005 Francelle was once again very pessimistic about the principal and the staff's potential to change and grow. As explained before, they received a negative report from the team due to the lack of learner support interventions in the classroom. She felt sorry for the staff and wanted to help but their negative and blaming attitudes, supported by the principal, and their unwillingness to learn, caused her a lot of stress.

> When I came to the school yesterday morning I wanted to know what I could do to help. I asked them how they do it and then we can go from there and work out the interventions, but when I heard what they were saying, I told them I was not going to help anymore. I am not going to help. I had to go for a very long walk, yesterday, to walk off all that stress. Today I also told the head that such remarks were not admissible.

At some stage Francelle was also called into the office to be reprimanded about something that she had said and she told the principal that she felt that she did not have freedom of speech: "I told him that I could not tell him what I felt because I knew how he was going to react. He could easily put a bad mark against my name and so forth."

After our second interview with Francelle, she was more willing to stay engaged with the Index for Inclusion process and opened her classroom for the different workshops presented during 2006 and

2007. During the second and third term of 2007 two of our students who had to do their practicum for school counselling were placed in the school at my request as I thought that they would be able to give further support in the school after I terminated my regular monthly engagement at the school towards the end of 2006. The student employed as informant for my study worked closely with Francelle in supporting the learning of students who struggled. The student modelled the more recent approaches in learning support and tried to enable Francelle to gain more confidence. The latter responded positively to her encouragement.

Because our students modelled the new approaches to learning support taught in the Department, Francelle realised that she was in need of more knowledge and skills. The student who acted as an informant explained:

> Francelle asked me for the booklet on our Honours because she watched me helping the children and could see that it was working. She was interested to do the Honours in Learning Support. I think it is important to model new approaches…

The student also acting as informant further clarified her perspective on teacher learning as she had communicated it to Francelle:

> You need to try it because then you are going to learn. You cannot do it by swimming on dry ground; you need to jump into the water yourself. I think it is so important that a person ….. and I think that very often they are afraid to jump into the water because they do not known what is going to happen … They saw that it was okay when the two of us [two students doing practicum at the school] showed them … It is alright and you can also … Nothing will happen.

The student reported that Francelle became convinced of the importance of learning in a team and supporting one another:

> Francelle told me that she now realised that they need to take hands and be there for each other. She also said that she was not sure where she would find the time but that it was very important if you look at the role of teacher support teams and everything …

It seemed that Francelle learned a different way of managing the school principal that was more beneficial to change in the school:

> She said that when we were at the school they saw another way of dealing with the principal. It might be a little 'scaly' [underhand] but you have to let him feel good and acknowledge his importance, even if you do all the work. In the end you get so much more done than when you resist him and … You need to do this because the school's ethos and the whole school are influenced by him.

When the two students first started their practicum in the school, it seemed as if Francelle found it challenging to work with the students. She later professed to not liking the students at first and being negative towards them, because she thought that she was not very popular with them. She did not feel very accepted by them. It was only when she started the waste removal project in the school in partnership with the students that her confidence increased and her relationship with the students changed. Apparently her attitude towards the principal also changed for the better. The student acting as an informant commented:

> I have been there today and her relationship with the children is totally different. She is completely different. The teachers tend not talk about what bother them and then they think things that are not true. Her self-esteem is also much better. I looked at the garden and it was wonderful. You cannot believe it and the school grounds are cleaner as well. I went to the principal today and asked him to help to keep the project sustainable and if we could phone the paper and report how the school is trying to keep the environment green or something to that effect. He was very positive and even excited and he gave Francelle the number of the paper and this is completely different from when we first came here.

I received a phone call from Francelle towards the end of 2007 to tell me about the good things that were happening in the school. She asked me to visit the school again. I could hear the change in the tone of her voice. During 2008 I interviewed her for the third time. She was happy to report that she was not as negative as when we first started the Index for Inclusion process in 2004. She reported on several changes in her personal and working life. It seemed as if she was finding it less challenging to move across boundaries in the school.

> I do not have … uhm … problems any more to communicate with people on the role that I have to play here … uhm … and what we should do through the TST and so forth is better. We do our work and so forth. So I can say that I have made progress since 2004.

She also confirmed a change in her relationship with the principal, as suggested by the student, which she rated as conducive to her actions in the school. It was clear that the principal was not prepared to change his actions, but he responded positively to the change in her. She remarked:

> And with the head, I try to keep on his good side because I need to work through him. If I do not work through him I will not be able to do anything. I try to be positive with regard to him but that does not mean that I am satisfied with the way that he does things but I make sure that we are on good terms in order to do the work in the school that needs to be done. I just need to remain positive. I now know that I need to remain positive should I want to do my work here, because I have learned from the past that being negative is not going to help me. Yes, and I feel that we have made progress.

She was in charge of the waste removal project and the garden project, but still struggled to get the other teachers on board. She reported that they still resisted collaboration. The management team was also still struggling to lead change initiatives. She was prepared to accept the leadership role with regard to the management of the two projects in the school but she had to ask for their help as they were not always prepared to share the responsibility:

> I told Ms … the other day that the two of us are always on the teams that have to organise the functions in the school. We want to stand back once and see what happens. But we have to start everything. We even had to take a new initiative on character building in the school forward. Nothing happens as the head does not do anything. I told Ms … let us take charge of the initiative, and then we divided everybody into groups and then we proceeded, but it can be better. Another school is doing well with the project and it was even in the paper. I do get despondent and do not know what we do wrong that we struggle so much to succeed.

When further questioned on the change in her, she offered the notion of a deliberate change in disposition and that she was motivated for change to happen in the school. She suggested that anybody could change if they were truly serious about it and that responses from your social environment wrought changes in you.

> It might be due to the interviews that you conducted with us and the workshops. In talking to other people … it brings change. A colleague also once remarked that even when only a fly sits on my nose I would take offence. This got me thinking and changing. In this way you try to change as other people … you hear them talking in a negative way about you and then you try to be more positive. It is possible to decide to change and do it. It is possible, yes, a person can change. You can work at it.

Francelle experienced it as very positive and confirming that others could see the change in her. She also suggested that self-transformation was possible through an intentional act. She found it difficult to understand the negative attitudes of others from the perspective of her new-found energy to change and grow. She thought that all staff members at Sunset Primary School had to cope with certain difficulties in life as they all came from difficult circumstances [due to apartheid] but she knew that it depended on how you chose to perceive your circumstances that made the difference:

> I feel very good that other people can see that there was some change in me. I do try and then I feel good. If you can see that we are making progress and you have made a contribution … and you feel good when … uhm … your colleagues tell you that they can see the change; you have grown in a positive way and this is what a person wants to do … and what you want to hear and you do not want to be negative … I cannot understand that people who have been in teaching for such a long time and then want to look at the negative all the time. A person wants to change.

Francelle also ascribed her change in demeanour to spiritual growth and greater involvement in the church. As an elder in church she also accepted more responsibility for the welfare of others:

> I am now more involved in the church; I do not know if it makes a difference. I am an elder in the church … and you have contact with fellow believers, and you pray together and this can make a difference in you …

Francelle's learning trajectory appeared to get its impetus from an intentional effort to change in reaction to both positive and negative input from her social environment. This reminds one of Vygotsky's proposition that individual and social learning processes are interdependent. This can be explained through the notion that each intramental function appears twice in development and learning: once in the form of actual interaction between people and the second time as an internalised form of this function; from intermental to intramental level (Artiles *et al.*, 2000; Kozulin, 2003; Smagorinsky, 1995). All higher psychological functions, such as Francelle's reflection on the self, are therefore construed as internalised social relationships which form the social structure of personality (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Impetus in her personal and working life was sustained through several initiatives from the Index for Inclusion process, such as the interviews that were conducted with her; the workshops; through the support and confirmation that she received from the student who worked closely with her and through the positive reaction from colleagues to the change in her, as well as through her closer engagement with her church. It was evident from the description of her learning trajectory that she made certain learning gains that externalised in a change in disposition and actions.

Francelle had to make an active choice to disengage from her own negative and blaming past and accept responsibility for self-transformation in opposition to the negative and blaming culture that continued to prevail in the school. She could also see that her effort had brought about changes in the school despite the lack of support from the management team and certain colleagues. Teacher leadership became embodied in her efforts to make small but actual inroads in the status quo at Sunset Primary School despite being unsupported by the system. In her own way she thus accomplished mastery over restrictive contextual constraints in order to learn, grow and change as a person, teacher and learning supporter (Fuller & Unwin, 2003; 2004). In her case it was possible to talk about identity learning as highlighted by Geijsel *et al.* (2001). Through learning Francelle was able to change both identity and the self (Worthen, 2004).

5.10.3 Hannah's learning trajectory

I explored Hannah's learning trajectory from her perspective and from my own observations. As was the case with Francelle I could 'peek' at her learning trajectory on numerous occasions of personal interaction, during the activities with the coordinating team and in the workshops, as well as in the interviews I conducted with her.

Hannah was born in 1957 and was also a long-time resident of the town in which the school was situated. Apart from her professional role as a teacher, she had to fulfil numerous roles such as that of wife, mother and community member. She was originally trained as primary school teacher and was one of the teachers who received her BEd Honours towards the end of 2005. When I conducted the last interview with her in 2008, she had been working as a teacher for 31 years, of which 13 years were spent at Sunset Primary School. One of her children, a boy of 19, struggled with learning problems since his admission to Sunset Primary School. For her it was important that he should at least learn social skills and good values at school as he struggled with the academic side of schooling. He left school at the end of Grade 10. She explained that he had never had formal learning support and was currently at home. He found it difficult to keep a job because he had a short concentration span:

> For some time he will be interested in something; then he will do it and he will work very hard. He usually puts in a lot of energy; ten years' energy. I have diagnosed him and I think he has problems with hyperactivity.

Together with Francelle, Hannah was the other teacher at Sunset Primary School who showed leadership qualities and a preparedness to accept a leadership role in the school. This implied that they were often over-burdened with responsibilities. Hannah's strong opinions were apparent from the beginning of our engagement in the school and she was often prepared to talk on behalf of the other teachers. They welcomed this, but she later refused to volunteer her opinion in meetings in order to force a contribution from her colleagues.

Her learning trajectory started from a position of deep despondency. She acknowledged the role that the Index for Inclusion process in the school played to lift her out of her depression:

> It was good to me because, although there were not always solutions, it provided me with the 'escape valve' to get rid of all these things. It helped me a lot to look at things in a different way; in a way different from my usual perspective. I was now able to consider others' perspectives and I was able to look through their eyes.

Her engagement in the activities of the coordinating group allowed her time for reflection and this resulted in a process of personal and professional change. Due to her own narrative of change, she suggested a therapeutic process for the whole staff during which they could engage with their own grievances, negativity and despondency. She felt that their students suffered as a result of their negative dispositions. However, not all the teachers were prepared to engage in such a process. A male teacher suggested that a process of deep introspection should be conducted on an individual level and as an individual choice.

Hannah explained that she considered her time away from Sunset Primary School a privilege:

> I could grow and develop away from the school and came back a different person. I could grow because of different experiences. Some of the other teachers have not been away from the school. They think that Sunset Primary School is the alpha and omega. This is their only reality against which they measure everything.

One of the things about which Hannah felt strongly was the fact that the school was not doing enough for the students and that the staff modelled a sense of failure. The students were used to having events cancelled. It gradually became the culture in the school to start something valuable for the students and then not fulfilling the promise. The students were always at the receiving end of the staff's failure to act on their ideas:

> We had a camp planned for last weekend and then the teachers wanted me to put off the camp, but I did not want to do it. We have recently cancelled quite a few things such as a choir afternoon and a netball competition and I did not want to cancel the camp for the weekend as well. I did not want to tell the children that we are not going camping. We teach our students only about failure; everything that we try to do, we fail at. The children enjoyed the camp so much and they learned a lot. We give our children so little that when they leave the school they have no memories to take with them. It is when you are out of the formal setting of schooling that you really get to know the children. When I go camping I am a different person.

During 2005 Hannah explained her personal and professional change in terms of taking small steps. Towards the end of 2008 Hannah used the metaphor of the growth of a tree that starts from a seedling and slowly grows into a tree of value bearing good fruit, to explain that change was a slow process and difficult to measure. She wanted me to be more patient and maybe more aware and appreciative of the changes that had already happened in the school, albeit not always evident from the perspective of an outsider. She emphasised through the metaphor of the growing tree that every person had to go through a process of change at his/her own pace. Learning encompasses a personal journey and everybody has an individual style of handling change. During an individual interview she explained her journey of learning and growth in more detail:

> I have always been a difficult and headstrong person, and I wanted things to go my way. I encountered a lot of problems in life because of my style of doing things. If I thought that I was in the right I would act on that. I had a lot of problems with Mr. January [the previous principal], but I think of him with love, because I was allowed to fight for my rights.

She juxtaposed her relationship with the previous principal with that of the current principal of Sunset Primary School and explained it as follows:

> I tend to swim upstream, but I do get very tired. I had a lot of fall-outs with Mr … [the current principal]. He suggested that I was not prepared to accept his authority and I received a written warning from him on grounds of insubordination. I feel like standing back to look at the fishes swimming on the other side, but it is difficult to let go, because I can see …

It was clear that that the current principal tended to present a controversial factor in her working life. Many of her comments centred on his inability to cope with his task as principal of Sunset Primary School:

> Mr … is not going to change. I have to learn to live with him for the next ten years. So what is going to be the best for me; to go against him or to learn to work with him or even way ahead of him? The Index for Inclusion process allowed me the platform to be more open about the things that bother me and should the principal hear about this and confront me, I would be prepared to tell him everything.

It became clear from her comments that she had thought of how the school would function without the principal present at the school:

> Very often at school I feel that we do not really need the principal as we know what to do, but then we need to stop fighting each other. We need to learn to work together. I am not prepared to work the principal out of the system, this is not my idea. I do not want to wish him away with a magic wand as used by a magic fairy and I do not want to change him into a frog, but the school is important to me …

Hannah loved Sunset Primary School and was very upset about its gradual decline which she attributed to the principal's half-hearted attempts at managing the school. She inferred that they could not trust him to do the best for the school and its children:

> Our principal does not give his cooperation to get the necessary for our children, so I have to cut him out. If I think about the school, I want to cry. We have been wronged in many ways through the years. Look at our building. It is very old and we are still in a temporary building after all these years. Our children get the bad side of life at the school and at home.

For Hannah the school building with its temporary structures became a metaphor for the marginalisation of the coloured people during the apartheid years and even today. Her strong views on the negative effects of apartheid were evident throughout my engagement with her.

During my last interview with her towards the end of 2008 she again acknowledged her learning gains due to the Index for Inclusion process. She explained that she had changed her perspective and that she had come to recognise that she could not force her colleagues to change:

> I used to be a fighter and still am. When I saw that something was wrong, I would fight for the changes that I wanted, but now I have come to realise that I cannot really change other people. I had to change in this respect. I also had to learn that if things were not done according to my liking, I should not lose hope and become despondent and withdraw from the process. I need to keep on trying to change things until I die. You have to persevere and try … In this way I have changed. I needed to change my attitude and behaviour towards other people.

It was apparent that Hannah had tried her best to be accommodating of her colleagues. For her, change implied agency and the willingness to learn. Change was possible should you take the initiative as an individual. She wanted to learn in order to make the necessary changes in the classroom. For her, change did not come easily, but she was prepared to persevere and to acquire more knowledge and insight:

> If you want to change, you need to make the shift. Change is hard work. Often you think that you have all the knowledge but I learned that there are a lot of things of which I do not know anything at all. I have to keep on looking for new ways of doing and solutions to problems in the classroom. I have changed my behaviour in the classroom. I was not a person with a lot of whims and fads and did not have a lot of patience with nonsense, but lately I am more prepared to talk to other people on ways to do things differently. I learn something new all the time. Through the workshop on mathematics I have come to understand that certain things can act as barriers to learning for the children. I need to know this and address it. I am now prepared to look for reasons behind the challenging behaviour of children and the fact that they struggle to learn.

Despite her learning gains she indicated that not everybody in the school was prepared to change and to contribute towards a process of collaborative learning. The relationships in the school were better, but there was room for improvement. The staff and management team still found it an uphill battle to act on their good intentions and she acknowledged that the staff still blamed the principal for the many challenges that the school faced. However, she had come to the conclusion that he was unable and unwilling to change and that she had to work around him to accomplish anything for the school and the students. Her passion for the school, teaching and the students prompted her to become a better teacher and person:

> I came to understand that I cannot change the principal. If I follow his lead, I will stay where I am, but if I work for the love of it and because I find joy in my contribution to the school and to the lives of the children, then I work from another perspective. The principal has certain blind styles. Maybe he does his best from his perspective. He is a kind person and is prepared to listen to me. Maybe I can walk the walk with him as a person, but not as a head. He does not act for the better of the school. I do not know if the school is important to him. The school is not number one with him. He cannot change. It is no use trying to work on him.

Hannah also disclosed that she was experiencing a time of intense spiritual growth that contributed in a positive way to personal growth. She suggested that her strength and commitment to the school could in a way also be contributed to her spiritual reawakening:

> I am busy with a process of spiritual reawakening and maybe it is therefore easy for me to say, but it does not matter about your religion of choice, you need that connection. You struggle without the connection. I am not going to force it on anybody because I do understand that it has to come from the inside … You just have to start with yourself. Because I am angry with the principal, it does not mean that the school should also become second best to me as well.

She was still struggling with her troubled story of marginalisation and deprivation during the apartheid years. She had thought that her spiritual renewal would support her in overcoming her feelings of being wronged by the past history of the country. She wanted to take this up with me again:

> I have been thinking because I knew that you were coming today. If we look at your background and we look at my background … then we accept that your life would have been better than mine. Apartheid had a big impact. Very often I find that it is still like a ball and chain to me. I often think that I have left apartheid behind but it is not the case. Apartheid left a huge problem and it still makes me feel hopeless. In my life I still struggle with white people. If I see a white person I want to withdraw. It is ingrained in me. It is difficult to open up to somebody who is white. It is also a feeling of blame because white people had such a lot going for them and we had nothing.

She also mentioned the student who helped her towards a greater acceptance of white people. We placed a caring student with strong leadership qualities in the school for the counselling practicum in 2008. The teachers responded well to her and Hannah in particular warmed to her: “She helped me to see things differently. In her eyes we were all the same. She became part of us and we could talk to her quite naturally.”

Researcher’s reflection

I felt privileged that Hannah was prepared to talk openly to me as a white person about her struggle to come to terms with her deprived past and the harm done to her by white people. I often wondered about my own willingness to forgive had I been in their shoes. Would I have been able to forgive? I suspect that it would not have been possible to forget.

Hannah found it difficult to come to terms with the state of their school building and her bitterness was still near the surface when she brought up the subject once again. Vandalism of the school building after hours by certain community members was also highlighted as a particularly humiliating experience for the teachers:

> I read about the more privileged schools and their new halls and I think, if I ask for money for our school, nobody will give it to me, but white people do give money to their schools. We do need so many things in our school. The floor in my classroom desperately needs attention. Vandalism is a big problem. They broke into one of the classes and set it on fire and now she [the teacher] has to wait for the police before she can carry on with teaching. If my classroom looked like that I would have given up all hope; a lot was taken from the classroom. We have a lot of barriers in our school. It is not always about money but also about planning, but currently we do not have enough funding to see us through the year.

It was evident that the hardships that they experienced during apartheid still prevailed, albeit in a different form. Challenges were still with them in the form of vandalism and financial needs.

Hannah had made definite learning gains. As explained before, her learning trajectory had obtained its impetus from a process of reflection induced by the Index for Inclusion process. In her particular case the Index for Inclusion as a tool brought the awareness that the status quo in the school and in her classroom could and should change. Inspired by her love for both the school and the students attending the school, she was prepared to actively engage with object construction to better her practice. She wanted to contribute towards change in the school and made certain changes in her classroom in response to the different workshops conducted in the school. But her best efforts were often thwarted by the traditional understanding of leadership in the school and by the leaders' incompetence to establish the school as an inclusive learning community. It was clear from her learning trajectory that Sunset Primary School as an activity system had greatly constrained her learning and development as teacher, but she persevered despite this. Hannah also battled with feelings of bitterness and blame that stemmed from her deprived past. For her the dilapidated school building acted as symbol of the damage done by apartheid and the fact that they still suffered as a school and community despite the promise of democracy in South Africa.

Hannah made a conscious choice for change and in the same way as Francelle accepted responsibility for self-transformation despite the negative and blaming culture that continued to prevail in the school. She drew strength from her own conviction that change should happen and from the spiritual dimension of her life. Teacher leadership became evident in the changes that she made in her classroom and the responsibility she took on a school-wide level to support new initiatives despite a lack of support from the official leaders in the school as well as from some of her colleagues. It was interesting to note the positive role of the Index for Inclusion as a tool to induce change in her disposition as well as in her practices, in contrast to the constraints to learning presented by the school as an activity system. The effects of the macro-social system on the life and learning of one individual teacher were also unveiled. As was the case with Francelle, Hannah accomplished identity learning during a time of change (Geijsel *et al*., 2001).

It has been shown that Engeström (1987; 2001) works from the assumption that change in an activity can be invoked by individuals asking questions and making certain changes. However, the question remains: Would the system in which Francelle and Hannah function allow them to keep on asking questions and making changes in order to sustain the process of growth at Sunset Primary School?

5.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to employ Engeström's (1987) triangular structure of activity to present the data generated while the researcher engaged in the Index for Inclusion project at Sunset Primary School. Despite the separate components suggested by the Engeström model and employed during the data presentation, I experienced, while writing up the findings, that the systemic whole of teacher learning as an activity (Foot, 2001) came to life in the collective, multi-voiced construction of the past, present, and future phases of development of the activity system (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999).

The research questions require a close scrutiny of the affordances and constraints to teacher learning to be identified on the institutional-community, macro-social and macro-educational and personal levels. This challenge will be dealt with in the next chapter. The findings as presented in this chapter (Chapter 5) in themes and patterns, in the ethnographic tale of the collective teacher learning trajectory and in the pen sketches of two teachers' individual learning trajectories, will be fundamental to the discussion.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER LEARNING FOR INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

6.1 INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DATA

The primary aim of this inquiry was to explore the nature of teacher learning for inclusion within the context of a primary school in a historically disadvantaged community. Critical ethnography "as a form of representation and interpretation of social reality" (Anderson, 1989:250) was the chosen research genre for this study. It allowed for investigating the richness, diversity and complexity of teacher learning within the context of Sunset Primary School in order to develop a sense of understanding of the meanings the teachers assigned to their own learning experiences during a time of change. I was particularly interested in critically exploring the affordances and constraints to teacher learning on the institutional-community plane as the pivotal plane of analysis for this study and I hoped that critical ethnography as a research genre would make possible "social explanations sensitive to the complex relationships between human agency and social structure" (Anderson, 1989:251). The third generation of activity theory that posits networks of activity systems and highlights the involvedness of boundaries between multiple activities (Daniels, 2008), as well as critical ethnography that allows for linking the local and the macro (Gutiérrez & Stone, 2000), also made it possible to investigate affordances and constraints to teacher learning on the macro-social and macro-educational level. Critical ethnography emphasises holism in the sense that it recognises and thus helps to investigate teacher learning for school change beyond what is obvious, considering that wider historical, cultural, social and political explanations of school change processes as forces from the outside are fundamental to the inside culture of an institution such as a school (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, cited in Anderson, 1989). The impact of the personal plane on teacher learning was also explored through a closer look at the learning trajectory of two teachers as subjects.

In this chapter I critically discuss the findings that emanated from the data analysis as presented in Chapter 5. I claim that a critical look at the data was warranted since the transformative agenda of the Index for Inclusion suggests an interrogation into the inequalities and inequities that seem to persist in the educational arena in South Africa. The aim should be to work towards changing the status quo (Slee, 2001a). Inclusive education aims to make visible the blindness, silences and exclusions that still seem to permeate the histories and learning experiences of groups who have been historically marginalised. It thus requires a radical agenda (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). I place my discussion within the theoretical framework of cultural-historical activity theory CHAT and argue the findings as knowledge claims within the literature framework established in Chapters 2 and 3.

The teachers were selected as participants of the local activity through whose eyes and interpretations teacher learning as activity was constructed. However, in order to capture holistically and in sufficient depth the affordances and constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School, it was deemed necessary to incorporate additional voices. The school principal and the deputy head of the school, as well as the learning support teacher, were invited to present their perspectives. A student of our department who did her practicum in the school also acted as informant. Although the school principal, deputy head and learning support teacher spoke from different positions in the school, they also acted as classroom teachers on a regular basis. During the first semester of 2009 two learning support officials from the local District Education Team were also briefly interviewed in order to verify certain findings.

In this chapter the significance of the combined results from the different ways of presenting the data will be discussed with specific reference to the implications of affordances and constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. Although the inductive facet of data analysis comprising the themes and patterns as presented in Tables 5.2 to 5.10 was a vital part of the overall process of data analysis, it mostly informed the ethnographic narrative of the collective learning of the teachers, as well as the personal learning trajectories of the two teachers. I will therefore mainly draw on the ethnographic tale and the pen sketches of the teachers for the knowledge claims I forward in the subsequent discussion.

6.2 AFFORDANCES AND CONSTRAINTS TO TEACHER LEARNING

6.2.1 Introductory notes

In Chapter 1 I argued that cascade models of training and short workshops as the preferred approach to the professional development of teachers in South Africa do not seem to provide the answer for appropriate teacher learning for inclusive education. From previous research done within teacher learning for inclusion it seemed best to align teacher learning with the development of schools as inclusive learning communities (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Oswald, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2007). This is also the approach that the Index for Inclusion supports (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Teacher learning as workplace learning was thus foregrounded in this study. This called for the research school as workplace to invest in the professional learning of its teachers so that the school may be developed as an inclusive learning community in order to respond more successfully to student diversity (Deppeler *et al.*, 2005). This implied change on a school-wide level. However, school change is generally understood as a complex process and the social practices of schools are notoriously difficult to change. Furthermore, it is difficult to sustain change (Edwards, 2008; Engeström, 2008; Sannino & Nocon, 2008).

Sunset Primary School was one of three schools that benefited from an UNESCO-funded project that aimed to assist schools in developing as inclusive learning communities for the good of their students. From the intervention at Sunset Primary School through the Index for Inclusion as tool I learned that a school could simultaneously afford and constrain the learning of its members. The school provided a frame for learning insofar as teacher learning could be contextualised, but the same frame also constrained the teachers to act within the particular frame offered by Sunset Primary School (Fairclough, 1995). Apart from the impact of the school as an institution on teacher learning, influences from the macro-social and macro-educational and personal levels could also play a vital role in teacher learning for change. The discussion on the affordances for and constraints to teacher learning will therefore be presented in broad themes relating to the three levels of influence. The affordances and constraints to teacher learning as indicated by the participants and as implicated on the macro-social and macro-educational level of influence will be discussed first in order to set the broader frame. The informants' views with regard to the affordances and constraints to teacher learning on the institutional level will be further discussed, followed by the impact from the personal level of influence. In addition, a theme representing reflections on the Index for Inclusion and the researcher as mediating tools will also receive attention.

6.2.2 Affordances and constraints to teacher learning on the macro-social and macro-educational level

Democracy came to South Africa on 10 May 1994. The apartheid dispensation, which had lasted for more than 45 years, had created great race-based inequalities, with a population fragmented along racial lines. At least 58% of all South Africans and in particular 68% of the black population were in poverty in 1995, while poverty was virtually non-existent for whites. The country also inherited enormous inequalities in education, health and basic infrastructure (Hoogeveen & Özler, 2005).

As indicated before, Sunset Primary School was situated in a small so-called coloured town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. All the teachers and the majority of students attending the school were of mixed origin. The coloured population in South Africa originated from the intermixing between slave groups, indigenous groups, and whites. During the 1950s legislation hardened the physical and psychological separation of the population on the grounds of skin colour and racial background or origin. By imposing the label 'coloured' on this group the government of the time afforded them a political non-status (as argued before) since they were officially neither black nor white. The coloured community of South Africa was constructed as being subordinate to the dominant white community and excluded from many socio-economic, political and educational privileges (Sonn & Fisher, 1996).

The pen sketch of Hannah in Chapter 5 made her struggle with the consequences of apartheid in her personal and working life quite clear. She was brave enough to point out the difference between our histories in terms of benefits and opportunities. As a white person I grew up with all the privileges afforded to me by the apartheid system while she and all the other teachers at Sunset Primary School experienced marginalisation, oppression and poverty. Hannah declared that she was still struggling to overcome her aversion to "white faces" due to the extreme hardship that she suffered as a result of apartheid. Apartheid was still a like "a ball and chain" to her, leaving her with feelings of hopelessness and bitterness. Blaming white people for the adverse circumstances that she had been subjected to for more than half her life was still ingrained in her and she realised that she had to come to terms with this. In this respect Van Niekerk and Prins (2009) claim that transformation in South Africa, combined with the persistent consequences of apartheid, contributes to high levels of psychological distress. All race groups in South Africa need to reconcile themselves with a redefinition of their previously defined identities and in many cases also need to reconsider their positioning in society. The radicalism and extent of transformation in South Africa causes stress for all groups despite the initial elation of in particular the historically marginalised groups at their new-found freedom, voice and potential privileges (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2009).

Poverty and inequality still seem to persist in South Africa. The Gini score for South Africa is about 0.60 (Landman, Bhorat, Van der Berg & Van Aardt, 2003). This comprises one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. Coupled with this, it is estimated that about 45% of the population still live in poverty (Landman *et al.,* 2003). Almost all of the poor belong to the black or coloured groups (Van der Berg, Burger, Burger, Louw & Yu, 2006). Hoogeveen and Özler (2005) add that South Africa's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world and that poverty, especially extreme poverty, has not successfully been alleviated. In the light of, among other factors, the current upward mobility of black people who are joining the ranks of the affluent and the middle class, resulting in a decisive move in the Gini coefficient from 0.49 in 1970 to 0.59 in 2000 (Van der Berg *et al*., 2006), the perception exists among many coloured people that their non-status has caused their marginalisation to continue under the post-apartheid dispensation (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2009). Interestingly enough, however, Hoogeveen and Özler (2005) estimate that the Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces of South Africa (where coloureds form the majority of the population) are the two provinces that indicate significant growth in their mean household expenditure levels and a significant decline in poverty. The growth rate in mean household expenditure level in these two provinces is consistent with the reduction in poverty as experienced by coloureds in general. Their estimates also indicate that the growth incidence curves (GIC) for coloureds lies entirely above the zero line. This could be perceived as an affordance of the democratic dispensation in South Africa that should potentially have a positive impact on schooling in so-called coloured communities. But since the publication of the Hoogeveen and Özler (2005) report there has been a world-wide economic crisis which has also adversely affected the South African economy. Parents may lose their jobs and their children will not be able to escape the effect of the crisis (Bloch, 2009). This will definitely have an impact on teachers' work in less affluent communities.

In reality it seems as if certain coloured communities, particularly those in rural areas, are still struggling with all the faces of poverty. Despite some eradication of poverty, the GIC for the coloured group is upward-sloping, which implies that the non-poor have benefited more from growth than the poor and that inequality within the coloured group has risen (Hoogeveen & Özler, 2005). Tensions between equity and growth persist in South Africa and currently the possibility of growth winning over equity seems to be inevitable (Sayed, 2003).

In the town in which the research school (Sunset Primary School) is situated the effect of poverty and unemployment is still an inescapable reality. This could be evidenced by the fact that all the students attending Sunset Primary School have recently been exempted from paying school fees. This indicates that the majority of community members have a low income. At present the number of non-fee schools has been increased to 60% of all schools in South Africa in an attempt to alleviate the effect of poverty on schooling. Nutrition schemes for schools have also been introduced to combat the negative effect of poverty (Bloch, 2009). Although a number of professional people lived in the town and were making a decent living at the time of the research, the majority of households were still struggling with poverty and related problems. In this regard Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) argue that the problem of massive poverty in South Africa remains a central barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. Kamper (2008) affirms that, even today, the already fragile social fabric of certain communities that resulted from historical exclusionary policies and practices are still disrupted by persisting poverty and social ills. Schools in these historically disadvantaged communities are most often severely affected by poverty-related problems such as hunger, illiteracy, unemployment and a defeatist mindset. Teachers working in such community schools have to deal with complex social conditions.

A distinguishing factor of the education system in South Africa is the very high degree of inequality among schools. This is a legacy of apartheid and one which the present government finds difficult to turn around. Massive inequalities still exist between formerly advantaged schools for white students and formerly disadvantaged schools, especially those in rural areas where poverty in all its manifestations is the principal feature of the communities in which these schools are situated (Engelbrecht, 2006; Taylor, 2006). This was pointed out by Hannah when voicing her feelings about privileged schools with their new halls and all their resources whilst the teachers and the students of Sunset Primary School had to suffer in a rundown school building and from a lack of resources. She felt strongly that despite the promise of democracy in South Africa, their students suffered from poverty and neglect – not only in their homes but also in the school.

According to Bloch (2009:25) "education as its stands today continues to reproduce inequalities in society, inequalities that threaten the stability and comforts of young people". Basic resources in many schools in rural areas in particular are still lacking and these shortcomings present considerable barriers to learning and participation (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). For the teachers of Sunset Primary School their prefabricated school buildings, the lack of a decent school hall and sport facilities, as well as the unkempt school grounds, were symbolic of their marginalisation as a group – not only during apartheid but also by the current democratic dispensation. This partially informed their negativity, blaming attitudes, their loss of energy and motivation for teaching as a career. Bloch (2009) confirms that the infrastructure of some schools leaves a lot to be desired and that huge backlogs, just basic catch-up, have been estimated at a minimum of R 153 million. He further (2009) argues that schools need to build dignity and respect among their students and to this end deserve, as basics for quality learning, a library, a laboratory, a staff room, adequate classrooms and toilets, Internet and computer access and sport fields for different sports.

Sayed *et al.* (2003:242) argue that educational inclusion requires a thorough understanding of the context in which students are included, the terms and conditions of their inclusion, if participation is truly invited and welcomed, and "a preparedness to look critically at the policy makers who set these terms and the actors who implement these policies". At policy level a considerable move has been made towards attaining the inclusive objectives of Education for All (EFA), but the reality in many schools in South Africa proves otherwise. Powell (2002) argues that equal education is promised in policy directives, but that ideology alone cannot transform the practice of education. Apartheid had a major impact on education that could not be discarded in a discussion on affordances and constraints to teacher learning in previously marginalised communities. The legacy of apartheid education was characterised by fragmentation, inconsistencies and inequity in educational provisioning. Nineteen separate education departments, governed by specific legislation and fragmented along racial lines, reinforced the divisions in the education system (Naicker, 2005). For 15 years schools had been a site of resistance to the apartheid government that eventually paid off when democracy won in South Africa (Fleisch, 2002).

The teachers in this study described their joy at the eventual establishment of a democratic dispensation in South Africa, but declared that they had been ill-prepared for the process of rapid, intensive and extensive transformation that accompanied the democratisation of the education system. Disillusionment set in quickly as they realised the extent of change expected from them. As older and more experienced teachers, their initial training as teachers was based on more conservative theories and educational practices. The implementation of the new outcomes-based education required that they completely discard previous accomplishments, knowledge and skills in favour of entirely different theories and practices without adequate preparation and the necessary support.

Outcomes-based education was experienced as “a totally new vocabulary” that they had to learn. They experienced the training as inadequate relative to the task expected of them. This left them feeling incompetent and caused them to question their efficacy. The teachers admitted to being confused, out of their depth and feeling vulnerable. It seemed as if the enormous challenge of implementing outcomes-based education carved away at the teachers’ sense of agency and efficacy (DiPardo & Potter, 2003). Top-down change initiatives left them with a deficiency of ownership and self-worth. The strength of their feelings at being asked to implement the new curriculum initiative at class roots’ level (O’Sullivan, 2002) without the necessary conceptual tools, skills and self-confidence, was brought home by their longing for the safety net provided by the controlling and prescriptive apartheid education system, despite their hard-won fight against apartheid education. Since 1976 and well into the 1980s teachers and students were at the centre of resistance against segregated education and fought for People’s Education under the banner of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) (Bloch, 2009).

DiPardo and Potter (2003:323) warn about “the affective fallout attempts to alter practice and policy, addressing troublesome emotions such as grief and anxiety, as well as the need for hopefulness and trust”. They cite Nussbaum (DiPardo & Potter, 2003:325) to foreground that teachers’ emotions “are inevitably aroused in situations in which matters of importance slip beyond ease of control”, laying bare both their vulnerabilities and their deepest commitments. It seems as if the public discourse concerning school change seldom acknowledges the pervasive presence of teachers’ emotions. While teachers remind us of the importance of care, passion, and morale, reformers seem to remain determinedly fixed on outcomes without being aware of the human costs involved in processes of change (DiPardo & Potter, 2003). Reflecting on the transformation of the education system it seemed important to acknowledge the stress involved in ambitious change initiatives. The teachers at Sunset Primary School admitted to finding all the changes stressful. Some of the teachers suffered with depression while others indicated a sense of hopelessness and despair. A CHAT perspective on teacher stress encourages attention to teachers’ thoughts and emotions, and to the relationship between teachers’ well-being, their learning for change, as well as their students’ learning. Teachers’ emotionality during a time of change needs to be understood with regard to the teaching-learning process as well as with regard to the whole of human life (DiPardo & Potter, 2003).

Dostal *et al.* (2004) argue that implementing a radically different education initiative without carefully designing an implementation plan and preparing the system for change could be disastrous and could threaten the stability of the system. Successful transformation is difficult to achieve by means of a quick intervention that has been designed from the top down. It is considered important for transformation to be associated with a change in mindsets within the system and its members (Dostal *et al*., 2004). By employing different metaphors the teachers of Sunset Primary School emphasised that change was difficult, took time (more so for some than others), and could be accomplished, but that it was an individual choice. Reflection on treasured assumptions, much-used practices and deeply-held beliefs as part of a process of learning is not easy as it involves emotions of uncertainty and self-doubt (Oswald & Swart, 2008). Teachers had to be prepared and supported to engage with new initiatives, and knowledge and practices had to be willingly and successfully internalised before a process of externalisation was possible.

Against this background, the excitement of the principal of Sunset Primary School when he learned from the daily newspaper that the National Education Department was considering certain changes in response to pleas from schools was understandable. However, he indicated that it came too late to save the education system from an imminent crisis. In a critical study of the state of education in South Africa, Bloch (2009) confirms the crisis in education, and proclaims schooling in South Africa a national disaster, despite some good work that happened during the transformation of schooling in South Africa. He argues that schools are failing their students, in particular those in poor rural communities.

Teachers' resistance to top-down change initiatives has been of continuing concern in South Africa. Drawing on Bowe, Balls and Gold (1992), Smit (2001) argues that teachers should not be seen as naïve readers of policy as they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own and that they have vested interests in the meaning of policy. Against this background, policy may well be rejected, selected out, ignored or even deliberately misunderstood. In the same vein Gitlin and Margonis (1995) argue that in some instances the act of resistance by teachers can make good sense. I want to support their arguments with the following discussion on resistance to the transformation of the education system as narrated by the teachers of Sunset Primary School.

Teachers of Sunset Primary School perceived transformation as never-ending, ineffective and having an adverse effect on their work in the classroom. In a desperate attempt on the part of the National Education Department to turn the education system around, teachers were subjected to extreme answerability and accountability measures. Large classes and administrative obligations, that resulted from the strict accountability measures that attempted to rewrite the dismal story of education in South Africa, intensified their work and brought less time for teaching and learning in the classroom. Consequently their students suffered.

The teachers – the subjects of this study – were particularly sad about the plight of their students who were not performing well. They were used to good results during the apartheid dispensation and were traumatised by their perceived inability to prepare their students adequately. The deputy principal confirmed that the teachers had good track records. The intensification (a Marxist term) of teachers' work due to innovation overload seemed to result in stress, distress and burnout. DiPardo and Potter (2003) argue that this happens in particular when imagined ideals resulting from the promises of a new education dispensation and present realities do not match. The teachers were deeply despondent at their failure to enhance their students' learning to match the criteria set by the Systemic Evaluation (SE) system, a national system introduced by the National Education Department to measure the progress of students in Grades 3 and 6 respectively. The Department of Education released the national findings of the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluation in 2003 indicating that students were not performing up to standard. The 2005 results for Grade 6 were once again upsetting, with a 35% mean score for language, 27% for mathematics and 41% for natural sciences. It seemed as if only 28% of Grade 6 students reached the level required by the curriculum. A study with Grade 6 students undertaken in the Western Cape in 2004 confirmed the worrisome findings on national level. Only 35% of students performed at the required level. Whilst 83% of students in formerly white schools achieved the required results, just over 25% in formerly coloured schools reached the required level. The most recent Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation conducted in 2008 did not show statistically significant improvements (Bloch, 2009).

Sunset Primary School's results were in general poor when measured against the criteria set by the National Education Department for the two grades. Several teachers were unhappy with the procedures employed during SE. They suggested that their students found the process intimidating and were consequently not performing to potential. Moreover, the pessimism about education in the public domain tended to focus on what teachers could not and did not do, and teachers often took the blame for the failed implementation of new innovations (Oswald & Swart, 2008). Bloch (2009:83) asserts that "teachers rightly feel there is a negative perception of their work; they do not receive public appreciation and support". This reinforced their feelings of hopelessness, decreased their job satisfaction, increased their negativity, and de-motivated them (Oswald & Swart, 2008) and many would leave the teaching profession if it was a financial viable option to do so (Bloch, 2009), as indicated by some of the teachers at Sunset Primary School.

The local Education District Office as a separate activity system networked with Sunset Primary School as representative of the National and Provincial Departments. Education District Offices have been allocated the task to collaborate with schools in their jurisdiction in order to support and develop the schools to address student diversity more effectively (Johnson & Green, 2007). Equal and beneficial partnerships between schools and their particular Education District Offices are envisaged, but in reality more authority rests with the Education District Offices. They also have become sites from where accountability measures as developed on national and provincial levels have to be enforced. The job of the Education District Team falls more and more into a compliance mode; trying to enforce circulars and orders which result in “a surplus of form-filling and other educational rituals and behaviours” (Bloch, 2009:106). Teachers have lost trust in education authorities and blame them for the many challenges that they are forced to face in schools and classrooms without the necessary assistance and support (Bloch, 2009).

From their particular authority base, officials from the local Education District Office were thus able to coerce the principal of Sunset Primary School to allow for the Index for Inclusion process to be conducted in the school despite his initial resistance. This was done with good intentions as school members of Sunset Primary School needed support and encouragement to implement inclusive education. At the outset, however, this acted as a constraint to teacher learning that needed to be sensitively addressed as it put the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process at risk. Sunset Primary School had an uneasy relationship with officials from the Education District Office. The officials were apparently not satisfied with the school’s performance and this resulted in unhappiness and resistance. School members blamed the Education District Team for abusing their authority, for not respecting the teachers and their contributions and for inadequate support. These factors acted as constraints to teacher learning as they closed ranks, avoided reflection on their own practice and were not prepared to engage with the recommendations from the officials responsible for their professional development and support. However, once an official with a more respectful and accommodating approach took charge of the school, the teachers responded positively as they felt valued and recognised as equals.

The above scenario makes a strong case for the successful establishment of collaborative partnerships in education in South Africa. All professionals in education will have to learn how to work within an ethos of collaboration and how to transcend cultural, historical and professional boundaries after working in isolation for so long (Sands *et al.*, 2000). The complexity of addressing the abilities and needs of a diverse student body and of putting the education system back on track compel joined-up solutions to difficult problems. Whether we call it transdisciplinary collaboration or knotworking, as previously argued in Chapter 3, the fact remains that professionals working within the education system will have to learn the necessary skills to work effectively in teams across boundaries in order to ensure quality education for all within an inclusive education system (Daniels, 2004). This implies that professionals in education will have to discuss and negotiate priorities and goals across the boundaries of their own professional context. They will have to recognise the need to take the lead at times and to follow at other times, because the interest of the student as client is the object of the activity. Expansive learning entails a process of renegotiation and reorganisation of collaborative relations and practices (division of labour) and the creation and implementation of matching concepts, tools and rules. Professionals need to learn to work towards mutual goals, to pool their expertise and to share resources, responsibility and accountability (Daniels, 2004).

In the majority of cases the qualifications of the teachers at Sunset Primary School proved inadequate for the new demands made on teachers by the democratic education system. The South African Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment Report (DoE, 2000) confirmed that teacher education had previously not succeeded in enabling all teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. Therefore a large proportion of unqualified and under-qualified teachers remained in the system. This was especially applicable to teachers in the previously disadvantaged school communities, who had no former opportunities for self-development (Oswald, 2007). The new democratic education system expected teachers to bring their qualifications on par with certain set criteria and in certain cases also made it possible for teachers such as those at Sunset Primary School to better their qualifications with the necessary financial support. The teachers acted on this and enjoyed studying to such an extent that they all persevered until receiving their honours degree in education. Throughout the research data the fulfilment that they experienced from further studies was foregrounded as an important incentive for teacher development. The impression that learning gains were not shared for school-wide application was however extremely worrying in the light of the Index for Inclusion's emphasis on establishing the school as an inclusive learning community.

In line with post-apartheid education policy such as the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000b), Education White Paper 6 of 2001 and the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2006), teachers are expected to be able to address student diversity in inclusive settings successfully. All the teachers at Sunset Primary School, with the exception of Francelle, were originally trained for mainstream education without any input on teaching students with diverse learning abilities and needs, including those with disabilities. Against this background, teachers at Sunset Primary School confessed that they struggled to address the needs of all their students appropriately and suggested that the inclusion of students with disabilities in their already large classes would add to the complexity of their work. Multi-level teaching presented particular problems in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. Apartheid education legitimised exclusionary practices, affirmed the status and power of professionals and special education and created the belief amongst teachers that teaching students with disabilities was not within their ability. This deficit view, together with the specialist culture that accompanied it, still impacted on current attitudes towards disability and difference in the present education system, and it seemed difficult to eradicate it (Engelbrecht, 2006). In order to meet the ideals of an inclusive education system, teachers at Sunset Primary School, however, had to learn to meet the needs of all students. This proved a challenging and complex task due to several factors.

Despite good policy with regard to the implementation of inclusive education and appropriately addressing student diversity, the implementation of this policy initiative proved unsuccessful. A research study by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007) found that the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa was challenged by several factors at both national and provincial level. Poor funding of the inclusive initiative, the inadequate development of human resources, a lack of active advocacy and information campaigns in the provinces to win over the hearts and minds of school members, as well as inadequate support from the Education District Offices, the driving force for the implementation of inclusive education, were some contributing factors. It seemed that post-apartheid education policy was intended to transform the education system on a cultural and structural level from one that was bureaucratic, conservative, disempowering with a lack of ownership, fragmented, closed and discriminatory, to one that was transformative, democratic, empowering with member ownership, open and inclusive (Morrow, 2002; Powell, 2002). However, it was not succeeding. Päivi (2008) maintains that knowledge creation and application are conspicuously slower in the field of education than in other fields; while Bloch (2009) claims that the post-apartheid approach is not modeling the new education culture that it wants to establish within South African education. The approach is often bureaucratic and formalistic, offering limited education options and not expanding support to schools and teachers (Grant, 2009).

The narrative of the collective and individual learning trajectories of the teachers of Sunset Primary School could be offered as an example of the fact that while policy making was important, policy alone would not bring about the system-wide transformation that was necessary. The teachers voiced their disillusionment with many colleagues across the spectrum of schools and members of other institutions, as well as with the media advocating democracy but not living by its principles. This foregrounded the reality that the implementation of new policies and curricula would only work when the local context and agency of school members and support professionals were acknowledged and accommodated during a time of change (Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998).

In a recent article Engeström (2008:382) reminded us that when working from a CHAT perspective, "explorations in the historical dimension will become necessary when analyses of contradictions are pushed deeper and possible zones of proximal development are explicated as working hypotheses for the future". To this effect Bloch (2009:56) answers that South Africa's past "carries conflicts, much pain and trauma, and many anti-educational implications". This had been underscored by the realities from the working life of teachers at Sunset Primary School. Despite a few positive gains for teacher learning within the workplace brought on by the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, the constraints outweighed the affordances. To a large extent the macro-social and macro-educational constraints were a given that the teachers had to deal with, allowing them only limited agency in the sense of a choice with regard to their collective and personal response. It was clear from the data that the majority of teachers at Sunset Primary School opted for a negative response to what had happened and was still happening on a macro-level.

We now turn to explore affordances and constraints to teacher learning on the local and institutional level as pivotal level of analysis for this study.

6.2.3 Affordances and constraints to teacher learning on the institutional level

6.2.3.1 Introduction to workplace learning

This study in particular addressed workplace learning for inclusion. In this section the emphasis of the discussion is on collective teacher learning for change and the affordances and constraints at Sunset Primary School as workplace that influenced such learning. The previous section on macro-social and macro-educational factors impinging on teacher learning at Sunset Primary School formed the larger canvass against which the local and institutional could be painted. From third-generation activity theory as introduced by Engeström (1987, 2001), we learned that the broader historical and cultural contexts in which the local context was embedded acted as a network of activity systems, the one constituting the other. The discussion on the local and institutional level will be conducted in four broad themes: communal and parental factors; leadership for teacher learning for inclusion; enhanced student learning as object of the activity; and teachers' cognition and emotions as factors in expansive learning in the workplace.

6.2.3.2 Communal and parental factors

Factors within the component of community (refer to the Engeström model) acted as both affordances and constraints to teacher learning for inclusion at Sunset Primary School. The constraints will be presented first. From the beginning of implementing the Index for Inclusion in the school, the school's estrangement from both its parent body and the local community became clear. Parents were not prepared to act as members of the coordinating group as suggested by the Index for Inclusion framework. This placed the success of the Index for Inclusion process at risk. The inclusion of all school members such as the parents, community members and support professionals as equal partners in an inclusive learning community was considered of key importance for school cultures, policies and practices to become more inclusive of all its students (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

It transpired from the data that the history of the school was intertwined with that of the community. As explained before, Sunset Primary School was situated in a small rural town that suffered from exclusion, marginalisation and negative identity criteria during the apartheid era (Sonn & Fischer, 1996). Sonn and Fischer (1998) however claim that literature and research on group responses to oppressive systems tended to emphasise negative outcomes and the victim status of these groups and often discard the innovative ways and alternative activity systems in which groups survive and maintain their cultures and identities. They highlight the notion of community resilience. Community membership as an essential source of well-being can act as an antidote to oppression, exclusion and psychological hardship and is integral to the survival of valued cultures and identities. It can also offer a sense of historical continuity to a community.

According to Sonn and Fischer (1998) it seemed as if, within the coloured community of South Africa during the apartheid regime, a sense of community operated on two levels: the first level represented the externally constructed and negative label of community, 'coloured'; the second level reflected the internal construction of community in mediating activity systems, such as that of the small rural town in which Sunset Primary School was embedded. The second level of community imbued its members with feelings of "security, stability, belongingness and psychological relatedness" (Sonn & Fischer, 1998:466). To rephrase the notion of the two levels of community: it meant that on the one hand the coloured group was denied a shared cultural heritage with the white group and suffered from an imposed negative cultural identity; whilst on the other hand the town managed to protect and maintain the foundations of the cultural identity they valued in their town and community institutions such as Sunset Primary School.

The two perspectives on community as identified by Sonn and Fischer (1998) were identifiable in the research data. On the one hand Hannah confessed to struggling with the negative label enforced on her by the dominant white group during apartheid, whilst on the other hand, as a consequence of apartheid, the town as an activity system became a close-knit community, investing heavily in group membership. The school principal pointed to the strong and laudable value system of the community that an outsider should understand and embrace, whilst the teachers told about their love for the school. The parents referred to the school as a "community school". It was clear from the data that from a historical perspective the school was considered a valuable asset to the community.

The down-side of such a close-knit community was that it opened the possibility for exclusionary practices and discrimination in both the town and the school. People 'from the outside' were not easily accepted and valued (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006). The school principal admitted to his outsider status as confirmed by the deputy principal who indicated that the former could not love the school to the same intensity as those (such as he) whose personal histories were interwoven with that of the school. Teachers also attested to finding it difficult to accept the influx of students from outside the community, such as Xhosa children, children from farm workers who were forced to leave the farms, and orphans from outside the community who were placed in foster care at homes in the community.

It seemed as if the assumption could be made that the school was confronted with an increase in student diversity that threatened the earlier homogeneity in the community and the school. Negative labelling and discrimination were the easy way out. The responses of some of the students also indicated that they felt subjected to unequal treatment and discrimination by the teachers. In this respect Bloch (2009:25) argues that many students feel that the education system in South Africa is failing them by not being inclusive "in its aspirations and effect". As indicated before, an activity system is continuously working through contradictions within and between its components (Engeström, 1987, 2001, 2008). In this instance, contradictions within the component of community impacted on teacher learning. With the increasing heterogeneity in the town and in the student body, teachers were confronted with new realities.

Over and above new forms of difference that acted as challenges to teacher learning, it seemed as if a multitude of factors contributed to the school currently being 'on an island', cut off from the local community and in many ways also from the parent body. Factors that might contribute to less positive relations with the school governing body (SGB), the parents, and the community could centre on a general lack of appreciation and support for schools and teachers in South Africa. Coupled with the fact that they were a low-paid part of today's civil service and thus not afforded the means and status that they deserve (Bloch, 2009), they did not have good track records in the light of the education system's failure of its clients (the students) (Bloch, 2009; Daniels, 2004).

In South Africa parents also have had limited experience in working in collaborative partnerships with schools. Previously principals and teachers were considered to be the ones with the knowledge and authority to make decisions (Van Wyk, 2004). Their involvement was generally limited to fund-raising activities (Johnson & Green, 2007). Inclusive education places a high premium on successful partnerships to address complex issues with regard to student diversity and to render the necessary support to teachers and students. Research conducted within inclusive education and CHAT pointed to the key importance of networking with parents and the community (Booth, 2000; Daniels, 2004; Engelbrecht *et al*., 2005; Friend & Cook, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Sands *et al.,* 2000).

With regard to the status quo at Sunset Primary School in particular, several factors could be offered as potential reasons for their failure to engage the parents and community members as partners and supporters. These included a loss of trust between the parents and the school due to an incident of abuse of school funding. The blaming attitude of the management team was also not conducive to building positive relations between the parties. Parents were positioned as uninvolved and unsupportive both with regard to the school and the learning of their children.

The principal's relationship with the SGB was strained. As parents form the majority on an SGB they hold a strong position with the power to influence the school budget, school and language policy, discipline and the appointment and promotion of teaching and administrative staff, among other things (Van Wyk, 2004). The school principal saw the school governing body as interfering and unsupportive. He suggested that he had often been called to task due to certain 'legitimate' absences from the school. He suggested that their approach was more controlling than supportive and that they did not fulfil their role as a link between the school and the community that it served (Van Wyk, 2004). It is interesting to note the six markers for a successful SGB as suggested by Creese and Earley (1998, cited in Van Wyk, 2004): working as a team; a good relationship with the principal; effective time management and delegation; effective meetings; good knowledge of the school; and the training and development of members of school governing bodies. Van Wyk (2004:54) concludes her argument by emphasising that an SGB in a school has "a statutory responsibility for many critical functions within a school which could make a valuable contribution to ensure a school's effectiveness and continuing improvement".

At Sunset Primary School it seemed, however, as if neither the SGB nor the parent body was recognised as a valuable resource in support of the school, the teachers and the students, despite the fact that collaboration and collaborative problem-solving were seen as cornerstones of an inclusive school. Collaborative practices were considered necessary to advance conditions for expansive teacher learning in order to address the challenge of student diversity at Sunset Primary School. Parents and community members needed to be engaged in partnership with the school in order to address challenging student behaviour that was on the increase. Teachers suggested that social illnesses in the community were worrying and that students were often subjected to unstable and dysfunctional families. This was reflected in a high percentage of reported cases of violence in households. They suggested that challenging student behaviour corresponded with adverse circumstances at home.

A stalemate existed with regard to who should take the initiative to seek engagement: the school or the parents. The management team also highlighted parents' overemphasis on the rights of the students. The teachers acknowledged the fact that there was less contact with the parents than in the past due to a decrease in home visits by the teachers. Parents appreciated visits from teachers. The learning support teacher suggested that parents were only invited to the school when their children's progress or behaviour was in question.

Community involvement could be reported at Sunset Primary School, but not on the same scale as in the past. Successful networking with the community was identified as important for the development of the school, but according to the teachers the school had "chased them away". Apparently the school principal was to blame for estranging the community. The teachers experienced the constant break-ins and vandalism at the school as degrading and demoralising, without recognising that stronger ties with the community to find collaborative solutions to their problems was the only feasible approach in this respect. In South Africa schools are encouraged to develop stronger links with their local communities to address complex problems. A school needs to establish a vibrant relationship with its community to be able to successfully communicate with the community and understand its needs, but at the same time the community can act as rich resource for the school (Donald *et al.*, 2006; Wai-ming Tam, 2007). This is especially true of schools in less affluent communities such as Sunset Primary School where "[s]chool-community partnerships can weave together a critical mass of resources and strategies to enhance caring communities that support all youth and their families and enable success at school and beyond" (Johnson & Green, 2007:169).

On the up-side the data reported certain changes with regard to parental and community involvement. Evidence to this effect was presented in Chapter 5. Apart from certain community initiatives in the school that the teachers could list, the Index for Inclusion process created a better understanding for the value of networking with the parents and the community. After I had addressed two parent meetings the school principal reported a change in the parents' attitude to the school. The teachers also talked about equalising relations with the parents and suggested that invited speakers could make a difference to parent meetings. I left the parent meetings with the feeling that there was enough goodwill that the school could tap into by purposefully inviting the parents and the community into partnership with the school. This was often foregrounded in meetings with school members. With regard to the sustainability of the learning gains in this respect, it could be reported that certain teachers accepted responsibility to work in partnership with community members to the benefit of the school. Enthusiasm and support from the principal and the management team for a more inviting stance to the parents and the community remained questionable. In agreement with Bloch (2009) I want to emphasise that 'hand-holding' and equal partnerships could be one of the key answers to rebuilding education in South Africa. It seemed as if the staff at Sunset Primary School still had to learn to 'hold hands' in order to accomplish the necessary changes in the school.

6.2.3.3 Leadership for teacher learning for inclusion

Rules and division of labour are the two key components of the Engeström model implicated when leadership in a school is explored. Rules determine social positioning in the school, and thus the distribution of power and work (Engeström, 1987, 2001; Worthen & Berry, 2006). Daniels (2004) suggests a shift at the level of rules, distribution of labour and community of the activity system when looking at new ways of distributing power and control in an activity system.

From a historical-cultural perspective the schooling system in South Africa during the apartheid system ascribed to a conservative stance and a fixed position with regard to the principal (or head) as the leader of the school. Headship, implying position, status and authority, dominated a view of leadership (Prew, 2007). Post-apartheid policy approaches to leadership in South Africa foregrounded a move from leadership as autocratic and hierarchical to an approach that was transformative, distributed, inclusive and participative. But what was the case with leadership at school level in South Africa? Welton (2001) and Williams (2001) claim that vestiges of conservatism are still apparent in the need for control, resistance to change and innovation and the authoritarian nature of leadership. From several studies it seems as if autocratic leadership styles are still dominant in many schools in South Africa. This often leads to conflict in schools and can even result in a total collapse of management (Grant, 2006; Prew, 2007). Grant (2006) claims that the majority of the schools are characterised by a culture of resistance, dependency and non-participation as a legacy of apartheid and Prew (2007) argues that under the pretence of inclusion, participation and of transformational and shared leadership with vision and mission statements in place, many principals are still carrying on much as before.

After 1994 more responsibilities were decentralised to schools, invoking the notion of a self-managing school (Prew, 2007). Bush (2007) argues that while policy initiatives in South Africa do allow schools more leeway to determine their own aims and developmental processes, school leaders are constrained by the expectations of national and provincial education departments. Schools are often left with the sole task of interpreting and implementing external imperatives in line with accountability measures (Bush, 2007). This was confirmed by one on the members of the management team at Sunset Primary School who indicated that they had some freedom to make decisions but within the confines of specific rules and regulations.

Bloch (2009) confirms that the management responsibilities of the principal are enormous and often crucial to the functioning or non-functioning of a school. Support is not always forthcoming to ensure that principals can attend to the enormity of their tasks. A major concern in this respect is the high level of administrative and financial management skills required for self-managing schools. Such skills are not at the disposal of certain schools as they do not have access to knowledgeable staff or parents or the equipment to handle administrative functions effectively – with disturbing results (Fleisch, 2002; Sayed, 2001). Bloch (2009:113) therefore finds it “not surprising that the leadership required to achieve these tasks would not spontaneously exist in all cases or appear in a democratic dispensation simply by wishing it”. Sunset Primary School presented as a good example of a school that did not possess the much-needed knowledge and skills to ensure the successful running of a school. They struggled with planning and with successfully managing the burden of administrative and financial responsibility. School policies were not on paper, the most recent school development plan was mislaid, and an earlier disappearance of money was reported. There were also more recent indications of the misuse of resources. The teachers used the metaphor of “the house with too much activity” to describe the crisis management style that prevailed at the school that left them feeling unsafe, exposed and vulnerable.

With regard to the leadership change required to implement inclusive education in schools, Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) indicate that schools should create and support non-hierarchical organisational structures. The collaborative nature of inclusive school cultures has clear implications for the nature of leadership and processes of decision-making (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). Leadership is not solely an individual affair but is spread throughout a school with leader roles overlapping and shifting as different developmental needs arise (Harris, 2003b).

The implementation of inclusive education in a school requires leadership that is both transformational and distributed. From a CHAT perspective Daniels (2004) indicates that distributed leadership as a conjoint agency opens possibilities of a changed way of looking at the rules, division of labour and community of an activity system, where the scope of activities to be performed "have to be redefined to encompass pluralities of agents whose actions dovetail or mesh to express new patterns of interdependent relations" (Gronn, 2000:325).

The aforementioned were the ideals for leadership with which I entered Sunset Primary School. I realised that in many schools in South Africa change with regard to leadership was necessary to support the transformation that was needed for schools to become democratic and inclusive systems. But Ainscow (n.d.) claims that it is not an easy process to lead schools that are implementing inclusive education. Teachers and other professionals find processes of change to be demanding, as they have to be able to deal with questions being asked of their beliefs and teaching practices. Central to the arguments offered in this dissertation was that change implied learning, signifying a process of learning for all school members. Sunset Primary School needed to become an inclusive learning community in order to support the learning of its members, and the membership base needed to be broadened to include parents, community members and in particular students to become active members of these communities (Deppeler *et al.,* 2005; Swart & Pettipher, 2007). But at Sunset Primary School leadership could be identified as presenting a profound challenge for developing the school as an inclusive learning community and thus one of the main constraints to teacher learning.

A central question that gradually emerged during our research engagement with Sunset Primary School was to what extent leadership should be viewed as the most important ingredient to act as catalyst in mobilising capacity for school change for inclusion and to build internal capacity to sustain processes of change (Christie, Butler & Potterton, 2007). To rephrase the question: Who was responsible for creating the necessary expansive conditions in the school to support teacher learning?

When I first entered Sunset Primary School practically all the characteristics of a restrictive environment for teacher learning as identified in the adapted version of the Fuller and Unwin (2003, 2004) continuum were present. The notion of expansive learning for transformation as constructed by Engeström (1987, 2001) was thus not possible without certain changes in the rules and division of work in the school. At Sunset Primary School teachers were working in isolation, jealously guarding their own knowledge base and skills, with virtually no collegial support for learning. Teacher learning adhered to out-of-school and narrow short training opportunities in strategic compliance with government agendas. The outcomes were reminiscent of Moloi and Henning's (2007) notion of "policy speak" without any school-wide agenda for the implementation of innovative practice. Opportunities for boundary crossing only came with a job change as explained by Hannah in Section 5.10.3. Most teachers were using a narrow range of learning approaches as emphasised by the student who did her practicum at the school. Teachers were obliged to use individual agency and out-of-school development initiatives to develop knowledge and skills, for instance by studying further at nearby universities. Such accomplishments were acknowledged and valued in the school but no effort was made to utilise the new-found knowledge and skills to the benefit of the school. Innovation was thus not considered of particular importance. Rigid specialist roles were adhered to and the expectation was that the school principal and management team should take the lead in all changes and innovations in the school.

The teachers considered the principal and by inference also the management team as the gatekeepers of change at Sunset Primary School. Their leadership skills and abilities were thus considered of crucial importance for the successful implementation of inclusive education in the school (Harris, 2003b; Gronn, 2000). To the teachers' profound dismay the principal chose to disengage from any responsibility with regard to the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process. In effect he actively resisted the change initiative and although the management team was well-represented, he seldom attended the meetings of the coordinating team. His attitude evoked feelings of hopelessness and despair from the other members of the team. At first it was difficult to understand his resistance. Later the inference could be made that he felt exposed and vulnerable by the intervention which, through a process of visibilisation, was unveiling school cultures, structures and practices resulting in a realistic portrayal of leadership at Sunset Primary School (Gronn, 2003). He appeared to experience this as threatening and extrication seemed the only way out. Hodges (1998) contends that it is possible for members of a community to dis-identify with a community's practices, without open resistance. In the principal's case resistance was out in the open for all to see. Some of the members of the coordinating team reacted with despondency to his disengagement from the process to the extent that they doubted the school's ability ever to accept ownership of the process. They contemplated withdrawing from the process themselves (see Francelle's confession to this effect in Section 5.10.2). Francelle suggested that he modelled the wrong attitude to the process implying that it was not worth pursuing, whilst the majority of the teachers recognised the value of the intervention in the school.

Although the principal's reaction initially jeopardised the implementation of the Index for Inclusion, he gradually came to accept our presence in the school. After a few working sessions with the teachers on distributed democratic leadership with the emphasis on teacher leadership and the benefits of collaboration and collaborative problem-solving, some of them realised that they would not be able to change him, but that they needed to get him ‘on their side’ in order to make some changes in the school. However, the majority of the staff found this particularly challenging as it implied a change in their perspective on the positioning of the school principal and the management team in the school. The conservative perspective on leadership as headship, implying position, status and authority (Prew, 2007) still prevailed in the school. This perspective was enforced by the principal who was not prepared to relinquish the authority and status of his position in the school. Shields (2003, citing Kets de Vries, 1997) warns that the power that accompanies formal leadership positions frequently develops from a desire for power and an inappropriate sense of self-importance which can be harmful to a school. Gronn (2000) suggests that potential weaknesses, such as ostentation, can be triggered when an inflated sense of agency is accredited to school leaders.

It seemed as if the principal’s sense of own importance disempowered the teachers and aggravated their battle with low self-esteem and self-efficacy emanating from their past and recent enforced top-down changes. Gronn (2003) argues that when leaders are constructed as exceptional, non-leaders are depicted as ‘followers’ and can easily feel ‘othered’. This can take away their agency and foster a kind of unhealthy dependency, learned helplessness or disempowerment among their followers (Gronn, 2003; Harris, 2003b; Shields, 2003). Whilst the teachers at Sunset Primary School needed the principal’s support and encouragement as enabling measures to address the many challenges in their school and classroom practice, much of their energy went into handling him delicately. This stood in the way of meaningful collaborative engagement and problem-solving to address the complexities presented by student diversity in the school.

The teachers and the rest of the management team ascribed the principal’s incompetence as a leader to an absence of interpersonal skills, will-power, energy and ability to lead a process of change at Sunset Primary School. His divided interests adversely affected their trust in and respect for him. In the broader coloured community he was a relatively well-known figure, but did not live up to their expectations. When he was appointed as principal of Sunset Primary School in a time of turmoil, both in the history of the school and in education, the community had high expectations of him as rescuer of the school. However, these expectations seemed to exceed his abilities as leader and his preparedness to lead a process of change in the school. The staff suggested that he chose to remain an outsider and to be geographically removed from the community. The teachers, parents and the community at large viewed his half-hearted commitment to the school, the students and the community less favourably. This situation contributed largely to the teachers’ positioning of the school as ‘an island’.

The principal confessed to having political ambitions and ranked being a principal at Sunset Primary School as the lowest of his personal aspirations. Nevertheless he wanted to be acknowledged as the leader of the school, as evident in the different metaphors that he employed to explain the positioning of a school principal (see Chapter 5 in this respect). According to the teachers "everything had to go through the office". Consequently the rest of the management team and the teachers found it extremely difficult to take any initiative in the school. He eventually showed a more positive attitude towards the Index for Inclusion process in the school and allowed the process to continue as a staff development initiative. However, he only chose to join in when he found it convenient, and never became part of the team. Moreover, he never became conversant with what the process wanted to achieve in the school. He never endorsed the ideals of an inclusive learning community. His relations with the rest of the management team, the parents, the SGB, the community and the students were negatively affected by his need to remain the authority figure in the school. In this way several voices in the school community were effectively silenced.

Although the principal found it difficult to network with the community, he eventually supported more initiatives at the school. He would however rather ask the Provincial Education Department for support with the development of the infrastructure at the school than network with the local community. The only inference that could be made from this was that serious attempts at networking on behalf of the school would have required considerable time and effort from his side for which he was not prepared. Another explanation could be that he perceived it as a threat to his authority and position to approach others to support the school.

Engeström (2001:137) talks of contradictions as "historically accumulating structural tensions" within systems. Principals trained in more traditional top-down approaches to leadership will have to relinquish some control to enable others to assume responsibility. Grant (2009), a strong propagator for distributed leadership and teacher leadership in South Africa, advocates a new conceptual framework for school leadership in South Africa that I want to endorse. In line with CHAT, she suggests education leadership as a democratic, distributed and transformative social practice and calls for an emphasis on place and space.

Leadership should be viewed as a shared practice (activity) that she explains by invoking the notion of the art of soccer playing. She draws on Gunter (2005:6, cited in Grant, 2009:46) to sanction the central aim of this dissertation in making a plea for educational leadership to be concerned with

> productive social and socialising relationships where the approach is not so much about controlling relationships through team processes but more about how the agent is connected with others in their own and others' learning. Hence it is inclusive of all, and integrated with teaching and learning.

Place is “the concrete, the location where one can pause and dwell” whereas space is the abstract concept invoking s movement and freedom where “one has the power and enough room in which to act” (Tuan, 1977:52, cited in Grant, 2009:46). Place allows the stability and time to engage in processes of learning while space is consciously constructed for school members to act and situate themselves as active participants where openness and trust facilitates critical collaborative learning. My research findings in terms of leadership at Sunset Primary School are in line with Grant’s (2009:47) claim that

> monologic space commonly prevails in South African schools where leadership is equated with headship and delegated from the head to ‘subordinates’ in a top-down, one-way process without any dialogue. Places of inequality where the powerful dominate and deny others the right to speak.

Grant (2006) argues for the development of a culture of distributed leadership and teacher leadership as a means to restore the self-worth and professionalism of teachers. At Sunset Primary School the teachers struggled with the concept of teacher leadership. Their conservative beliefs about leadership were deeply ingrained and it was difficult to move from a stance of dependency to the idea of agency and responsibility. The deputy principal ascribed their challenge to the legacy of apartheid that taught them how to be slaves and not how to handle freedom and the responsibility that accompanies it. Another member of the management team indicated that they could not afford to position themselves as victims any longer. Sparks of enthusiasm and agency were evident in most of the teachers’ responses to the intervention in their school. They recognised their responsibility in the change initiative but found it difficult to move from their comfort zones. It was easier to blame than to take action for the sake of transformation in the school. This approach was also evident in their classrooms.

Despite all the effort that I put into facilitating a process of learning and change and into ways of enthusing them to take responsibility for change, their restrictive environment and their problems with agency were still major challenges. I realised that teachers should be consciously prepared on a pre- and in-service level for teacher leadership. Grant (2006:513) argues that “in keeping with the notion of distributed leadership, teachers need to be encouraged to find their voices, take up their potential as leaders and change agents to produce a liberating culture in their schools”. Teachers need to be consciously and adequately prepared to take up informal leadership roles in the classroom, the school and the community by working collaboratively within a culture of mutual trust and respect with all school members to move their school to become more inclusive (Grant, 2006).

Pienaar (2009) suggests another view for understanding the leadership crisis at Sunset Primary School that I want to offer for consideration. He (2009:133) claims that “the more power a person wields, the more lives are affected by his or her behaviour. When people in positions of leadership manifest significant blind spots, individuals, organisations and whole communities may suffer.” Pienaar (2009) further explores the factors that constitute leadership ineffectiveness resulting in organisational failure and found that the character of a leader, the ability to manage own emotions, and interpersonal skills may be some aspects negatively affecting leadership in a school such as Sunset Primary School. Pienaar (2009) builds a strong case for leadership training to focus on the development of processes that help leaders to greater self-awareness as one of the key ingredients of emotional intelligence. Pienaar (2009) quotes Goleman *et al*. (2002) in stressing that leaders who are self-aware are generally more honest with themselves and about themselves and better able to understand their own drivers, goals and values. They are also more likely to act with conviction and self-authenticity that result in better relationships with others. Although Pienaar's argument (2009) is focused on leadership in general, the results of my study indicated that the training of educational leaders are important with regard to competence levels but should also focus on the development of intrapersonal skills. In fact, training in intrapersonal skills should receive the same emphasis as the development of interpersonal skills. Intrapersonal skills are recognised as the foundation for the development of good interpersonal skills and as fundamental to good leadership.

6.2.3.4 Enhanced student learning as object of the activity

This study had in mind an unending process of collaborative teacher learning at Sunset Primary School with as object and outcome the continuous transformation of the school and classroom cultures, policies and practices in order to ensure access, participation and quality learning for all students (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Student learning and inclusion was thus the "central object of the reflection dialogue, inquiry and networking" (Engeström, Engeström & Suntio, 2002:223).

Certain constraints to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School derived from the complexity presented by adequately addressing the diverse learning abilities and needs of students in the light of their challenging and inappropriate behaviour. The teachers were despondent about their students' perceived inability to learn and to make the necessary progress. In line with students at many of the historically disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape, students of Sunset Primary School were performing poorly in the Systemic Evaluations (SE) (Bloch, 2009). Teachers attested to their students' challenges with reading, writing and mathematics. Together with the SE of Grade 3 and 6 students, an evaluation system of teacher appraisal implemented in public schools since 2005 serve as accountability measures for teacher success. According to Bloch (2009) the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) has been a controversial issue and is still subject to discussion and finalisation.

According to Bloch (2009) the South African system is failing its students. He claims that South African children are not performing to potential and proves this by quoting various international studies such as the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

(SACMEQ), the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) published in 2003, and the Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which all point to the poor results of our students and in effect the poor quality of our education system. Nationally the Grade 3 and 6 systemic evaluations for literacy, numeracy and science support the findings of international studies. Action needs to be taken in South Africa to ensure that children are given the education they deserve.

Teachers at Sunset Primary School were not prepared to accept responsibility for failed student learning. Constraints to teacher learning were present in their conception of their students. They blamed their students and their families for the students' inability to show the required progress and for behavioural problems manifested in the classroom to the detriment of good learning practices. The SE process also came under attack, as did the Education District Office and both the National and Provincial Education Departments, as discussed in Section 6.2.2. The deputy principal blamed transformation in education for their students' inability to show progress and for their behavioural problems.

Some of the teachers seemed to cope by employing strict measures of control and corporal punishment that used to be the criteria for a good teacher during the more conservative apartheid education system (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004), whilst others indicated a sense of hopelessness and despondency for their perceived inability to ensure student progress in their classrooms. This was a sensitive issue for teachers, as they considered their ability to 'control' behaviour in their classrooms as an important indicator of their competence as teachers. They were trained within the previous conservative apartheid educational culture that regarded the maintenance of order and discipline a measure of a teacher's worth (Wingo, 1974 in Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004). Their conceptualisation of their students as being unable to learn and 'out of control' presented a major constraint in finding innovative ways to work in collaborative and respectful partnerships with their students.

The teachers' more conservative upbringing and value system could also act as a barrier to change in their personal and working lives as it impacted negatively on their attitudes and practices in the classroom. In this respect Van Niekerk and Prins (2009) claim that large numbers of students from disadvantaged communities still find themselves in schools and classrooms that do not prepare them adequately for modern life. One of the contributing factors can be ill-prepared teachers who have had little experience themselves of modern life and are struggling to cope with all the challenges presented by the rate and extent of change and globalisation in modern society. This might explain the differing value systems of teachers and students at Sunset Primary School and consequently the teachers' inability to address the students' needs in an appropriate way. In South Africa today parents and students are more aware of their rights and this can offer a severe challenge to older teachers.

Corporal punishment was an accepted tool for disciplining students in the conservative apartheid education system. Oswald and Engelbrecht (2004) argue that the apartheid education system highly regarded traditional forms of authority such as those vested in parents, educators, school principals and school inspectors, who were seen as being responsible for the preservation of social stability and the maintenance of traditions in society. Williams (2001, cited in Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004) emphasises that this view is often closely associated with authoritarianism where childhood is viewed in a negative way, as deficient, which should be remedied by education. In 1996, to the dismay of most teachers, corporal punishment was banned in all schools in South Africa. It is, however, a practice that is still in use in schools in the Western Cape. Williams (2001, cited in Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004) links this practice with the conservative culture that still prevails in many schools. At Sunset Primary School corporal punishment was still being used as a disciplinary tool although it was illegal to do so. It also seemed as if it occurred with the tacit approval of at least some of the parents. The teachers admitted that corporal punishment was not as effective as it used to be in the past, but claimed that they experienced difficulty finding useful and successful alternatives to corporal punishment. An HSRC report (2005:92-93) argues that

> [the] issue of corporal punishment is bound up not only with the correspondence between values of parents and teachers, but also with the rights of learners and the ability of teachers to distinguish between offences that require an educational or a punitive response.

The HSRC report (2005) further suggests that the central cause of teachers' difficulty in managing student behaviour appropriately might be a lack of knowledge on how to stimulate a democratic and just classroom environment to enhance student learning.

The HSRC's (2005) observation is corroborated by Prinsloo (2005) who indicates that South African teachers struggle to ensure and support quality learning processes in their classrooms in innovative ways. With regard to international findings on this subject, Corrie (2002, cited in Saunderson & Oswald, 2009) claims that the continuous struggle of teachers to manage difficult student behaviour takes up much of their time and energy and leads to high levels of frustration and to their questioning of own efficacy. For the staff of Sunset Primary School their students' poor progress substantiated their perceived incompetence and inability to control their students' behaviour. It seemed as if difficult student behaviour, as well as incidents of violence and extreme bullying, was intensifying to the extent that certain students left the school out of fear of being victimised.

As mentioned before, the teachers blamed their students' poor progress and bad behaviour on the parents and the community. According to the teachers violence and other social ills were on the increase in the community and were spilling over into the school. The HSRC report (2005, as cited in

Engelbrecht, 2006:260) concedes that life in poverty-stricken communities in South Africa is greatly characterised by

> [t]he ways in which poverty shape children's daily lives and how these patterns of daily life create patterns of participation in education that include late-coming, absenteeism, repetition and eventual drop-out …

Discrimination was rife in the school amongst students and between the teachers and the students. The nutrition scheme for students from poverty-stricken households, which was supported by the Provincial Education Department and the community, could be viewed as an asset of the school (and on a broader level as an asset of many schools in South Africa), also became a site of discrimination and name-calling. Discriminatory attitudes and practices towards certain forms of difference acted as significant barriers to teacher learning. Both teachers and students viewed any students with visible differences as 'different' and 'outsiders' (for instance, the few Xhosa-speaking students; students with disabilities, e.g. those with foetal alcohol syndrome; those with more extreme learning difficulties; and those from poverty-stricken households).

Mariage *et al.* (2004) suggest a meaning-making process that can open the discourse space to support all students equally and effectively, while the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) supports a welcoming and inclusive approach to diversity among all students. It presumes that the aim of inclusive education is to eliminate social exclusion stemming from certain attitudes and responses of a school community to student diversity based on criteria such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability/disability. Learning in the classroom means having your voice heard, being recognised, accepted and valued for who you are and what you bring to the learning environment (Ainscow & Kaplan, 2005; Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

The findings revealed a culture of blaming as one of the central characteristics of Sunset Primary School. This was an extremely challenging issue to address during the Index for Inclusion intervention in the school and it emphasised the importance of the effect of teachers' emotions on their willingness to engage with any change initiative. Although bullying received extensive attention during the intervention, the management team and the majority of the staff only made half-hearted attempts to engage with the initiative that in effect needed to be addressed on a school-wide level in conjunction with a consistent and proactive approach to discipline in the school.

The blaming of students can be an outcome of deficit thinking that is more prevalent than most teachers would care to admit (Shields, 2006). Furthermore, Shields, Bishop and Mazawi (2005, in Shields, 2006:69) contend that teachers are in danger of "pathologizing the lived experiences of children". According to Shields (2006:69)

> [t]his is not to suggest that unequal living situations do not result in disparate readiness for school, that there should be no variations in outcome, or that all children will succeed in the same way and at the same levels. But it is to acknowledge that it is inappropriate to make assumptions about the potential or ability of any student or group of students based solely on their familial circumstances.

Should teachers hold views that favour the deficit model, they are absolved from taking responsibility for how their own behaviour contributes to challenging student behaviour. This could reinforce a culture of blaming in schools. Such a culture could exacerbate problems of student behaviour and obscure solutions that are very often already present in individual capacities and systemic assets. During the Index for Inclusion intervention the teachers were challenged with different ways of conceptualising their students, but these efforts were often viewed with scepticism. For many of the teachers it was just too frightening a prospect to seriously consider their own part in contributing to poor student learning and behaviour.

During my engagement with a group of Grade 6 students from the school I was impressed by their potential and willingness to participate as leaders and in partnership with the staff to address the challenges that the school faced. I pursued the issue of student voice as an important offspring of democratic education with the staff. Some of the teachers willingly professed that there was no platform for student voice in the school and that it was one of the issues that needed addressing. Both the school principal and deputy principal were however unwilling to engage with the issue of space for student voice in the school. It appeared that their trust and belief in their students' ability to make a worthwhile contribution to the school's well-being was under question. This brought home the observation of Matusov and Hayes (2002:239) that "students are often viewed as inept, deficient and biased". Their need for control and their distrust of their students seemed so deeply ingrained that they were not prepared to take any risks in this respect despite all our efforts. Thus they missed an excellent opportunity to collaborate with their students in building a community of learning and progress in the school. Later some of the teachers worked more closely with some of the students to run the library and the garbage removal project in the school.

The notion of a school as a community of difference as (cf. Shields, 2006) could be invoked here to foreground the importance of enabling students to become partners in education. In a school as a community of difference respect for each other, the inclusion of all voices, justice, empathy in the sense of Noddings's work on the notion of caring, democracy understood as the right to have one's voice heard and understood, and optimism are considered of key importance to optimise student learning (Shields, 2003). During the implementation of inclusive education at Sunset Primary School these attributes of a good school were emphasised but the staff found it challenging to internalise, despite the worthy intentions of some of them to ensure a good education for their students.

Some of the teachers acknowledged that inadequate human and physical resources were detrimental to the learning of their students. For instance, computer training for students was non-existent and the staff seemed unable to get a previously identified initiative off the ground. Taking action proved too challenging and the students lost out. The staff's low morale and apathy negatively influenced their students. Hannah admitted that the staff modelled 'failure' to the students and left them without good memories to fall back on in difficult times. This could contribute to feelings of hopelessness and sadness among the students and to their low self-esteem, as identified by the teachers. The students at Sunset Primary School were not given enough opportunity to ensure joyful learning and a love for life, although some progress was made in this respect.

The Index for Inclusion process at least created some awareness that school and classroom cultures can enhance or restrain student learning. But, as argued by Engeström *et al.* (2002:216), systemic contradictions

> [c]annot be eliminated or fixed by means of isolated technical solutions. They can be resolved and transcended only by means of systemic transformations - processes we call expansive learning … with as core the collaborative creation of new artifacts and patterns of practice.

The attitudes and loss of energy of the management team at Sunset Primary School acted as a considerable constraint in this respect.

6.2.3.5 Teacher cognition and emotions as factors in expansive teacher learning in the workplace

In this section I explore teacher cognitions and emotions as affordances and constraints to teacher learning for inclusion at Sunset Primary School as activity setting and also look at the notion of expansive learning during the implementation of the intervention.

From an international perspective Darling-Hammond (1998) and Lohman (2006) refer to the intensification of teachers' work which has become more stressful, complex and ambiguous during recent years. Change seems to be a constant factor which implies that innovations have to be applied within the scope of a normal workday. For teachers in South Africa the radical rewriting of the education system in many ways overextended their capacities for change. The narrative of the collective and individual learning trajectories of the teachers working at Sunset Primary School served as an example of the intensity of effect of educational transformation on teachers and a school community.

Change initiatives at policy level confronted teachers with considerable shifts in both theory and practice. In the words of CHAT, teachers at Sunset Primary School and elsewhere were 'asked' to reconsider their spontaneous concepts of teaching as acquired through years of experience in the classroom in the light of changed scientific concepts. They had to internalise new scientific concepts as inner cognitive tools (Kozulin *et al.*, 2003) to be externalised in their everyday practice (Blanton *et al.,* 1998; Keating, 2005). The aforementioned proved difficult at Sunset Primary School. One such example (of utmost importance for the implementation of inclusive education in any school) centred on the issue of support for student learning and participation in the school. The teachers struggled to come to terms with the notion of learning support as suggested by the Index for Inclusion and supported by Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001). The Index for Inclusion adopts a broad notion of support as all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to all student diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Arguing from a Vygotskian perspective, Gindis (2003:217) explains learning support as all students' "integration to the fullest extent possible in social-cultural interaction, provision of appropriate and effective 'psychological tools' and ensuring scaffolded (mediated) learning experiences". The search for positive capacities and strengths in the support of students is a trademark of the Vygotskian approach (Gindis, 2003).

With regard to the above, Naicker (2005) argues that in South Africa the shift from a segregated, conservative and exclusionary education model heavily vested in special education theory and practices to an inclusive outcomes-based education system entails a paradigm shift from one set of theories, assumptions, models, practices and tools to another. Schools have long confused sorting and labelling children with supporting their learning (Allington, 1994). Tomlinson (2004) argues that the categorising, labelling and sorting approach has negative implications with regard to the quality of teaching that students are likely to encounter. In line with our experiences at Sunset Primary School as borne out in the presentation of the data, ideological constraints could be considered a major barrier among practitioners in schools (Naicker, 2005). Naicker (2005) emphasises that practitioners in schools should engage critically with conservative philosophies with their roots in the medical or deficit model and special education thinking. They should understand the implications of these philosophies for their practice before the implementation of inclusive education will become a viable option.

In line with Deppeler *et al. (*2005) who foreground the importance of workplace learning for inclusive education, this dissertation has argued throughout that change in the workplace could and should act as a strong incentive for workplace learning. The success of such an endeavour depended on the collective and personal will and agency of the staff at Sunset Primary School to engage with the change initiative. The top-down approaches to change in the education system forced teachers to respond to innovations in reactive ways. Their resistance to these initiatives was dealt with in Section 6.2.2. I believed that the implementation of the Index for Inclusion process would afford teachers the opportunity to learn about inclusion in a reflective rather than reactive way. This could give them the opportunity as a school to influence rather than merely react to the implementation of inclusive education in their school (Kinsella & Senior, 2008).

Through dialogue, negotiation and the production of spaces where one will find a fusion of diversity that facilitates mutual understanding (Roth & Lee, 2007) the Index for Inclusion process at Sunset Primary School aimed to build on teachers' prior experiences to support the development of confidence that creates competence (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). Expansive teacher learning wants to work towards innovation in teachers' and schools' practices. Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) suggests that all learning is in some way collaborative and that learning takes place through a process of inquiry within a social group (Wells, 2000). Engeström's (1987) reformulation of the definition of the ZPD acted as an incentive for our work in the school. The ZPD was seen as the distance between the current actions of the teachers in the school and the sign system of the Index for Inclusion as a new form of activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to the contradictions embedded in their everyday actions.

Teachers at Sunset Primary School struggled with the changed conception of student difference and found it difficult to take ownership of the learning of all their students in inclusive classroom communities. I found it particularly disconcerting that the staff seemed so overwhelmed by the extent of current student diversity in their classrooms that the Index for Inclusion intervention could not be extended to include an initiative to re-engage children from the local community who had left the school well before the official school leaving age of 15 and were not receiving the learning opportunity that was their right by law. Likewise the project could not address the needs of children with disabilities in the local community who were not attending school. As researcher I understood the engagement of out of school youth as a particular object of inclusive education.

In international literature on inclusive education and as propagated in Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001) the classroom teacher is expected to form an integral part of the network of support for students and to be able to deal with the complexity of student differences in order to ensure quality learning for all students. Learning support is thus perceived as integral to schooling in general and the task of every classroom teacher. This means that enriching education should take place in the classroom with learning support available for all students (Bouwer, 2005). Education White Paper 6 of 2001 further stresses the need for changes in "attitudes, behaviour, methodologies, curricula and environments" in order to maximise participation and prevent or minimise barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001:55). Tomlinson (2004) argues in this respect that classroom teachers are often unprepared to change their teaching practice to provide responsive instruction and opportunities for quality learning for all. Classroom teachers tend to assume they have taught struggling students effectively when they 'expose' the students to certain content and skills, rather than when they scaffold success. Tomlinson (2004) suggests that as long as general classroom teachers do not acknowledge scaffolded learning as an important approach to supporting the learning of students, there is little impetus to retool these teachers to ensure quality learning for all students.

As stated before, 17 of the 19 teachers were over 40 years of age. Although the teachers acknowledged their experience and potential as particular strengths, it was ironic that “they brought a lot of history with them” that also acted as a constraint to teacher learning. They were trained and initiated in the apartheid education system. The apartheid education system seemed to have provided safety, security and structure through top-down control that seemed lacking in the current education dispensation where new teaching approaches and practices require inclusive and participative relationships, reflective practice, experimenting and risk (Williams, 2001; Wits Education Policy Unit, 2005). The latter are still actively resisted in schools as was my experience at Sunset Primary School. The teachers knew that the status quo had to change in support of their students’ learning, but found it difficult to consider changing attitudes and practices without the necessary support in place.

Day and Gu (2007) argue that teachers do not necessarily become more effective with age and experience. Teachers who have been in service for long periods of time and especially from 24 years onwards (as was the case with the majority of teachers at Sunset Primary School) need in-school support to promote their sense of resilience, agency and well-being and to sustain their commitment and effectiveness. Teaching is emotional work and the more emotional energy is depleted through adverse effects of personal, workplace and policy experiences the less will be their capacities for sustaining effectiveness. There is thus an inextricable connection between attending to the well-being of the students and supporting the well-being of the adults in the school.

Day and Gu (2007:439-440) further contend that

> [t]he provision of responsive and differentiated support to meet teachers’ professional and personal learning needs at different times in their work lives can help to counter declining commitment trajectories, enhancing the continuity of positive development of teachers’ professional commitment and thus their effectiveness.

The teachers at Sunset Primary School found themselves disengaged from all their formal and informal support networks. The school principal resisted the Index for Inclusion process and was unsupportive of the opportunity offered for collaborative teacher learning and problem solving. He eventually became more positive towards the process and was prepared to acknowledge it as a staff development initiative. Professional development was however never given the priority that it deserved and he resisted becoming an active leader or participator in an inclusive learning community. He remained oblivious to the benefits of collaborative learning and problem-solving as important support mechanisms for teacher and student learning. Likewise, the contribution that the education support team and the learning support teacher could make in enhancing teacher and student learning was not centrally placed on the school's agenda.

In addition, despite certain efforts from community members, the school had managed successfully to position themselves as 'an island', cut off from the support of the parents and the local community. The school was also estranged from the officials from the Education District Office who were entrusted with the support of the school, the support and professional development of the teachers and the support of student learning.

Booth and Ainscow (2002) stress that students, in their capacity to direct their own learning and to support each other's learning, may be utilised as important resources of support for teachers in the classroom. Students can act as resources of support in the classroom to prevent and address barriers to learning through enhancing their agency and voice and fostering social learning. They should be supported in chipping away at the barriers to their learning in order to achieve the maximum independence possible in learning (Bouwer, 2005). At Sunset Primary School, students were not recognised or utilised as important resources in the learning process.

To aggravate matters the teachers from Sunset Primary School entered the profession without any inclination to learn from and with other adults, as collaborative teacher learning had not been promoted during their training and early careers (Grossman *et al*., 2001). Through the project an attempt was made to model the many benefits of team learning and mutual support. The project worked from the premise that teachers at Sunset Primary School needed to learn to appreciate the value of collaboration to transcend the counterproductive boundaries that existed between themselves and the management team, the parents, the community, the students and the Education District Office. When I entered the activity system of Sunset Primary School teachers were actively undermining each other. Opposition and discord were part of their normal working day. This acted as a severe constraint to collective teacher learning. Teachers were challenged with the notion that in collaborative partnerships it was possible to "create zones of proximal development for each other 'where intellect and affect are fused in a unified whole'" (Vygotsky, 1934/1987:373, cited in Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002:51). To echo the words of Mahn and John-Steiner (2002:52): the teachers needed to learn that "[e]motional scaffolding includes the gift of confidence, the sharing of risks in the presentation of new ideas, constructive criticism and the creation of a safety zone". Teachers at Sunset Primary School however found it difficult to learn as a team and to make "the joy of discovery, the commitment to remain open to one another's ideas, and a temporary erasure of individual egos" their own (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002:52). In the absence of their natural networks of support I found the work to be done at Sunset Primary School complex and even overwhelming at times. Through the Index for Inclusion process I recognised the significant role played by what Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) call "caring support" when facilitating risk-taking in the learning process. I tried to support the teachers to establish an inclusive learning community in their school built on respectful, collaborative and caring support, despite severe restrictions to this effect in their school. This proved to be an uphill battle.

My experience at Sunset Primary School highlighted Mahn and John-Steiner's (2002) emphasis on an expanded version of the ZPD as a complex "system of systems" with interdependent elements including the participants, tools, context and the participants' experience of their interactions within it. These elements are complementary in the construction of the ZPD. Should this complementarity be violated, effective teacher learning is diminished. Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) quote Wells (1999) to stress that learning in the ZPD involves all aspects of learners; not only their cognitions and practical actions, but also their emotions.

As can be derived from the above discussion, the teachers struggled to confront a change in thought and practical actions that largely contributed to the complexity of teacher learning during the implementation of the Index for Inclusion in the school. They attested to feeling safe within the status quo despite their awareness of its dysfunctional nature and their willingness to reflect on their challenges in the school. The Index for Inclusion process in the school managed to create awareness and provided a shared language with which the teachers could reflect on their attitudes and practices, but they claimed that to act on newly-acquired understanding and knowledge remained perplexing and insurmountable because of the complexity of restrictions in their environment (as evident from the data). Certain learning gains were made that will be discussed in the reflection on the role of the Index for Inclusion process in the school.

At Sunset Primary School I experienced that teacher emotion could be identified as one of the more significant factors contributing to a break in the complementarity important in the construction of the ZPD for teacher learning. From our perspective as researchers, it was evident that teachers at Sunset Primary School found it difficult to change their own positioning within the school and in the broader education arena due to their low morale and distress that emanated from upholding a victim status. They had indeed been victimised by the apartheid system and also by the many post-apartheid changes in the education system, but the Index for Inclusion wanted to afford them the opportunity and support to accept leadership positions and responsibility for change in the school. They struggled to utilise the opportunity.

I found what Bloch (2009) calls "classic victim behaviour" embodied in the staff of Sunset Primary School. Bloch (2009:107) stresses that teachers spend too much time in the victim mode, bemoaning their unfortunate circumstances. He addresses the following question to teachers, and particularly those in less advantaged settings: "Are we going to forever throw up our hands and behave as perpetual victims? This is what we inherited – how do we take responsibility?" He acknowledges that the process includes complaining, but simultaneously also "organising and fixing things that are seen not to be working. It involves a constructive perspective on change." Sterling and Davidoff (2000:8) present the notion of "unhooking from the blame-frame" as a remedy for victim behaviour and claim that victims most often see themselves as blameless. They (2000:9) explain the blame-frame from the perspective of the victim as follows:

> When you are caught in the role of the victim, you require someone or something to be the perpetrator. In other words, you need someone other than yourself to blame for the problem. You also need someone or something to play the role of rescuer, to solve the problem for you.

It is only when you free yourself from your own limiting positioning as victim that you are to be whole and enabled and likewise able to free your colleagues to realise their own potential. I often found implicit referrals to the school principal who had failed in his role as rescuer of the school. The project was also depicted as a potential rescuer that could save the school. This jeopardised the ideals of the intervention, namely working towards a point where the school would take ownership and ensure the sustainability of the outcomes.

Roth and Lee (2007) argue that emotions are tied to the motives and goals of learning. The data generated and collected at Sunset Primary School was saturated with words carrying emotional content, implicating both affordances and constraints to teacher learning. The negative emotions seemed to outweigh the positive ones. Learning in the sense of increasing one's possibilities in the world and gaining control over one's life conditions are generally associated with positive feelings and emotions (Roth & Lee, 2007). Zembylas (2003) confirms that it is important for teachers to identify how their emotions afford or constrain possibilities for learning and, likewise, how these emotions enable them to think and act differently. Reflecting on own emotions can render teachers vulnerable, but can also lead to learning gains.

DiPardo and Potter (2003:337) argue that "as key strands in the 'web of meaning' our emotions are intimately connected to our thoughts and actions and shaped in important ways by the institutional, cultural and historic contexts in which we live and labor". However, according to Zembylas (2003) teacher emotion as embedded in the institutional culture, ideology and power relations, is seldom the focus of research. In this study, teacher emotion was explored within the context of the school and in relation to the macro-social and macro-educational system. In the preceding discussion several references were made to the effect of teacher emotion on expansive learning within the context of Sunset Primary School. Day and Gu (2007) list five effects of the implementation of externally generated initiatives on teachers in the UK that can be applied unchanged to the circumstances of teachers at Sunset Primary School: change initiatives implicitly encouraged teachers to comply uncritically with innovations, they challenged teachers' identities, reduced the time for teachers to teach their students, threatened teachers' confidence and resilience, and challenged teachers' morale, motivation, efficacy and commitment. The teachers also indicated profound sadness, hopelessness, and distress at their perceived degeneration of the school, the learning progress and the behaviour of their students. They felt powerless to make the necessary changes. Staff relations were lacking in trust and respect, and characterised by strife and discord. Furthermore, the relations between the teachers and the management team were particularly strained. Teachers seemed disillusioned and appeared to have very little energy or enthusiasm. These negative emotions caused the teachers to resist any engagement with a process of learning and change. They were also disinclined to take risks.

Nevertheless, the teachers also experienced positive emotions: some of them cherished the belief that there was a certain amount of potential dormant among them that could be harnessed for the good of the school. They were proud of the good track record of a large group of teachers who were improving their formal teaching qualifications at a nearby university of technology. Bloch (2009:102) however indicates that

> [i]t is not so much a problem of formal qualifications, because on the whole teachers have managed to upgrade at a formal level over the fifteen years of democracy. Rather, it is a lack of the core abilities to teach, even when the will is there.

At Sunset Primary School it seemed as if the teachers' additional qualifications did not contribute to a culture of teacher learning in the school or to student progress in the classroom. Bloch (2009) does not venture any answer to this riddle but only adds more questions with regard to the amount of funding that went into the training of teachers for outcomes-based education but did not elicit the required outcomes.

Most of the teachers declared that they were willing to work towards a change in the school. They realised that should they learn to cooperate effectively, they might be able to bring about much-needed changes. They also recalled many previous occasions when as a team they were successful in organising school functions. Gradually they placed more trust in the Index for Inclusion process in the school and certain learning gains and changes were reported. They described their joy at discovering that they had unconsciously internalised new knowledge and skills that proved useful in their classrooms. Some of the staff also recognised the importance of taking responsibility for change in the school as individuals according to their own conscience, and addressing the blaming culture in the school. They acknowledged that the students were always at the receiving end of the staff's inability to work as a team and to accept agency for change. They recognised that agency should emerge from all levels (Kinsella & Senior, 2008).

Engeström (1987) claims that expansive learning is well suited to circumstances where a school and its members have to learn something that is not fully defined or understood as was the case when inclusive education was introduced into Sunset Primary School. New attitudes, knowledge, practices and skills needed to be contextualised and incorporated into the system as suggested by the Index for Inclusion as a tool. Engeström (1987; 2001) claims that standard learning theories have little to offer if one wants to understand such processes. Expansive learning is essentially a collective endeavour aimed at transforming a system. Research makes visible and pushes forward the contradictions of the activity under scrutiny, challenging the actors to appropriate and use new conceptual tools to analyse and redesign their own practice (Engeström, 1999c). In these conditions an individual teacher or a group of teachers may begin to question the sense and meaning of the context and to construct a wider alternative context.

At Sunset Primary School the teachers reacted to the aforementioned process in different ways. The coordinating group wanted to make a difference in the school and was even prepared to confront the school principal to change his attitude towards the project. At times they lost hope but somebody was always willing to persevere. Eventually they won the battle for the Index for Inclusion process which could stay on as a staff development initiative. The majority of teachers chose to become part of the process, but benefited from the learning process in different ways, at different times and to different extents as so eloquently expressed with the help of different metaphors. One of the teachers, who seemed to need support the most, chose not to become an active participant in the project. The rest of the staff did not support his decision as they were worried about the students in his class. In this way certain learning gains were made but on a collective level change was not always visible. Elements of the innovation were integrated into school practice, but due to the complexity of constraints and lack of support in the system, sustainability of the process of learning for inclusion remained a perturbing factor for the researchers. The next section will look at affordances and constraints to teacher learning on a personal level.

6.2.4 Affordances and constraints to teacher learning on a personal level

I regard the following question that Nocon (2008:346) asks with regard to workplace learning for change in the activity system as important for the outcome of this study: “If change occurs in complex ways mediated by actions and interactions of individuals, is the level of institutional change the appropriate place to be looking for evidence of educational change?” This was one of the issues with which I battled during the writing of this dissertation. From the data it was evident that individual learning gains could be reported but it was more difficult to find evidence for systemic change.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) claim that individual teachers can play a major role in increasing the expansiveness of their workplace. In their research into teacher learning in the workplace, they found several examples of dedication to personal and professional growth. In my own research with a colleague, we also had experience of passionate teachers displaying agency in learning how to deal with the complex changes in their everyday practice and acting as resources of support for their peers

(Oswald & Swart, 2008). Francelle and Hannah's individual learning trajectories presented additional examples to this effect. Due to the intervention in their school both Francelle and Hannah had made noteworthy learning gains that externalised in changes in disposition and actions. Their learning trajectories were studied in more detail than those of the other teachers as they openly admitted to change and development.

Francelle and Hannah were subjected to the same barriers in their learning environment as the other teachers but made a conscious decision to resist restrictive contextual constraints in order to learn, grow and change. This made them prepared to accept responsibility for projects in the school, and teacher leadership became embodied in their efforts to bring about change in their workplace. The question arose: If they were subjected to the same constraints in the workplace as the other teachers, what were the affordances within their personal space that made them prepared to engage in learning and change? Both admitted to starting from a deep despondency about their school and their profession. Only a conscious effort took them from that particular positioning into a space where they could be more hopeful, enthusiastic and willing to make a change. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) claim that "much depends upon the status, career ambitions, identity and self-perception of the teacher" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005:126).

According to Billet (2008) the focus and direction of individuals' intentions play an important role in processes of learning and in remaking cultural practices (Billet, 2008). As could be deduced from the data, impetus for intentional effort could come from different sources. Both Francelle and Hannah listed as important affordances to personal learning the role of the Index for Inclusion process and a love for the school and the desire to see change in the school, as well as the role the church played in supporting their development and growth. Additionally, Francelle received active support and confirmation from the student who worked closely with her and actively modelled the new approaches in education. Hannah built a good relationship with another student from our department who joined the school a year later. This student taught her to be more trusting of white people. Francelle also drew strength from her colleagues' positive reaction to her development and growth. She gained more self-confidence and became more positive to her colleagues and more accepting of them and the students. Both Francelle and Hannah also learned new ways to approach the principal in order to bring change to the school. In Hannah's case her own son's learning difficulties taught her to have more empathy with students who struggled to learn. Her intrinsic strength and natural leadership abilities further supported her development and change.

From the aforementioned it seemed as if external mediating factors could make an important contribution when the school as workplace presented significant barriers to teacher learning and the development of the school as an inclusive learning community. The Index for Inclusion process seemed to have supported both Francelle and Hannah's learning for inclusion. The students who acted as agents of change in the school also contributed to the learning journey of the two teachers.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003) argue that the impact of worker biographies on the affordances within activity systems should also be explored. Teacher learning needs to be understood in terms that include their capacities, agency, interests, identities and subjectivities and their active role in the remaking of the workplace (Billet, 2008). In Francelle and Hannah's case, their love for the school and its students motivated them to learn and change. The inclusion discourse emphasises the well-being of all students with their diverse learning needs as the object under construction and the Index for Inclusion process created this awareness for Francelle and Hannah. In their case motivation seemed to play a role in agency. Since they were motivated to bring about change in their workplace and in the lives of their students, they were prepared to engage with learning opportunities and to become active agents in their own learning process. Billet (2008) contends that humans have a unique capacity for reflective self-evaluation which affords them agency in the workplace.

For Francelle and Hannah the Index for Inclusion process as a new tool applied within their school as an activity system succeeded in acting as an interruption "to make the familiar unfamiliar" (Ainscow, 2005:4) or to make inner contradictions conscious in ways that stimulated self-questioning, creativity and action (Roth & Lee, 2007). They were willing to engage in the transformative process of learning as envisaged by the Index for Inclusion, and expansive teacher learning was the result (Engeström, 2001). For them expansive learning, which is seen as the core business of educational change, opened the possibility of identity learning as described by Geijsel and Meijers (2005:420). Geijsel and Meijers (2005) explain that both learning and social identification happen as part of social practice, and that identity as a learning process is not something that just happens to a person, but is actively constructed with the help of culturally available tools. Through learning, Francelle and Hannah were able to change both identity and the self (Worthen, 2004).

For the transformation of the Sunset Primary School into an inclusive learning community, it was necessary to expand the workplace to offer teachers the opportunity to enhance their own capacity, to engage in reflective practice, to facilitate team learning, to speak the truth without fear of consequence and to support each other's learning, experimentation and risk-taking. They also needed to develop the confidence to make mistakes and learn from them (Kinsella & Senior, 2008). This was slow to happen at Sunset Primary School and teachers were thus not afforded the support of an inclusive learning community. Support to successfully engage with a process of learning and change had to come from elsewhere. Francelle and Hannah both acknowledged the support that they received from the Index for Inclusion process in the school, from the students and through spiritual means. The role of the church in supporting identity learning highlights that "our identification with any one community is always inflected by our relationship with other communities and practices". This obliges us to acknowledge that the teacher's affiliation with the school as a workplace is but one part of the individual's life (Davis *et al.,* 2007:105). Identity learning can also be afforded or constrained by "a cauldron of complex interactions and elements" from other communities (Davis *et al.,* 2007:105). But the support to be offered by both the Index for Inclusion process and the students was limited in time and space, evoking questions with regard to the sustainability of the journey of inclusion in the school.

Sterling and Davidoff (2000:16) argue that

> [w]hen you see your school as a dynamic, living, growing organisation, you begin to build it as a learning organisation. This means bringing new ideas into the life of your school, to inspire reflection, growth and change. When you understand yourself and reflect on how you can grow and develop in an ongoing way, you open the way for others to reflect on themselves in the same way.

In concurrence with the above statement, Engeström (1987; 2001) stresses that change in an activity system such as Sunset Primary School can be invoked by individual teachers asking questions and making certain changes. In the light of the school's struggle to afford an expansive and supportive environment for teacher learning, Francelle and Hannah needed to remain strong enough to keep on asking questions, making changes and "open[ing] the way for others to reflect on themselves" (Sterling & Davidoff, 2000:16) in order to sustain the process of learning for inclusion in the school.

6.2.5 Reflections on the mediating tools: affording or constraining teacher learning

According to Kinsella and Senior (2008) the radical transformation needed for a school to become inclusive cannot be successfully created simply at the insistence of policy changes on national and provincial levels. They claim that it is also unlikely to happen as a natural consequence of school development. This section reflects on the mediating qualities of both the Index for Inclusion and the researchers with regard to teacher learning for inclusion *in situ.*

The overall aim of the project was to explore how a school developed in ways that supported the learning of all students by addressing barriers to learning and participation that existed within the school's existing cultures, policies and practices in order to identify priorities for change (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). In particular, this study explored teacher learning. The usefulness of the tools would therefore be assessed with regard to the mediation of teacher learning for inclusion. The outcome envisaged for teacher learning was the internalisation of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion that would result in a process of externalisation revealed in teachers' actions. A change on individual and collective levels was expected.

Artiles and Dyson (2005) argue that the precondition for using the Index for Inclusion as a tool in countries other than the United Kingdom was that the learning of inclusive practices should be placed within the context of own life histories, systems of meanings and a particular workplace. The Index for Inclusion should thus be used as a “catalyst rather than a template” while respecting local solutions to complex local and cultural problems (Artiles & Dyson, 2005:58). The use of a tool such as the Index for Inclusion can be equated with Wertsch’s (2007) idea of explicit mediation deduced from Vygotskian theory. In the case of explicit mediation a tool is deliberately introduced into a stream of activity by a researcher who can help reorganise an activity in some way (Wertsch, 2007).

Booth and Rustemier (2005) report on the use of the Index for Inclusion in schools in the United Kingdom and provide examples to show that schools can successfully use the framework to make significant changes to their cultures, policies and practices. They indicate a correlation between schools that implement the full cycle of activities and the success of their outcomes, but claim that not many schools employ the framework in such a comprehensive way. In our project the Index for Inclusion process with all its cycles was implemented at three primary schools. An exploration of the affordances and constraints of the Index for Inclusion process with regard to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School presented interesting results, highlighting the complexity of school change and showing that it cannot be understood as a singular process (Engeström, 2008).

The teachers reported several important learning gains that could be ascribed to the influence of the Index for Inclusion process in the school. The Index for Inclusion process definitely created space for the staff to talk about all the challenges in the school in a supportive environment modelling the value of an inclusive learning community. Several references were made to this effect. An awareness of the benefits of an inclusive approach to schooling was also apparent in the light of the broader definition of inclusive education as about quality learning for all students. A shared language for inclusion was evident and there was also some evidence of systems thinking. Current perspectives on teaching and learning were challenged insofar as teachers indicated a new understanding of the notion of barriers to learning and participation and the importance of considering the context of every student. There was also an awareness of teaching in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Students were also acknowledged as resources in the classroom.

The teachers agreed on the value of collaboration across boundaries and came to recognise the benefits that could arise from working in partnership with each other, as well as with parents and the community, the students and even the principal. Teacher leadership was present in an embryonic phase, but some of the teachers still struggled with conservative perspectives on leadership as being the responsibility of the management team in the school. An effort was made to address the challenge of bullying and student behaviour in the school. The teachers found this particularly meaningful and some took the responsibility for addressing bullying in the school. As a short-term outcome of the workshops on bullying two teachers put together a puppet show for the students and others read books on the topic. One long-term outcome of the bullying workshops was that school policy on bullying was formalised. Another was supervision on the school grounds, which became part of the teachers' daily roster. The school principal also promised that the school would start on time to allow less time for bullying to occur on the school grounds. The school library was reorganised, stocked with more recent publications and reopened, and library prefects were trained as supervisors.

It was clear from the data that the Index for Inclusion challenged the teachers' current attitudes, knowledge and skills with regard to student diversity and the notion of the school as an inclusive learning community. There was also evidence of the internalisation of some aspects of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion. A significant affordance of the Index for Inclusion process in the school was to be found in the one remark of a female teacher that "it was not a process of take but a process of give". Previous research initiatives at the school had apparently not been conducted from a participatory and collaborative stance and had left them feeling that they had not gained anything from the process. In a sense they felt violated. This confirmed the value of the Index for Inclusion as an instrument that represented a way of working *with* and not *on* schools as involving processes of collaborative inquiry and development carried out in partnership with schools as a means of developing better responses to the challenges of student diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

Several constraints to teacher learning could however also be identified with regard to the Index for Inclusion process in the school. In line with the finding of Norwich *et al.* (2001) the Index for Inclusion process needed a lot of time, commitment and strong leadership from the researchers to get the process off the ground at Sunset Primary School. Had it not been for the perseverance of the researchers the project would not have realised to the extent that it did in the school. In the light of the initial resistance of the school principal, the absence of strong leadership and the school's apparent inability to take ownership of the implementation of inclusive education, mediating the learning of teachers was a daunting task at most times. The Index for Inclusion was also experienced as broad and abstract with not enough focus on student learning, which was in effect singled out as the object under construction of teacher learning as activity in the school.

Due to the particular complexities and challenges in the school it was difficult to support the staff in identifying the assets of their system and also their own strengths. The extent of changes that they had to make in the cultures, policies and practices in their school in view of the expectations of the Index for Inclusion caused more despondency and feelings of hopelessness. They tended to fixate on the negative and the problems so much that they could not move forward. In a way the expectations of the Index for Inclusion also outweighed their perceived competences. This was difficult to manage. Although the Index for Inclusion emphasises an exploration of existing resources in the school, Booth and Black-Hawkins (2001) suggest a stronger emphasis on building on existing knowledge in schools in economically disadvantaged communities in a collaborative way before using detailed material from the Index for Inclusion, as well as consciously acknowledging teacher strengths and the assets of the schools, including all students. In the light of the data collected from Sunset Primary School I would suggest the creation of tools that focus strongly on exploring existing and potential assets and strengths of a school community and building on these positives to address challenges with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. At Sunset Primary School in particular such an approach would have enhanced teacher learning.

The coordinating group set up as part of the Index for Inclusion process at Sunset Primary School did not bring the desired results. The members of the coordinating team experienced their participation in the group as meaningful but due to several constraints (as previously indicated), found it difficult to accept responsibility and take action to inform the rest of the staff about inclusive education. This was left to the researchers. From my own experience and that of the staff, it seemed advisable to consider including the whole staff from the beginning of the process. At Sunset Primary School it would have saved time and effort but the emphasis should always be on voluntary participation. Based on their work in Irish schools Kinsella and Senior (2008) advise that the coordinating group should be assembled from two types of participants: those who seem to believe in changing the status quo in the school, and those in positions of seniority that will inevitably be involved first in any school learning effort. The group should consider a “vertical slice” of the staff (Kinsella & Senior, 2008:663). The absence of the school principal from the coordinating group at Sunset Primary School was the focus of a great deal of negativity and resistance from the staff. A concerted effort to procure the participation of all senior leaders in a school system seemed non-negotiable when a change initiative of the scope of the Index for Inclusion process was introduced into a school.

When a culture of helplessness prevails in a school it can constrain processes of self-evaluation and school development. Booth and Black-Hawkins (2001) argue that the Index for Inclusion process has the potential to address a strong dependency culture in a school should the school willingly take ownership of the process. At Sunset Primary School the dependency culture and the sense of disempowerment evident in the school were so overpowering that it was very difficult to take the process forward in the absence of strong and committed leadership. As researcher I tried to support the change process in the school, but certain constraints inherent in our work realities, the process and the school system made it a considerable challenge.

One of the more important constraints with which I battled was the matter of timescale. The five phases of the Index for Inclusion follow a typical development cycle. The project was originally planned for a two-year engagement in the three research schools, but at Sunset Primary School the process needed to be prolonged. From my experience in the school I learned that the process of internalisation or ‘ingrowing’ of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion was more complex than had been envisaged (Frawley in Lantolf, 2003). I came to appreciate that external activity can continue for a long time before turning inward and becoming a function of the individual or group (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 2007). In this respect Edwards (2008) draws attention to the work of Sannino (2008) who advises researchers to take the long view with regard to change in a school system. Engeström (2008:380) also quotes the work of Nilsson (2008) to emphasise "longitudinal partnership" as one possible change mechanism in a school.

Another point of relevance with regard to timescale was to be found in the problem of the different timescales and the different meanings ascribed to them by schools, research and university programmes, as well as obligations causing frustrations to participants (Edwards, 2008). Initially I struggled to find a time that would suit both the school's timetable and that of my own. In this respect Nocon (2008) suggests that researchers should align their actions and timescales with that of the school in order to ensure the internalisation of at least some elements of the change initiative in the school. Early on in my engagement at Sunset Primary School I realised the wisdom of such an approach. I was the visitor from outside and had to consider the participants' lived realities. The teachers at Sunset Primary School were overwhelmed with their own responsibilities and further studies. However, my teaching obligation at the university, as well as my having to simultaneously run the project at three schools, kept me fully engaged and I had to make certain choices. The data of my study indicated my frustration at not being able to extend the project at Sunset Primary School into the classrooms. Our research data indicated that experienced teachers seemed to find it difficult to make changes in practice when they were not exposed to what teaching actually looked like when it was done differently. They needed to experience the changes for deep beliefs and assumptions to change (Kinsella & Senior, 2008). Time and opportunity did not allow for more direct collaboration with the students and a lack of time also played a role in the limited amount of contact that I had with the School Governing Body (SGB), the parents and the local community. These two groups were not represented in the coordinating team and this acted as a constraint to teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. In a way time constraints also hampered the work that could have been done in the community with regard to the children of school-going age who were not attending school. I had to make peace with this.

Nocon (2008:346), who presents another significant look at the role of time in a collaborative project between a school and university researchers, suggests that very often

> the longer timescale of traditional schooling activity tended to diminish the impact of the relatively shorter timescales of educational change research activity, undermining the appropriation by school personnel of a desirable educational innovation.

I recognised this in the outcomes of the project, but found comfort in the fact that I could find evidence that elements of the innovation had been integrated into school practice (Nocon, 2008). Hannah used her tree metaphor to emphasise precisely this lopsidedness in timescales between researchers and schools. Four years was a long time for a researcher to be enmeshed in a research project in one particular school, but time had another meaning when a whole system had to work towards a radical rewriting of what it means to be school and teacher. The tree needed longer than four years to bear fruit. In this respect it seemed wiser to draw a distinction between changes in action and changes in activity when assessing the effect of change in a school as suggested by Edwards (2008). Actions can be equated with short events and more immediate smaller outcomes whereas the notion of activity should be seen as an evolving, complex structure of both mediated and collective human agency over long periods of time (Roth & Lee, 2007). Our work at Sunset Primary School was extended and confirmed by the students who did their practicum periods in the school. Since schools had started to support the implementation of inclusive education more actively – in alignment with the recommendations of Education White Paper 6 of 2001 – we remained hopeful that our work at Sunset Primary School would be taken forward. Towards the end of 2008 the curriculum advisor at the local Education District Office indirectly strengthened the initiatives of the workshops in mathematics presented at the school by procuring the services of the same expert in mathematics to present workshops to a wider audience. She confirmed that quite a few teachers from Sunset Primary School regularly attended her training sessions.

I was never sure whether and how my positioning as a white academic at a nearby university acted as a potential constraint with regard to teacher learning at the school. Largely because of my positioning it took more time to gain entry to the system. It was important for the research engagement at Sunset Primary School that gaining access would not be a one-off occurrence, but a process that had to be renegotiated on a continual basis whilst a relationship of trust and respect was being established (Delamont, 2002). The attitude of the school principal as the gatekeeper to the system often provided constraints to this process and to the work of the researcher. I tried to conduct my work at the school in an open, collaborative and transparent way, but the principal very often wanted to meet with us behind closed doors. It seemed that although he had chosen to be absent from many of the meetings, he still wanted to control the process. Because the rest of the staff was not privy to the information shared behind closed doors, I felt that it could jeopardise our efforts at building a collaborative partnership with the rest of the staff if this happened. I tried to manage our complex situation in the best possible way without compromising the project.

Another constraint that might have stemmed from my particular positioning as an expert with regard to inclusive education was that the teachers positioned the project as a ‘rescuer’. This jeopardised the possibility of the school eventually taking ownership of the implementation of inclusive education to ensure the sustainability of the school’s journey to change and growth.

Despite the aforementioned constraints the data also reported ways in which the researcher afforded teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. From the beginning of my research engagement at the school I recognised that my interaction with the staff would always be complicated, complex and unpredictable and that it would call for intense self-reflexivity (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), empathy and sensitivity to both the abilities and the needs of the participants, and a willingness to make the necessary adjustments to the process. Consequently, I kept reflective notes throughout my engagement at the school (See Section 4.3.7.2). Time constraints and the seeming improbability of reaching the envisaged outcomes often made me doubt my own abilities to mediate such a complex process. I knew I had to persevere and see the project through, despite many concerns and frustrations.

My concerns included the teachers' tendency to allow "shortcomings in the system or disadvantaged circumstances [to] fill all consciousness, blowing up the scale of the barriers to insurmountable proportions" (Bouwer, 2005:51). I had to actively guide them not to become "stuck in an endless list of problems and deficiencies" (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:5). I had to bear in mind that teachers in South Africa were often at the receiving end of criticism and that the pessimism in the public domain could reinforce feelings of hopelessness, decreased job satisfaction, increased negativity and de-motivation (Oswald & Swart, 2008). This could cause a loss of self-confidence and a lower sense of self-efficacy, causing resistance to engage with yet another change initiative such as the implementation of inclusive education. At Sunset Primary School this was aggravated by a culture of mistrust and feelings of insecurity. I was concerned about the school's seeming inability to take responsibility for and ownership of the project. I was afraid that by positioning the project as a 'rescuer' the researchers could be drawn into the blame-frame approach adopted by the school. The school principal's initial resistance to the project, as well as his divided interests and his compromised relations with the staff and other important members of the school community, posed serious challenges. I also had to manage his insecurities and vulnerabilities. Due to his disengagement from the project school-wide changes were almost impossible to implement.

However, I was very pleased when the teachers became more trusting and were prepared to openly share their own frustrations, their vulnerabilities, their anger at the apartheid system and the fact that they still felt marginalised by the current system. I was also very happy when they showed the first signs of taking ownership and making changes in their practice. My one-off contact with the group of Grade 6 students brought mixed feelings. I recognised their intelligence and willingness to support the teachers in bringing the necessary changes to the school, but I worried whether the school would allow them enough scope to excel and the platform to become collaborators in decision-making and change initiatives in the school.

In view of the lack of support, respect, trust and collaboration in the school I tried to create a place for teachers through the project where they could explore new "spaces, expand their horizons and travel to new territories" (Rule, 2004, cited in Grant, 2009:55). I wanted to create a safe and secure space for the teachers to connect with each other and to learn together as a team. As suggested by Rule (2004, cited in Grant, 2009:47) I tried to "provide a safe environment encourages openness and trust and facilitate critical engagement within and among participants and between participants and their worlds". From the data it seemed as if the project had accomplished this. I tried to model the principles fundamental to collaboration and collaborative problem solving and this evoked certain positive changes on several levels. For instance, the staff learned to be more respectful and tolerant of their own diversity and that of the students.

Ainscow (2007) contends that research involving the Index for Inclusion shows the importance of cultural factors in schools and how deeply held beliefs within schools may prevent the development of more inclusive ways. I recognised the significance of working on the deep structures of the school to ensure more effective change in the school. McDonnell (2003) explains that schools have two different structural levels: deep structures that encompass the conceptual and fundamental level of theories, values, assumptions and beliefs, and surface structures that function on the level of the day-to-day practices in the operation of the school. Research tends to favour the latter while the deep structures of a school are usually more resistant to change. In alignment with Kinsella and Senior (2008), I knew from previous research that the process of inclusion usually operated at the deep structures of the school system. I had to focus our approach on the level of attitudes, ethos and the culture of the school. From the data it was obvious that the changes that could be reported had mostly taken place as a result of my conscious engagement with the deep structures of the school.

Critical ethnography suggests a new way of working with research participants in schools. As explained before, the collaborative partnership between researchers and participants is key to current ethnographic work. In this project I aimed to shift the research aims away from the acquisition of knowledge about research participants and their practices to approaching them as collaborators and engaging them in a relationship. Apart from establishing collaborative partnerships with school members, the notion of enabling was also considered an important ingredient of ethnographic work in schools and central to our engagement at Sunset Primary School (Swart & Oswald, 2009). The Oxford Dictionary (2005) explains enabling as "to make it [something] possible by creating the necessary conditions". In the context of my approach to ethnographic research, enabling entailed making the development of a personal sense of control over one's own life and political control of factors that influence one's life possible for the teachers. I therefore considered it of key importance to acknowledge and honour the agency of the teachers at Sunset Primary School and from an ethic of care try to support them to speak for themselves (Cintron, 1993 in Massey, 2004).

In our engagement with the school, enabling came to mean a process of learning for both the teachers and the researchers for the duration of the collaborative research project. Against this background, Hannah's metaphor for the school's process of learning – and her own – as the growth of a tree was very appropriate for our own learning process in engagement with the school. Hannah taught me not to be too hard on myself should interventions not show the desired outcomes immediately, as "a tree takes time to grow". Inviting research participants as equal partners into our research project brought new insights, and enhanced relationships with practitioners. It also enriched us as researchers, together with our research findings and the project outcomes.

6.3 REFLECTIONS ON CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY AS A THEORETICAL LENS AND ANALYTICAL TOOL: A CONCLUSION

This inquiry explored the complex issue of teacher learning when facilitating a process of systemic change for the implementation of inclusive education in a primary school. Cultural-historical activity theory CHAT was employed as theoretical lens and analytical tool (Barab, Schatz & Scheckler, 2004) for the study in the hope that it would be able to explicate the complexity of workplace learning by means of the Index for Inclusion. I decided to use CHAT as theoretical framework in the light of Artiles *et al.*'s (2006) criticism of among others the work of Booth and Ainscow (2002) (creators of the Index for Inclusion) for not describing in any detail the specific processes of actions that inform the learning process of teachers. Engeström (1987), with his notion of expansive learning, on the contrary, exemplifies how workplace learning for innovation can be argued from a well-developed theoretical base.

The critical ethnographic design of the empirical study and the agenda of the Index for Inclusion framework added the critical stance that was necessary to address the radical agenda of inclusive education. According to Booth and Ainscow (2002) and Slee (2001a) the implementation of inclusive education needs to be a project of critical thinking and radical reconstruction, politically steadfast and aggressive in order to move a school forward to change to become more inclusive. Artiles and Kozleski (2007:355) contend that inclusive education should "infuse a critical transformative agenda into its project that interrogates and aims to change historical inequities". As answer to the question that Davis *et al.* (2007) pose with regard to methodologies and methods needed to complement the core of CHAT to afford the necessary tools to link the local and the macro, this study offers the possibility of extending the toolkit of CHAT by using critical ethnography and the critical agenda of the Index for Inclusion.

According to Davis *et al.* (2007) CHAT claims to be a practice-oriented theory. This claim is supported by Edwards and Daniels (2004:108) who argue that CHAT "offers a conceptual tool box to education which has the potential to enable it to operate as an engaged and transformational social science". Wardekker (2000) talks about CHAT's emphasis on activity and community that allows for a pragmatist twist to research conducted within this framework. CHAT is always about "change and learning in relation to actions" (practices) (Wardekker, 2000:269). In the light of the above arguments and in retrospect, I argue that my study would have benefited from employing the toolkit of CHAT in conducting the empirical part of the research, instead of only using it, and in particular the work of

Engeström (1987), as a theoretical and analytical tool when writing up my findings. Should the opportunity arise to again mediate change within a complex system such as a school, I would prefer to work from a more compact and integrated research approach as suggested above. The conceptual toolkit provided by Engeström (1987), which includes the notion and cycle of expansive learning, the triangle models of Engeström, and his interventionist methodology known as developmental work research (DWR), could have provided more tools to address the change process at Sunset Primary. At the same time it could also have simplified the study. This could also have contributed to a less comprehensive and complex research report.

An added incentive for conducting an empirical study on school change and teacher learning from a CHAT perspective arises from a more recent assertion of Engeström (2008) that interventionist methodology in research on school change is a domain in which the Vygotskian legacy of activity theory is only beginning to be discovered and explored in practice. In a research study driven by the question whether a school community can learn to master its own future, Engeström *et al.* (2002) employed a Change Laboratory intervention with teachers in a school in a disadvantaged area of Helsinki. Positive change outcomes were reported with regard to teachers' conception of their students that directly impacted on student progress. Five additional studies (Nilsson, 2008; Nocon, 2008; Rainio, 2008; Sannino; 2008; Yamazumi, 2008) employing CHAT as a framework and having school change as a focus are presented in a 2008 publication of the *Journal for Educational Change*. Engeström (2008) and Edwards (2008) comment on these studies and foreground CHAT's generative potential in the study of school change. Activity theory is also highlighted as an evolving framework that needs to be developed further as applied in empirical studies. In the light of the five studies drawing on different strands within CHAT, Edwards (2008) suggests that CHAT applied as a conceptual framework rises to the occasion and makes a compelling case for the analytical resources it offers.

The question arises: What could CHAT as a theoretical framework and analytical device offer this study and in which way could this study make a contribution to research in workplace learning for school change from a CHAT approach? CHAT's deeply anti-Cartesian approach that foregrounds the notion of examining "mind as embedded in material activity rather than existing independently of the world that it would come to know" is fundamental to this study and in a way made this study of the affordances and constraints to teacher learning possible (Edwards & Daniels, 2004:107-108).

Edwards and Daniels (2004:108) argue that CHAT as a learning theory differs from social learning as foregrounded by, among others, Booth and Ainscow (2002) in two ways. The first difference is to be found in CHAT's concern with language as the carrier of "powerful scientific concepts that allow people to think beyond the limits of their immediate everyday experiences and to work collaboratively with others [both other researchers and practitioners] to build new knowledge". The second difference lies in CHAT's emphasis on "action or intervention in order to develop practice and the sites of practice". As argued before, CHAT thus provided a learning theoretical base to the study within which to explore the learning of the teachers. The triangle model and its extensions as developed by Engeström (1987; 2001) provided the means to analyse and present the findings of the inquiry in such a way that the multitude of relations within the triangular structure of activity came to life without forfeiting a comprehension of the systemic whole of teacher learning as activity (Foot, 2001).

CHAT's assumption that social phenomena such as teacher learning as situated in the context of a school are complex, collective and contextualised in historical time, space and culture was also fundamental to this study (Nocon, 2008). The process of data analysis within CHAT allowed for a collective, multi-voiced construction of the past, present, and future phases of development of teacher learning at Sunset Primary School (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). This study attempted to emphasise the role of historicity as an important focus within the CHAT framework. Together with the study's emphasis on the complex influence of history on the lived and workplace realities of teachers, contradictions in workplace were also emphasised. Contradictions emanating from cultural-historical factors were highlighted as significant factors in teacher learning in the workplace. This is in line with Engeström's (2008) assertion that attention should be paid to explorations in the historical dimension when analyses of contradictions are pushed deeper and possible zones of proximal development are explicated.

Exploring possible answers to the research questions contributed to a rich, comprehensive and rewarding look at all the factors influencing teacher learning for change, both in an expansive and a restrictive way. CHAT as an analytical framework succeeded in a powerful way to illuminate the complexity of school change and teacher learning *in situ.* As Engeström (2008) emphasises, school change is never a singular enterprise and outcomes are never easy to measure. This brought me some clarity with regard to my concern that the output did not equal the input of the project at Sunset Primary School, but also made me question my understanding of success when school change for inclusion is at stake.

With regard to the contribution that the study could make to workplace learning for school change from a CHAT perspective, I found that the study in its comprehensiveness touched on quite a few of the issues that had previously been earmarked for further exploration within CHAT. The third research question formulated for this study compelled an exploration of the impact of the personal level on teacher learning within the workplace. The individual seemed to have received too little attention within CHAT research and it further appeared that the mediating roles of individuals are often absent in contemporary conceptions such as that of Engeström's activity system (Billet, 2008). By exploring the individual learning trajectories of Francelle and Hannah this study made a sound contribution to enhance the CHAT research base on the role played by the individual in school change. Their learning gains led to certain changes in the school. In alignment with Engeström's (1987; 2001) statement that change in an activity system can be invoked by individual teachers asking questions and making certain change, the hope is therefore kept alive that some elements of the project will be sustained at Sunset Primary School as a result of their added insight and energy. The individual teacher's potential contribution to school change is further put in perspective by Hubbard *et al.*'s statement (2006, as cited in Engeström, 2008:381) that when change is induced "in any one part of the system, it reverberates throughout the system in ways that cannot be anticipated".

This brings me to the question of the sustainability of change initiatives in schools where this study also made a contribution. As previously indicated, Nocon (2008) argues that the sustainability of a change initiative in a school is uncontrollable and cannot be expected (or measured) at the activity- or school-wide level. CHAT views activity as "complex, collective, and at once, historically robust and continuously emergent" (Nocon, 2008:346). An activity such as in teacher learning for inclusion is a constantly moving target operating at a longer timescale than our individual actions as research participants (Nocon, 2008). In citing Eisenhardt (2000), Engeström (2008:381) suggests that "perhaps conceptualizing change as a quantum leap from one frozen state to the next is being superseded by viewing it as having a more complicated, continuous scale distribution". Change in a school such as Sunset Primary School could thus be seen as an interconnection of "trails of new ideas and practices that partially spread and expand, partially disintegrate and fade away" (Engeström, 2008:381). Nocon (2008:345) refers to a "gradual and incremental tinkering with the system" that may be a more productive approach to school change and a more appropriate way to sustain elements of educational innovations. At Sunset Primary School change was introduced by means of the Index for Inclusion as a programme for wholesale school change, but in effect it became a continued "tinkering with the system" resulting in gradual learning gains for teachers akin to Hannah's metaphorical growing tree that eventually bears fruit.

One of the themes indicated in Chapter 1 of this dissertation that needed further theoretical and empirical exploration was that of positioning. Daniels (2007) identifies positioning as key to the notion of discourse and identity within an activity system, invoking the issue of voice. In this study care was taken to engage with the positioning of teachers as subjects within macro-social and macro-educational discourses and also within the most significant discourses in the school in an effort to answer the important question of Williams *et al.* (2007:106) on how "social positioning and power shape personal opportunities and 'constrain' or mediate self-positioning" It was clear from the study that macro-social and macro-educational discourses could render teachers 'speechless' and thus powerless with the consequence that passive resistance to change and becoming hooked to the blame-frame were seen as the only two viable options. The effect of macro-social structures can indeed impinge on the local (Davis *et al.*, 2007).

Apart from the effect from the macro-plane on teacher learning at Sunset Primary School, the positioning of leadership in the school also presented a considerable constraint to teacher learning. Due to the principal's autocratic and unsupportive approach to leadership the teachers were robbed of the opportunity to try their hand at teacher leadership and collaborative learning and problem-solving within an inclusive learning community. They were othered as followers and their contributions were neither sought nor valued. This resulted in feelings of despondency and powerlessness with space to make the changes that they deemed necessary for the school. It became clear what Daniels (2007) meant when he referred to social positioning becoming self-positioning. The positioning of parents, the community and the students indicated the effect of the dominance of certain voices and the silencing of others and how this impinged on teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. In this way it was also possible to argue the significance of how "figured worlds are constrained for the person as well as socio-culturally constructed" (Daniels, 2007, in Williams *et al.,* 2007) and the effect of this on dispositions and practices in a school.

The emotional experiences of teachers during a time of change and the role of motivation have been identified as areas for further exploration through CHAT (Daniels & Warmington, 2007; Roth & Lee, 2007). The significant role of teacher emotions in their learning in the workplace, as well as the link between motivation and agency with regard to teacher learning, became clear from the findings of this study. Teacher emotions can act as either affordances or constraints to workplace learning in a powerful way as evident from the preceding discussion. The data indicated that personal motivation for change provides the impetus for teacher agency. In its turn, teacher agency provides the incentive to engage with workplace learning and for teachers to become active agents in their own learning process. Francelle and Hannah were prepared to engage in a process of learning by means of the Index for Inclusion process in the school, which resulted in expansive learning. Expansive learning opened the possibility for identity learning that is necessary to take action for change in the workplace. However, when hope has been lost to the extent that personal motivation is lacking or non-existent, the teacher may choose to disengage from workplace learning or will only engage with surface learning without any deep changes in attitudes or practices. Examples of the aforementioned were also evident at Sunset Primary School.

On the one hand, CHAT afforded me the chance, through an intensive examination of the data that emanated from the study of one school during a time of change, to better understand the local dynamics of change, innovation and resistance when focusing on teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace. On the other hand, it also presented the possibility of lifting the analysis away from the useful detail of the micro-processes in order to offer guidelines for research in schools when school change and teacher learning are at stake (Edwards, 2008).

6.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH INTO SCHOOL CHANGE AND TEACHER LEARNING

6.4.1 Introduction

Teacher training institutions have to be at the vanguard of research into innovative ways to promote learning on all levels within an education system. This study aimed to explore and enhance teacher learning for inclusion. Teachers as subjects in this study needed to become agents of change in the development of their school as an inclusive learning community to ensure a journey of lifelong learning, with as object under construction, quality learning for all students in the school and local community. This dissertation in particular explored the affordances and constraints to teacher learning in the workplace from a critical stance. Although the dissertation reported on teacher learning for school change from the detail of micro-processes, I want to attempt what Edwards (2008) calls "lifting the analysis away from the micro processes" in offering recommendations for researchers who consider a replication of the study in other geographical areas in South Africa. In this section the lens is thus on guidelines (as derived from the findings of the study) for researchers who wish to focus on teacher learning for school change. Several recommendations will be attempted to support further research within this particular focus.

6.4.2 A qualitative study without a theoretical framework is not worth pursuing

I feel strongly that it is difficult to imagine a qualitative study without a theoretical framework (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998:45) calls the theoretical framework "the structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study". To corroborate Merriam's (1998) statement, the findings of a document analysis study carried out by Agherdien, Henning and Van der Westhuizen (2007) reveal that studies that are theoretically developed yielded data that can be interpreted in more depth. These authors (2007:17) argue that "theoretical frameworks are epistemological devices that account for the knowledge that is produced in a study". It is, indeed through framing our studies theoretically that we are allowed to "see in new and different ways what seems to be ordinary and familiar" (Anfara & Mertz, 2006:xxvii). Henning (2008:5) points to the importance of "nurturing" theoretical work "alongside empirical inquiry" and suggests the application of Vygotsky's work as meaningful in educational settings. She also asserts that theory as a context for empirical work in the qualitative mode is not always the norm, as most often empirical work is considered the context for theory. I do acknowledge that any recommendation with regard to employing a theoretical framework in qualitative studies can be considered contrary to notions of grounded theory that are often used as a reason for the lack of theory in qualitative research studies. Studies conducted in grounded theory are "supposedly conducted without a theoretical lens" (Henning, 2008:8).

This study was conducted as an ethnographically oriented yet theoretically grounded study (Engeström, 2008:382). It was consciously framed within CHAT and employed some of the toolkit CHAT offers to analyse and present the data. Care was however taken to allow for a position of tentativeness during the first phase of inductive data analysis in order to apply the principles of emergence in the data and submission to the data to enable the data to take on a life of its own (Holliday, 2007). It was only afterwards and during the second and deductive phase of a process of abductive data analysis that the data was analysed and presented with the help of the mediational structure of an activity system created by Engeström. In this way I tried to stay close to the data while having the privilege of discussing the data against the backdrop of the fast-developing theoretical framework on learning presented by CHAT. I found this beneficial to my study as it helped me to understand the complexity of teacher learning for school change in a restrictive environment.

In the light of the above discussion, I want to recommend that studies exploring school change and teacher learning, in the first place, consider framing it within a particular theoretical framework and to be direct about it, and in the second place, to consider CHAT as a particular framework for studies within this focus area. CHAT embodies much-needed hope: "Rather than accept circumstances as they are, it encourages us to view each action also as transformational – changing the life conditions and ourselves" (Roth, 2004:7). Research based on CHAT holds considerable positive implications for the transformation of educational practices (Edwards, 2004). Edwards and Daniels (2004:107-108) warn, however, that CHAT requires considerable shifts in perspective for researchers "who are familiar with either the certainty of modernist versions of psychology or with the relativism of post-modern versions of the social sciences" due to its emphasis on examining "mind as embedded in material activity rather than existing independently of the world that it would come to know".

6.4.3 Gaining access to the research site represents a complex process of negotiation and renegotiation

In preparation for this dissertation, I found little or no referral to how access to particular research sites should be negotiated and gained. Problems of access and the experience of first encounters are not often narrated in research reports and are often treated as "'noise' as far as data/information of the research project" is concerned (Schwartzman, 1993:48). It seems as if these experiences are viewed as something to negotiate and get out of the way. In my engagement at Sunset Primary School, this was one of the more complex phases of the research process that needed careful attention and particular skills. I argued my case in Sections 4.3.4 and 6.2.5. In Section 4.3.4 I emphasised that to gain entry to the research site is a significant part of doing research because in the first place, the researcher must gain access in order to collect information, and secondly the process of gaining access affects what information is available to the researcher (Feldman, Bell & Berger, 2003; Schwartzman, 1993).

Researchers should be aware that gaining entry to a research site represents a continuous process of negotiation and renegotiation. This aspect of ethnographic research needs more attention in empirical research and academic literature than what it receives. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) advise the researcher to be persistent, flexible and creative when negotiating entry to a research school Notions of care, collaborative partnerships, communication, enablement and mutual learning opportunities are all implicated when gaining entry to a research site.

6.4.4 Working from a collaborative and enablement perspective comes highly recommended

Researchers should establish collaborative partnerships with the practitioners in schools and conduct the intervention in an open and transparent way. Interactions with staff members will always be complicated, complex and unpredictable, which will call for intense self-reflexivity (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), empathy and sensitivity to both the abilities and the needs of the participants, as well as for the willingness to make the necessary adjustments to the process. Cultural differences may play a role and cultural sensitivity is thus of particular importance.

One of the aspects of the research intervention at Sunset Primary School that I found particularly difficult to handle was that the teachers kept on referring to their many problems and challenges and were reluctant to explore assets in their school community and strengths within themselves or in their students. Their choice to emphasise the negative and problematic aspects of their context was not conducive to the development of agency through joint action. Various reasons can be offered for this, but I want to suggest as a possible solution that researchers should consciously work from an enablement perspective that uses assets, resources, capacities and strengths to deal with challenges and to provide support (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). While challenges are not ignored but also explored, the focus shifts to the personal strengths of individuals and assets in the community that could be useful. Bouwer (2005:51) defines personal strengths as "those intrinsic qualities which a person musters in addressing a difficulty head on or also when taking an alternative route to reach objectives". Assets comprise all the extrinsic resources in the community. In similar vein, Sonn and Fisher (1998) highlight community resilience as a response to change. They define community resilience as the positive ways in which community members respond to change and challenges in their environment.

CHAT argues that the way we think and act in our workplace is shaped by the cultures in the school, but that in turn we can shape those cultures by our actions, emphasising a merger of the collective and the individual (Edwards, 2007). Edwards (2007) draws on earlier work with colleagues (Edwards, Gilroy and Hartley, 2002) to emphasise that when state intervention in curricula, approved pedagogies, and quality assurance systems are part of the reality of teachers in schools, such a narrow focus on teacher practice can be overcome by building resilience in schools that might support the development of informed, responsive and theorising teachers. Teachers can then lead change initiatives in their schools through collaborative problem solving and innovation. This calls for research interventions in schools to intentionally work with assets and strengths in schools and their communities in building capacity for change. According to Edwards (2007) such an approach to intervention in schools can be called responsive research practice. A CHAT-informed approach to building resilience in schools "calls for a shift in the centre of gravity, from the service to the practices, with more focus on enabling practitioners to work responsibly with other professionals" and with their students as clients (Edwards, 2007:262).

6.4.5 Complexity is the norm: teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace

From previous research done within teacher learning for inclusion it seemed best to align teacher learning with the development of schools as inclusive learning communities (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005; Swart & Pettipher, 2007). The development of an inclusive school involves a deep learning cycle, developing not only new competences, but also fundamental mind shifts at the level of the individual and the school community (Senge, 1994 in Kinsella & Senior, 2008). Carrington and Robinson (2006) point to the complexity involved when a school and its inhabitants are asked to change in order to be better able to respond to diversity in students, staff and parents in an inclusive way, while Edwards (2008) contends that the social practices in schools are notoriously difficult to change for complex reasons.

This complexity was evident throughout our engagement with teacher learning at Sunset Primary School. As indicated in the preceding discussion, a complex set of factors that emanated from the macro-social and macro-educational, institutional and personal levels combined to produce a complex narrative of affordances and constraints to teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace.

Researchers should expect this complexity and be prepared to engage with the deep structures of school communities, as implementing inclusive education in a school implicates a change in the attitudes, ethos and culture of the system. More resistance should however be expected when working on the deeper structures of a school (Kinsella & Senior, 2008).

6.4.6 The Index for Inclusion can be considered for employment in South African schools

The aims of the Index for Inclusion framework are compatible with the generic principles explicated in Education White Paper 6 of 2001 and can thus be employed fairly successfully in South African schools as evident from this study. The particular value of the Index for Inclusion is to be found in its positioning as a way of working *with* and not *on* schools, involving processes of collaborative inquiry and development carried out in partnership with schools as a means of developing better responses to the challenges of student diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Certain recommendations can be offered for its use in South African schools on strength of the findings of this study:

- The Index for Inclusion should be used in a flexible way and be fine-tuned to suit the needs of the local context of the school and its community.
- The Index for Inclusion has the potential to evoke contradictions that are necessary to introduce change in a system, but care should be taken that school members are not overwhelmed by the explicit and implicit demands for transformation that the framework suggests. The extent and intensity of change recommended could immobilise rather than energise school members and might result in feelings of despondency and hopelessness.
- The role of the critical friend as mediator of the Index for Inclusion process is important. It is to be doubted whether the Index for Inclusion process will get off the ground without much time, commitment and strong leadership from the mediator. In this study all the material of the Index for Inclusion framework had to be translated into Afrikaans and carefully mediated in line with the expectations of Education White Paper 6 of 2001. It is easy for the staff to lose energy during a process of restructuring and reculturing of the total system of a school in order to become more inclusive of all its members. The mediator needs to keep the process on track as it would be unwise to assume that the implementation of inclusive education in a school will occur naturally (Kinsella & Senior, 2008).
- The mediator needs to take care with the assembling of a coordinating team. In a school where collaboration and teamwork are not the norm, the coordinating group may find it difficult to create the necessary awareness for the Index for Inclusion process. In a school community characterised by discord and disharmony it may be better to get the management team and all interested parties on board from the beginning of the process.
- The mediator should ensure that all school members share knowledge of the sign system of the Index for Inclusion before the priorities for change are formulated.
- School members need to be intentionally introduced to the value and principles of collaborative learning and problem-solving in an inclusive learning community. This can be a difficult process in a school where team learning and sharing has not been an integral part of school practices.
- The Index for Inclusion does not focus enough on student learning as the object under construction. The mediator needs to be aware of this and should find ways to link the outcomes of the project with positive student learning outcomes.

6.4.7 Sustainability: What is it that we want to accomplish?

As indicated before, Engeström (2008) emphasises that outcomes of school change are difficult to measure. In this study, measuring the outcomes of the intervention presented as a difficult and complex issue. The outcome set for teacher learning as an activity in this study was ‘an inclusive school' as described in Section 3.3.2.3. But as argued before, an inclusive school is depicted as forever in a process of becoming. It is furthermore typified as a school on the move; constantly learning and changing in response to the diverse learning abilities and needs of its student body (Ainscow, 2007; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). In similar vein, activity such as teacher learning for inclusion is seen as a constantly moving target operating at a longer timescale than our individual actions as research participants (Nocon, 2008).

I considered ownership of the above process as indicative of positive outcomes for the Index for Inclusion process in the school. The object under construction (meaningfully accommodating student diversity and transforming the school into an inclusive learning community) had to remain central to the agenda of the school at the termination of the project. The sign system of the Index for Inclusion should thus be internalised to the extent that it could give direction to the staff's journey of learning. Due to several complex factors as discussed in the preceding sections, evidence of the above was difficult to find on a collective level, but significant learning gains were made by individual teachers keeping the hope alive that they would act as agents of change in the school. I experienced it as particularly difficult that the research school tended to position the project as 'rescuer' of the school, thus jeopardising the possibility of the school eventually taking ownership of the implementation of inclusive education to ensure the sustainability of the school's journey to change and growth. If the initiative did reach the desired outcomes, it would be easy to place the blame elsewhere. Researchers should be aware of this tendency in certain schools as it needs careful management to ensure the sustainability of the process.

It is worthwhile once again to refer to the criticism levelled at the Index for Inclusion for not focusing enough on enhanced student learning as outcome for the project given the central position allocated to student learning as object under construction. A researcher who considers implementing the Index for Inclusion process in schools needs to be aware of this and find ways to link the outcomes of the project with positive student learning outcomes as foregrounded in the previous section.

Once again employing the metaphor of the tree, it is perhaps advisable to see the intervention in a school and the sustainability of the process, as suggested before, as an interconnection of "trails of new ideas and practices that partially spread and expand, partially disintegrate and fade away" (Engeström, 2008:381). Nocon's (2008:345) reference to a "gradual and incremental tinkering with the system" may be a more productive approach to school change and a more appropriate way of sustaining elements of educational innovations.

It is, however, important for any researcher when considering working in schools to enhance teacher learning for school change to consider potential outcomes for the intervention carefully even before engaging with the process. I suggest that these outcomes should be determined in deliberation with school members to ensure greater ownership of the process.

6.4.8 Training for school and teacher leadership requires more attention and research in South Africa

Given the central positioning of leadership in schools, it is imperative that the school's approach to leadership should be determined from the onset of the intervention. The school's management team and especially the school principal should be on board from the beginning to ensure positive outcomes for the intervention. The absence of meaningful leadership in the research school was glaringly exposed during the intervention in the school and highlighted the importance of positive leadership in a school in a forceful way. Any intervention in a school needs the approval and active support of the school principal and management team to ensure ownership of the process.

The autocratic and conservative approach to leadership in the research school also evoked questions on leadership styles that are conducive to the transformation of schools into inclusive learning communities. I agree with Ainscow's (n.d.) statement that leading schools that are implementing inclusive education is not an easy process. Processes of change are not comfortable for teachers and other school professionals, as they have to be able to deal with questions being asked of their beliefs and practices. As argued throughout the dissertation, transformational and distributed leadership styles with an emphasis on teacher leadership seem the appropriate choice, but interestingly enough the findings indicated that strong and mindful leadership seems to be the answer when moving schools towards non-hierarchical organisational structures. Hallinger's (2003) assertion that "schools at risk" would initially require a more directive top-down approach depending on where the school finds itself in the journey to improvement makes sense in the context of the research school. Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) have also found that more inclusive schools chose non-hierarchical leadership approaches but without being laissez-faire. The school leaders in their study were not reluctant to be directive when faced with decisions that implicate values and beliefs important to an inclusive approach to schooling.

However, the implementation of inclusive education in a school eventually requires leadership that is both transformational and distributed. Sustained improvement over time will ultimately depend on teachers and the rest of the school community increasingly accepting levels of ownership for change processes in the school (Hallinger, 2003). In agreement with Grant (2006:513) I want to emphasise distributed leadership and that "in keeping with the notion of distributed leadership, teachers need to be encouraged to find their voices, take up their potential as leaders and change agents to produce a liberating culture in their schools". Teachers need to be consciously and adequately prepared to take up informal leadership roles in the classroom, the school and the community by working collaboratively within a culture of mutual trust and respect with all school members to move their school to become more inclusive (Grant, 2006).

6.4.9 Tread sensitively when teachers' emotions are at stake

While writing up the findings of my study, the significant role of teacher emotions in affording and constraining learning during a time of change in an education system and school became overwhelmingly clear to me. In this study teacher emotions both afforded and constrained teachers' learning. During times of change in the workplace teachers' emotions need to be valued. Teachers should be treated with caution, and demand concentrated attention (Meijers, 2002). Teachers' work is politically charged and involves both emotional and cognitive investments and challenges (DiPardo & Potter, 2003). Researchers should recognise that when radical change in the workplace is introduced teachers' professional and personal well-being is implicated. In line with DiPardo and Potter (2003) I want to recommend an expanded neo-Vygotskian conception of the work of teachers to enrich the efforts of researchers, policymakers, teachers, educators and administrators in order to provide enhanced understanding and better support structures that include teachers' emotional and intellectual needs.

6.5 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to explore and critically discuss the affordances and constraints to teacher learning in a primary school in the Western Cape Province. One of the limitations of this investigation is that it was confined to the context of one primary school. This weakness was however countered by the in-depth nature of the investigation with the support rendered by the framework of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). I endeavoured to provide a detailed trail of events and activities in a richly-detailed (or 'thick') description of the research process and the findings to enable readers to study the research and decide what is suitable and utilisable in their own contexts (Merriam, 1998).

To my mind the value of the study lay in employing CHAT as a theoretical framework and in the findings of the study that may have practicability and usability for other researchers in the field of school change and teacher learning for inclusion. With this in mind I formulated a few general guidelines for researchers who may consider an intervention/exploration within this focus, bearing in mind that it is always difficult to lift the analysis away from the micro-processes of a school to offer recommendations for researchers who consider a replication of the study in other areas (Edwards, 2008). Hopefully these guidelines will allow some food for thought and contribute to more meaningful research attempts at school change and teacher learning for inclusion, as this is an area of research that still needs much more attention in South Africa.

With regard to the intervention in the school in particular, many limitations can be identified. If I should touch on all of these, I will be able to fill the space of one more dissertation. I will spare the reader this. The most important limitation however needs some discussion. It resides in the issue of time constraints that deterred me from a more comprehensive engagement with all the relevant school members, such as the members of the school governing body (SGB), the parents, community members and the students. At the time of engagement I had to make certain choices and decided to work through the teachers as subjects of this study in an attempt to engage the system. Therefore this study focused on teacher learning. To my mind, the study did contribute to better insight in the complexity of teacher learning for inclusion. It highlighted the important implications of the workplace as either an expansive or a restrictive environment for teacher learning. The findings indicated that the transformation of a school into an inclusive learning community is almost impossible when the workplace represents a restrictive environment that constrains teacher learning for change. The leadership approach in a school transpired as one of the most important factors in moving the school to become an inclusive learning community.

The length of the dissertation could possibly be considered a weakness, but I want to suggest that the Index for Inclusion with its emphasis on a change in the cultures, policies and practices of a school contributed to the complexity and comprehensiveness of the study. When a full cycle of the Index for Inclusion process is implemented in a school, it results in a thorough examination of all aspects of schooling and brings to light all the areas in the school that need attention in order for a school to become more inclusive. My dissertation is the result of this process and I would not have wanted it otherwise. By means of the intervention and analysis of findings within the structure offered by CHAT I learned more than I had expected and I would not trade this experience for anything. Due to the complexity of the study it was impossible to explore all the findings of the study and my experiences in sufficient detail and I am aware of these limitations. I chose to end the dissertation here with a short conclusion.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with the aim of investigating teacher learning for inclusion by means of the Index for Inclusion. I was specifically interested in discerning affordances and constraints to teacher learning in the workplace. Three levels of exploration were implicated in the study: the macro-social and macro-educational, the institutional, and the personal. The study employed a critical ethnographic design and was theoretically grounded in cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) that allowed an in-depth exploration of the complexity of factors impinging on teacher learning in the workplace.

As the study has shown, the Index for Inclusion as a tool in this study did allow for teacher learning for inclusion in the workplace. It raised awareness for inclusive education, contributed to a shared language for inclusion in the school and created the platform for teachers to engage with own attitudes and practices in a safe and supportive environment. Certain teachers attested to significant learning gains.

However, the study also painted a dark picture of how a school could act as a restrictive environment for teacher learning and how difficult the process could be to change such an environment to become more expansive in support of teacher learning for inclusion. Several factors acted as severe constraints to teacher learning. Some of them warranted a closer look. On the macro-social level, poverty and the consequences of apartheid in South Africa acted as significant constraints to expansive teacher learning. With regard to the macro-educational level, teachers struggled with innovation overload and the absence of meaningful training and support for change that negatively affected their morale, motivation and self-efficacy. On the institutional level, the leadership approach in the school proved particularly detrimental to expansive teacher learning. Teacher cognition, attitude and emotion also contributed to constrain their own engagement with the learning opportunity afforded by the Index for Inclusion process in the school. The students were not receiving the education that they deserved and their parents and the community were not invited into collaborative partnerships with the staff.

On the personal level the study engaged with the possibility of individual teachers gradually bringing the necessary changes into the school on the grounds of their own positive learning experience through the Index for Inclusion process. The hope for change in the school is thus embodied in individual teachers' agency, energy and incentive to work towards sustaining the good work that was accomplished by means of the Index for Inclusion process in the school.

For me the intervention in the school, my first encounter with CHAT as a theoretical framework, and writing up my findings within this framework represented a steep learning curve that enriched me as a person, academic and researcher in a profound way. In reflecting on all my experiences, I need to acknowledge that conducting this study was most often an uphill battle but worth all the trouble. I look forward to doing further research within the framework afforded by CHAT.

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ADDENDUM A

QUESTIONNAIRES EMPLOYED DURING THE NEEDS ANALYSIS PHASE

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read all questions carefully. Select only ONE option by crossing the relevant box with a neat cross. For example:

At this school the interest of the children is always put first

[✓ Yes always]	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

GENERAL

1. Are you a girl or a boy?

Girl	Boy

2. In what grade are you now? (please write your current school grade in the box provided)

SECTION A

A1.1 I feel welcome at my school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.2 Learners help each other.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.3 Teachers help each other.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.4 Staff and learners treat each other with respect.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.1 Teachers expect me to do my best.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.3 Teachers treat all learners as being equally important.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION B

B1.5 When I first came to school I was welcomed and looked after.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.6 Teachers value all learners at the school, not just their own classes.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.7 Teachers encourage positive behaviour.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.8a Teachers work hard to make the school a safe place.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.8b Teachers work hard to make the school a happy place.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.9 The school is doing all it can to stop bullying.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.10 Bullying is not a problem for me.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION C

C1.1 Teachers try to make the lessons easy for me to understand.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.3 I learn to appreciate people who are different from me.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.4 Teachers help me to learn for myself.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.5 Our teachers expect us to help each other in lessons.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.6 I do a range of assessments that let me show what I know.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.7 Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect between the teachers and learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.9 Teachers help us when we do not understand lessons.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.10 It is easier for me to learn if I set myself goals.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION D

D.1 Tell us about THREE things you like about this school.

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D.2 Tell us about THREE things you would like to change about this school.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read all questions carefully. Select only ONE option by crossing the relevant box with a neat cross. For example:

At this school the interest of the children is always put first

[✓ Yes always]	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

GENERAL

1. Job description?

Non teaching staff member	Teaching staff member

SECTION A

A1.1 I feel welcome at this school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.2 Learners help each other.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.3 Staff collaborate with each other.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.4 Staff and learners treat one another with respect.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.5 Parents are involved at this school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.7 The local community is involved at this school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.1 There are high expectations for all learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.2 The school community shares a philosophy of inclusive education.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.3 Staff treat all learners as equally important.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.4 Staff and learners are treated as human beings and occupants of a 'role'.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.5 Staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and encourage participation in school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.6 The school strives to minimise discriminatory practices.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION B

B1.1a This school's staff appointments are fair.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.1b This school's staff promotions are fair.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.2 New staff are helped to settle into the school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.4 The school seeks to make its buildings physically accessible to all people.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.5 All new learners at the school are helped to feel welcome and settled.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.6 Staff value all learners at the school, not just their own class.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.2 Staff development activities assist staff to respond to student diversity.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.6 Pastoral and behaviour support policies are linked to curriculum development policies.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.7 Teachers reinforce positive behaviour.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.8a Staff strive to make the school a safe place.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.8b Staff strive to make the school a happy place.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.9 The school is doing all it can to minimise bullying.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.10 Bullying is not a problem for the learners I know.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION C

C1.1 Teachers plan lessons that are responsive to learner diversity.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.2 Teachers plan lessons that are accessible to all learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.3 Teachers plan lessons that foster appreciation of differences amongst people.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.4 Learners are actively involved in their own learning.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.5 Learners learn collaboratively.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.6 A range of assessments allows all learners to display their skills.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.7 Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect between teachers and learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.8 Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.9 Staff support the learning and participation of all learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2 Education Assistants support the learning and participation of all learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.1 School resources are distributed fairly to support inclusive practices.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.2 Community resources are known and drawn upon.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.3 Staff expertise is fully utilized.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.4 Student diversity is used as a resource for teaching and learning.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.5 Staff develop resources to support teaching and learning.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION D

D.1 Tell us about THREE things you like about this school.

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D.2 Tell us about THREE things you would like to change about this school.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS/CARER/GUARDIAN

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read all questions carefully. Select only ONE option by crossing the relevant box with a neat cross. For example:

At this school the interest of the children is always put first

[✓ Yes always]	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

GENERAL

1. My child is in

Primary school	High school

SECTION A

A1.1 I feel welcome at this school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.2 Learners help each other.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.3 Staff work well together.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.4 Staff and learners treat each other with respect.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.5 I feel involved in the school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A1.7 The local community is involved in the school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.1 Teachers expect my child/ children to do his/ her/ their best.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.2 The school community shares the understanding that schooling includes everyone.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.3 Teachers treat all learners as being equally important.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.5 Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

A2.6 The school strives to minimise discriminatory practices.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION B

B1.4 The school seeks to make its buildings physically accessible to all people.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.5 My child/ children were helped to feel welcome and settled at this school.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B1.6 Teachers value all learners at the school, not just their own class.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.7 Teachers reinforce positive behaviour.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.8a Staff strive to make the school a safe place.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.8b Staff strive to make the school a happy place.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.9 The school is doing all it can to minimise bullying.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

B2.10 My child/ children are not affected by bullying.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION C

C1.1 Teachers try to make lessons understandable for my child/ children.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.3 My child/ children are taught to appreciate differences amongst people.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.4 My child/ children are actively involved in his/ her/ their own learning.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.6 A range of assessments allows my child/ children to display his/ her/ their skills.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.7 Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect between teacher and learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C1.9 Teachers support the learning and participation of all learners.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.1 School resources are distributed fairly to support my child/ children's learning.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

C2.2 Community resources are known and drawn upon.

Yes always	Yes sometimes	Never	Unsure

SECTION D

D.1 Name THREE things you like about this school.

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D.2 Name THREE things you would like to change about this school.

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ADDENDUM B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF EMPLOYED DURING THE EVALUATION PHASE

INDEX QUESTIONNAIRE

WERE YOU A MEMBER OF THE COORDINATING TEAM?
Mark the relevant box

Were you aware of the National Education Department's aim of implementing inclusive education in all schools in South Africa before the Index for Inclusion process was introduced into your school? If yes, where have you heard about inclusive education for the first time?

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What was your understanding of inclusive education before the Index for Inclusion process was introduced into your school?

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What is your current understanding of inclusive education?

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How do you currently feel about inclusive education?

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As part of the Index for Inclusion process we first prepared a coordinating team to lead and support the implementation of inclusive education in your school.

- What is your view on the role of the coordinating team?

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    - Do you think that the coordinating team succeeded in their task? Please elaborate on your answer.

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- How have you experienced your participation in the coordinating team? **(Only for members of the coordinating team)**

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Inclusive education emphasises transformative leadership in a school. What is your perception of this?

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The Index for Inclusion process is built on the assumption that school members will accept ownership of developing their school as an inclusive school. What is your perception and experience in this regard?

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Several priorities for change have been listed by you.

- How important do you consider the realisation of these priorities for your school?

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- Make suggestions how the school could address these priorities effectively.

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- How do you see your own role in working towards addressing the priorities that you set for the school?

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One of the priorities listed for attention was to formulate and implement anti-bullying policy in the school.

- How have you experienced the training that you received in this respect?

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- Which contribution are you prepared to make towards addressing bullying in your school?

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We also addressed the possibility of the school becoming a more democratic and inclusive community.

- How did you experience the workshops presented in this respect?

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- Which other initiatives do you think should be put in place to enable the school to become a democratic and inclusive community?

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You received training on collaboration and collaborative problem-solving.

- How did you experience the workshops presented in this respect?

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- How do you think can you contribute to greater teamwork in your school?

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Workshops on establishing a positive learning culture in your school are currently presented.

- How do you experience the workshops presented in this respect?

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If the opportunity arises and funding was available to prolong the Index for Inclusion process in your school, how would you feel about this?

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Can you make suggestions toward how to manage the Index for Inclusion process in your school more successful?

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ADDENDUM C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE FIRST FORMAL INTERVIEW WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

1. Why have you chosen teaching as a career?
2. Please tall me about your career path up until your current position as principal of the school.
3. Which qualities do you consider as the most important for a school principal?
4. Which contribution do you as school principal make to the culture in your school?
5. What do you understand about the notion of democratic leadership?
6. Current literature describes the school principal as both the manager and the leader of a school. How do you feel about this?
7. Since 1994 transformation in education compelled many changes in schools. Which leadership qualities do you think are necessary to lead a school to positive transformation?
8. One of the outcomes of the Index for Inclusion process implies the development of the school as an inclusive school community where all members of the school community are included and valued.
    - How do you feel about this?
    - Is this an ideal that you would like to pursue for your school?
    - Which role can the school principal play in this process?
    - Do you think that this will be possible in your school?

ADDENDUM D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE FIRST FORMAL INTERVIEW WITH THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER

INTERVIEW SCEDULE:
LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER

1. Which barriers to learning and support are there in your school?
2. Which learning support is available in your school to address the above barriers? Do you consider it sufficient and effective?
3. Should you rate the support in your school as insufficient, what can be put in place to make it more effective?
4. Are there any under-utilised resources in your school that can be activated to address the barriers?
5. Does the education support team in your school contribute towards addressing barriers to learning and participation?
6. Which role do you play to support the teachers to help learners in their classrooms?
7. Which inclusive practices are already in action in classrooms in your school?
8. Which role do you play with regard to staff development to enable them to address barriers to learning in their classrooms more effectively?
9. To which extent does the school's disciplinary policy succeed in addressing challenging student behaviour pro-actively?

ADDENDUM E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHERS DURING THE EVALUATION PHASE OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION PROCESS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
TEACHERS

1. Were you aware, before the Index for Inclusion process that the National Education Department wanted to implement inclusive education?
2. What was your understanding of inclusive education before the Index for Inclusion process was introduced into your school?
3. What is your current understanding of inclusive education? How do you feel about the implementation of inclusive education?
4. What is your understanding of the role of the coordinating group in the Index for Inclusion process?
5. Do you think that the coordinating team in your school contributed towards enhancing the Index for Inclusion process in your school? Please elaborate on your answer.
6. How have you experienced your membership of the coordinating team **(only for members of the coordinating team)**?
7. Inclusive education places emphasis on transformative school leadership. What is your perception in this regard?
8. The Index for Inclusion process expects that the school would accept ownership for the Index for Inclusion process in the school. What is your perceptions and experience in this regard?
9. You listed several priorities for change that you wanted to address. How important do you consider the realisation of these priorities? Discuss the role of the school and yourself in the realisation of these priorities.
10. How have you experienced the training for addressing bullying in your school? Which contribution are you prepared to make to further the cause in your school?
11. We also addressed the possibility of the school becoming a more democratic and inclusive community. What was your experience in this regard? Which other initiatives do you think should be put in place to enable the school to become a more democratic and inclusive community?
12. You received training on collaboration and collaborative problem-solving. How did you experience the workshops presented in this respect? How do you think can you contribute to greater teamwork in your school?
13. Workshops on establishing a positive learning culture in your school are currently presented. How do you experience the workshops presented in this respect?
14. If the opportunity arises and funding was available to prolong the Index for Inclusion process in your school, how would you feel about this?
15. Can you make suggestions toward how to manage the Index for Inclusion process in your school more successfully?

ADDENDUM F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND DEPUTYPRINCIPAL DURING THE EVALUATION PHASE OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION PROCESS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND VICE-PRINCIPAL

1. Were you aware, before the Index for Inclusion process that the National Education Department wanted to implement inclusive education?
2. What was your understanding of inclusive education before the Index for Inclusion process was introduced into your school?
3. What is your current understanding of inclusive education?
4. How do you feel about the implementation of inclusive education?
5. What was your experience of the results of the questionnaires completed by the staff, parents and learners?
6. Inclusive education expects change in the cultures, policies and practices of schools, but change is not easy. What is your experience in this regard?
7. What is your understanding of the role of the coordinating group in the Index for Inclusion process?
8. Do you think that the coordinating team in your school contributed towards enhancing the Index for Inclusion process in your school? Please elaborate on your answer.
9. How have you experienced your membership of the coordinating team?
10. Inclusive education places emphasis on transformative school leadership. What is your perception in this regard?
11. The Index for Inclusion process expects that the school would accept ownership for the Index for Inclusion process in the school. What is your perceptions and experience in this regard?
12. Inclusive education stresses teamwork and collaboration among staff in a school. Can you indicate where the school currently stands with regard to this ideal? How do you think can you contribute to greater teamwork in your school?
13. Inclusive education stresses good relations between school members and members of the governing body of a school. Can you indicate where the school currently stands with regard to this ideal?
14. We addressed the possibility of the school becoming a more democratic and inclusive community. What was your experience in this regard? Which other initiatives do you think should be put in place to enable the school to become a more democratic and inclusive community? What is your role in this respect?
15. How do you feel about a platform for learner voice in your school?
16. How have you experienced the training for addressing bullying in your school? Which contribution are you prepared to make to further the cause in your school?

17. Workshops on establishing a positive learning culture in your school are currently presented. How do you experience the workshops presented in this respect?
18. The inclusive approach to schooling suggests that the parents and the community should be invited as partners into the school. How are you as a school going to address greater parent and community participation in your school?
19. What are your dreams and ideals for your school in the journey to greater inclusivity in your school?
20. If the opportunity arises and funding was available to prolong the Index for Inclusion process in your school, how would you feel about this?
21. Can you make suggestions toward how to manage the Index for Inclusion process in your school more successfully?

ADDENDUM G

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER DURING THE EVALUATION PHASE OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION PROCESS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
LEARNER SUPPORT TEACHER

1. What is your understanding of the role of the coordinating group in the Index for Inclusion process?
2. Do you think that the coordinating team in your school contributed towards enhancing the Index for Inclusion process in your school? Please elaborate on your answer.
3. How have you experienced your membership of the coordinating team?
4. Inclusive education places emphasis on transformative school leadership. What is your perception in this regard?
5. Inclusive education stresses that all barriers to learning and participation should be addressed in a school. How do you rate your school's progress in this regard? Which contribution can you make?
6. Inclusive education suggests that learning support should be available in the classroom for all learners. How do you rate your school's progress in this regard? How do you see your role with regard to the above?
7. Education White Paper 6 of 2001 suggests that a school should have an effective education support team to support learning support in the classroom. What is your experience of the above in your school? How do you see your role in this respect?
8. Education White Paper 6 of 2001 recommends that the Education District Team should play a certain role in your school to support the work of teachers and the learning of learners. Which initiatives are in place to support teachers and learners in your school?
9. How do you train the teachers to address the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms more meaningfully?
10. Which role does the nearby special school play with regard to support practices in your school?
11. The inclusive school approach stresses equality. How do you feel about leadership positions for teachers?
12. Inclusive education promotes the development of a school as an inclusive school community inclusive of all teachers, parents, learners and the community. How do you rate your school's progress in this regard? Which contribution can you make in this regard?
13. Which initiatives can the school launch to increase parent and community participation in the school?
14. What are your dreams and ideals for your school in the journey to greater inclusivity in your school? Which role can you play in this respect?

ADDENDUM H

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHERS DURING 2008

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS

1. Please tell me your personal stories of growth and development.
2. What is your experience of change in the school?
3. Were you able to make changes in your classrooms in line with what you have learned during the Index for Inclusion process? Please elaborate.
4. What will motivate teachers to keep on learning to address the diverse learning needs of their learners despite being in teaching for a long time?
5. What would act as barriers to changing classroom practice to be able to address the needs of learners more meaningfully?
6. In which way has the project contributed to your own learning process?

ADDENDUM I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH A TEACHER DURING 2008

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
HANNAH'S STORY

1. Please tell me the story of your own growth and development during the Index for Inclusion process.
2. You previously mentioned going through a bad time when the Index for Inclusion first start in the school. Can you tell me more about this?
3. You mentioned something about a seedling and a tree. Can you elaborate on this?
4. In which way has the project contributed to your own learning process?
5. What is your experience of change in the school?
6. Were you able to make changes in your classrooms in line with what you have learned during the Index for Inclusion process? Please tell me more about this?
7. What will motivate teachers to keep on learning to address the diverse learning needs of their learners despite being in teaching for a long time?
8. What would act as barriers to changing classroom practice to be able to address the needs of learners more meaningfully?
9. What can bring the necessary changes?
10. Why is it so difficult for teachers to change and to move from a certain comfort zone?
11. How do you currently experience leadership in the school?
12. How do you currently experience the participation of the parents and the community?

ADDENDUM J

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER DURING 2008

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
FRANCELLE'S STORY

1. Please tell me the story of your own growth and development during the Index for Inclusion process.
2. In which way has the project contributed to your own learning process?
3. What is your experience of change in the school?
4. Tell me about possible changes with regard to the role of the education support team in the school.
5. Were the teachers able to make changes in their classrooms in line with what they have learned during the Index for Inclusion process? Please tell me more about this?
6. What will motivate teachers to keep on learning to address the diverse learning needs of their learners despite being in teaching for a long time?
7. What would act as barriers to changing classroom practice to be able to address the needs of learners more meaningfully?
8. Why do teachers find it so difficult to changes their attitudes and practices?
9. What can bring the necessary changes?