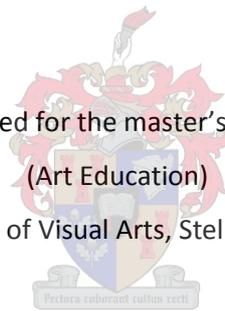


**INTRODUCING A DIPLOMA COURSE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VISUALS ARTS AT  
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY: AN INVESTIGATION INTO ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS  
REGARDING SOCIAL AND RACIAL TRANSFORMATION**

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Dissertation presented for the master's degree in Visual Arts  
(Art Education)  
at the Department of Visual Arts, Stellenbosch University



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## DECLARATION

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## **Abstract**

The need for social change in an environment that is burdened with a history of segregation becomes evident in a landscape that remains largely culturally homogenous. Through art education with a focus on transformation, curriculum development within the arts can be viewed as a tool for social justice. As the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University (SU) seeks to re-evaluate its position within Stellenbosch and South Africa, it is necessary to look at structural changes that might bring about an environment where students from diverse racial, cultural and economic backgrounds have the freedom to be educated equally. This study aims to create a platform on which such possibilities might be discussed and analysed. In this study it was important to see how transformation is linked to educational development and how this feeds into concepts regarding social justice. From these theoretical concepts the investigation into the attitudes and perceptions of lecturers regarding a potential diploma course become valuable notions for understanding these views. Contextualising SU's Department of Visual Arts with regards to how it is historically positioned as well as its efforts to transform gives a backdrop to how this research can potentially become a navigating tool for educational development in this department and further afield. The findings from this study highlighted a need for those involved in the development and implementation of a potential diploma course to be aware of their own position in this academic setting. The department also partakes in community-engagement projects, where active steps can be taken to see how the department can use these projects to bridge academic gaps between secondary and tertiary education by actively seeking new ways in which the learners they work with can become feeder students. Identifying the importance of re-evaluating the curriculum to shift the focus from a Euro-American viewpoint to content that orientates itself to concentrate on more of a South African and African visual culture becomes central. To prevent further exclusion in this learning environment support from older students in the form of mentorship may be helpful as well as hiring lecturing staff that portrays a diverse lecturing staff body for a multiracial student body to identify with. Educational development can serve to liberate the effects that the past has had on people in the present. To move forward a deep introspection of all the key role players in this kind of educational development must take place. A potential undergraduate diploma in the Department of Visual Arts may serve as a necessary platform for social justice by providing access to this knowledge area to students from a wider social, racial and economic standing.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to start by acknowledging how crucial this degree was for my personal growth. The knowledge that I acquired in this process fed and nourished me intellectually. However, the real value lies in the way in which the knowledge I obtained steered my thoughts into action and allowed me to see the value art and education can have when it is centred on a critical consciousness geared towards education for social justice. Having said this I must thank the people who supported me throughout this process, as it was not an easy journey but one that required constant re-evaluation of my own position and capabilities within the context I was situated. I must thank my supervisor, Dr Elmarie Costandius, who both encouraged me and made sure that I did not leave the work that was so necessary to do. Your constant encouragement guided me till the very end. I would like to thank my companion, partner and friend, Brandaan, who was my rock and who challenged me intellectually to always give of my best. Thank you to my parents who never gave up on me and who constantly reminded me of my deadline looming but who also instilled in me the values of discipline and respect. I am very thankful for your prayers. Thank you to my bursaries (Harry Crossely and NRF grant holder funds) who made a generous contribution towards my education and who saw the potential in my work. To my sisters and brother, your ideas on education helped me to think about all those who do not have the same privilege that has been afforded to me. Thank you for this life lesson. Thank you to Open Stellenbosch collective who gave me a platform on which to debate as well as put my ideas to practice. This year you opened up many barriers to education that this university has struggled with for a very long time. Your courage and dedication to widen access to education is a battle worth fighting for. Lastly, thank you to all my friends who were so patient with me. Your patience has not gone unnoticed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

The need to formalise artistic training within the visual arts was born out of the necessity to bring artists into the realm of the labour market where their training could be recognised as the expertise of a formal body of knowledge and accredited with the label of professionalism. Globally this field of knowledge is not only formalised to satisfy the needs of a gap in the economy, but is also being developed in an educative environment in which it contains a syllabus, curriculum and pedagogy that are constantly being reviewed and changed to meet the needs of social trends as well as the interests of the contexts in which they are situated (Schmidt Campbell & Martin, 2006:5).

The model on which South African art education has been founded remains one that is deeply embedded in Western perceptions of art and the historical value attached to Western art by society. Sirayi (2007:559) argues that even if African perceptions are introduced into an art curriculum, it is always seen in relation to Europe. It has therefore taken on a very specific role in the tertiary education environment, and art in this context can very often be regarded as exclusive and elitist by those who are not participants within this field. As a student at a historically white university, namely Stellenbosch University (SU), I have developed an interest in how this university seeks to negotiate its role in a present post-apartheid South Africa in relation to how it was and still is historically perceived. The university struggles with contentious issues regarding transformation and racial integration. Many projects have been spearheaded in an effort to combat the lack thereof, but because the university is the site of a largely racially homogenous group it is difficult to implement policy changes that reflect social change (Costandius & Rosochacki, 2012:16).

I am of the opinion that an important aspect of bringing about change starts at the core of the structural way in which curriculum and pedagogy are being implemented. Learning in an environment in which there is recognition of citizenship and the value of an integrated society, where one group is not favoured above the other, is valuable, as it teaches students how to imagine a nation as diverse and inclusive. Learning is therefore seen as taught through the lived experiences of different social and cultural communities (Osler & Starkey, 2003:245).

As researcher it was often difficult for me to remain impartial in the interviewing process of this study. Racially, I am of ‘mixed descent’, as my father is a ‘white’ Afrikaner from Stellenbosch and my mother is a Rehoboth ‘Baster’ from Namibia. Culturally, I often find myself having to negotiate myself in this institutional environment, as I can identify with some aspects of this Afrikaner world, yet at the same time I am also excluded from this environment because of my skin colour. The interviewing became somewhat of a difficult process in that when asking certain questions I often (in retrospect) felt that there were many aspects that I might have overlooked as a result of my identification with this ‘white’ environment. Furthermore, I think that because of this I might have not delved into aspects of this department that have, to other black students, been of an oppressive and exclusionary nature. In the same way there seems to be some hesitation when it comes to looking critically at oneself in the department. A critical view is taught and encouraged to be practised regarding all aspects of life. However, when it comes to looking critically at what and how lecturers and students personally do things in this specific environment, we are hesitant to investigate that.

An empirical research approach was utilised to formulate a case study in which the Department of Visual Arts at SU was the focus. The study investigated the challenges the department faces with regard to transformation and inclusivity. In the formulation of this case study I would like to posit that structurally SU’s present admission requirements have become an obstacle by disallowing many future learners from entering the learning environment. The research conducted for this study looked into how transformation is perceived from the perspective of those implementing and teaching the curriculum at specific universities in the Western Cape, South Africa, to determine and form an understanding of how transformative education is being used to bring about social change in their immediate contexts. An introduction of a diploma course was the focus of the research conducted as well as an investigation into how attitudes and perceptions regarding transformation can perpetuate a cycle of racial institutional culture or bring about social, racial and economic change.

## **1.2 Summary of theoretical framework**

This study explored literature that focuses on development rhetoric in higher education in South Africa. The focus was on understanding how these terms and concepts could be applied to the way in which the lecturing staff’s attitudes and perceptions regarding

transformation in higher education are currently being employed to perpetuate certain hegemonies or to partake in a platform for meaningful change.

Transformation is used as an umbrella key term to link concepts and ideas. Transformation is broadly understood, according to Reddy (2008:209), as change that takes place from one particular qualitative state to another. Change here is linked to improvement. Since the end of apartheid, transformation has been used in many higher education institutions to justify slow progress as something that merely takes time. Transformation in this sense is linked to development.

Development as a long-term goal in a South African and an African context has always been viewed in a critical light. In institutions of learning the most important element of development is centred on ideas of solidarity and agency (Bhattacharyya, 2004:11). Bhattacharyya's (2004) points are validated by focusing on the way in which development should not only be concerned with structural changes, but should also inevitably lead to critical consciousness, which then can generate and give way to action. Action in this regard is not viewed as a top-down effect, but as a vehicle for people who have been historically and presently marginalised academically, economically and socially to be given the right tools to change their own communities. Societal development, as Waghid (2014:1453) argues, is the way in which social justice must reveal itself in society.

Another key concept that was discussed in this chapter is social justice in society and education. Like development social justice is seen as a continuum. Social justice leans heavily on the active role of the society it is situated in. Social justice can be identified as a way in which resources are equally distributed and where physical and psychological safety and security of all member in a society are up held. Social justice also includes making sure that education is implemented in such a way that it not only conveys knowledge but that the knowledge that is carried across develops into critical enquiry and action specifically regarding the imbalances and differences present in society. It therefore focuses on analysing different forms of oppression and looks at ways in which oppression can be uprooted (Adams, Bell and Griffin 2007:1-2). Nancy Fraser (1997) identifies social injustices to be socioeconomic, cultural and symbolic, and political. Within this framework social justice will be discussed.

Finally, I investigated how transformation can be understood in terms of the constitutive meanings in which it is embedded in. Firstly, I looked at equity and redress with a specific focus on racial discrimination. In the higher education learning environment racial discrimination is not only overtly felt, but is also experienced as an established institutional racism where it has been so firmly set in place that in some instances many will not even recognise it (Guess, 2006). In many cases transformation is put on hold because of the blindness institutional racism causes. As a result many do not believe that transformation is necessary.

Secondly, I conducted a critical enquiry into the social structures that are formed within tertiary institutions in order to evaluate how action can be taken to address issues of equity and redress.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

What remains evident within the SU context is its historical background that continues to filter into its present-day narrative. The research premise was based on the need for social change, which is harnessed by a critical reflection on the models of learning already set in place. These models of learning are often characterised by unequal social relations predominant in South African society and hence within an educational context are largely dominated by particular theoretical and intellectual paradigms that perpetuate histories of subordination. Although some departments within SU have seen more change than others with regard to certain social concerns, the Department of Visual Arts seems to struggle with key aspects such as racial and cultural diversity and economic imbalances, which are important concerns when dealing with education in a post-apartheid context. The visual arts in an educative environment has also carried with it the historical baggage of privilege in a university setting, as not many people regard it as a long-term sustainable profession to pursue (Costandius & Rosochacki, 2012:16). This diminishes the desire of certain individuals who show talent, academic prowess and willingness to pursue this career path.

There also seems to remain a vast knowledge gap academically between secondary and tertiary education, and because SU places considerable value on academic excellence, many learners will not be accepted into a degree programme based on the grounds of their academic performance. Most often these learners will be from schools where they have not had the privilege of receiving an education that is needed for university acceptance (Herman,

1995:264). My research concern in this way acknowledges that knowledge is rapidly expanding and that a necessary platform for social justice in education is needed to provide a possibility for learners from a wider social and economic standing to gain access to knowledge areas that would not normally be made available to them. Art education can in this way be used as a social tool to engage with the aspects of globalisation, citizenship and social reparation that are inevitably taking place around them.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The main research question in this study was formulated as: *What are the attitudes and perceptions of lecturers regarding a prospective diploma course in the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University?*

The sub-research question was: *What do these attitudes and perceptions of lecturers reveal about the teaching and learning and broader context in which the prospective diploma course will be implemented?*

#### **1.5 Aims and objectives**

The aims of this study, taking into account the context in which the research was situated, were to pave a way to implement a diploma course and thereby create awareness of the problematic issues that such an implementation will involve. The aim of the study was also to establish what adjustments students and lecturers will need to face or to make to enable a diploma course to function as well as flourish.

The objective of this study was to interview two institutions from varying contexts to determine how their diploma courses in Visual Arts work. Once I had conducted these interviews, I used this research to determine how and whether these institutions' educational models were applicable to the setting of SU's Department of Visual Arts. Finally, I examined what could be done to make the potential undergraduate diploma course more approachable to learners from diverse racial, cultural and economic backgrounds.

## 1.6 Research methodology/design

The research conducted was done in close conjunction with research<sup>1</sup> already being done within the Department of Visual Arts on the possibility of a diploma course. I therefore used SU's Department of Visual Arts as my main research focus and the research therefore falls in the realm of identifying new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and explanation. An empirical research approach was utilised, as it formed part of a qualitative case study in which the research took its departure from information that I gathered from interviews and documents on curriculum development within SU and one other South African university. The qualitative research approach is understood to be insiders' perspectives of social actions. As the research took its departure from this viewpoint, the goal of this kind of research is to understand and describe the different views observed rather than to try to explain or predict possible outcomes.

The majority of my research was gathered from information that has already been collected on curriculum development geared towards community development and transformation within university contexts. I also looked at models already in existence at another department at SU, namely the Department of Music, and at another university, namely the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), and visited these institutions to conduct field research there. The research I conducted at these institutions was applicable to the research design approach that I have chosen, that being a qualitative case study. A case study by its definition is research that comprises of an organised gathering of information concentrating on a "particular person, social setting, event, or group" in order that the researcher may successfully understand how the subject operates or functions (Rutterford, 2012:119).

## 1.7 Conclusion

The need for social change in an environment that is burdened with a history of segregation becomes evident in a landscape that remains largely culturally homogenous. Through art education with a focus on transformation and citizenship, curriculum development within the arts can be viewed as a tool for social justice. As the Department of Visual Arts at SU seeks

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<sup>1</sup> Monique Isabel Biscombe, a PhD candidate in the Department of Visuals Arts of SU, in her master's thesis focused on how students from 'othered' identity groups experienced this academic environment. Her thesis is titled *Coloured in: Investigating the challenges of an 'othered' identity within spaces of learning*. It was from this platform that I was challenged to take up my own research topic, as she highlighted the importance of academic bridging courses as one of the ways in which the learning environment can deal with aspects of transformation and inclusivity.

to re-evaluate its position within Stellenbosch and South Africa, it is necessary to look at structural changes that might bring about an environment where students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds have the freedom to be educated equally. The research proposed here aims to create a platform on which such possibilities might be discussed and analysed.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this study a focus on understanding the role of higher education in South Africa's present social and political context is necessary. Recognising that higher education has come to play an important role in the way transformation is viewed in society and the critical role education has ideologically been given becomes the main area of concern. By understanding the historical as well as present situativeness of the future of tertiary education, value-based actions and implications can be discussed and analysed to evaluate how to move forward. The theoretical framework employed in this study was used to give an understanding of how the research conducted fits into a broader field of theoretical research concerning transformation and inclusion in higher education, specifically in the context of SU.

#### 2.2 Transformation

Transformation can broadly be understood as change that takes place from one qualitative state to another, where change normally entails 'improvement' (Reddy, 2008:209). Kirsten (cited in Van der Merwe, 2000:82) defines change as a shift in "the structural transformation of a society in all its dimensions the political, social, economic, cultural, educational resulting in a complete change of the existing relations of power". Transformation then can be understood in a number of ways in a South African context since the end of apartheid. After apartheid ended the term was negotiated in conflicting ways, because as Reddy (2008:209) states, "conflicts arose over the grand vision and the minute details of addressing and reorganising historically sedimented power relations in institutional contexts and cultures and in everyday life". As a result, the term 'transformation' has resonated within a democratic landscape in which South Africa is currently situated because of the nature in which democracy occurred.<sup>2</sup> A possible reason why it might have been incorporated into the more dominant discourses of democracy is because its meaning holds the potential to be adapted to symbolise and evoke a number of diverse understandings, especially those interpretations pertaining to politics and conceptions of social change. However, Van der Merwe (2000:82)

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<sup>2</sup> Conflicts were resolved by reaching a compromise. In that compromise many issues were left unresolved.

sees transformation as an all-inclusive development that cannot be seen only in the singular, but as a movement that touches all organisations and institutions in society. In discourses on social change, key players in the state and civil society use these notions of transformation to invoke meanings that meet purposes that often serve a particular or singular goal. In this way transformation can be described as both an ongoing process and an end to strive towards depending on the audience, ideology or political moment that seeks to define it (Reddy, 2008:210). Transformation in higher education in South Africa is viewed in light of the direct impact of the transition from apartheid to democracy (Van der Merwe, 2000:82).

### **2.3 Development**

Transformation in higher education is often viewed against a backdrop of development, which is linked to discourses on democracy. Development in a rapidly changing global context means that higher education has to keep up with an increasingly global economy in which South Africa is also a participant (Cloete & Maassen, 2002:15). Development and reform in higher education can be met with a certain amount of tension, as they seek to find a balance between two dominant perspectives: the first seeing higher education as a social institution and the second viewing it in terms of its role in the national economy (Cloete & Maassen, 2002:17). For the purposes of this study a larger focus was placed on the first perspective. However, development cannot be separated from either of the two.

Bhattacharyya (2004) sees the construction of development and the theories it maintains in a manner where it remains an unambiguous point of reference so as to guide others who are investigating future activities within development. Its purpose is driven by the ideals of solidarity and agency (Bhattacharyya, 2004:11). By its definition of solidarity and agency, development should then be incorporated into society in such a way that “the creation and promotion of people’s choice and capabilities” (Bhattacharyya, 2004:13) becomes the uniting force with which it is implemented in higher education. The theoretical discourse that should guide the way in which development is studied and enacted is through critical consciousness. In a developmental sense critical consciousness should generate the ability for people affected by social, cultural and economic problems within their communities to own and define the active measures by which difficulties can be solved (Bhattacharyya, 2004:13). In the same way, Argar (cited in Van der Merwe, 2000:82) places a great deal of importance on transformation that points to development that generates new meaning at the level of the individual.

Waghid (2014:1453) posits that societal transformation is the desired objective of development. Social development is concerned with fostering sustainable and harmonious communities in which the inclusion of action and efforts is used to encourage a kind of development that does not exclude or compromise the standard of human and social resources. In doing so, this kind of development should be a contributing factor to the enhancement of human and social potential. Education has been identified to hold this potential. Waghid (2014) further argues that development is a way in which social justice reveals itself in society. From this point of view, transformation that is linked to social development cannot be detached from an education for social justice.

## **2.4 Social justice**

Bell (Adams, Bell and Griffin, 2007:1–2) explains social justice as a continuum where it can be viewed as both a process and a goal. The purpose of social justice entails full and equal participation whereby an active role is taken by all members and groups in a society to meet their needs shaped on mutual understandings of social justice. Within these understandings of social justice an idealistic view of society is held in which resources are distributed equally. Consequently, the physical and psychological safety and security of all members are upheld. Social justice therefore involves an active role from the society in which it is envisioned. It also involves a realisation that members have the ability to be part of bringing about social justice. The agency that members have also means that they have a responsibility to others within their society. Education is therefore an ideal medium to teach students about their responsibility in terms of social justice. It also involves discussions on social justice that make students aware of differences within society. Difference becomes an important aspect of social justice education, as analysing different forms of oppression, for example, should include giving students an interdisciplinary conceptual framework to understand the meaning of social difference and oppression in order for them to understand it within their own social system as well as in their personal lives (Adams, Bell and Griffin, 2007:1–2).

To make more sense of social justice, an understanding of injustice must first be made plain. Fraser (1997:3–4) differentiates the understanding of injustice into three broad conceptions. The first understanding is a socio-economic injustice that is entrenched in the political-economic structure of society. Within this structure examples of injustices present include exploitation, economic marginalisation and deprivation.

The second injustice is to be understood as a cultural or symbolic one. Aspects of injustice here are implicit and embedded in the social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Here cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect are some of the examples of how to identify economic injustices in society. Although these injustices are understood in separate analytical terms, practically they are seen to be entwined in the actual outworking of society. Fraser (1997) explains its twofold nature in this way: “even the most material economic institutions have a constitutive, irreducible cultural dimension; they are shot through with signification and norms. Conversely, even the most discursive cultural practices have a constitutive, irreducible political dimension; they are underpinned by material supports” (Fraser, 1997:4–5).

In trying to understand injustice, according to Fraser (1997), it is not enough to only be able to identify the effects they cause, but an understanding must give way to a remedy or a way to turn the understanding into an action that will lead to social justice. Although Fraser (1997) recognises the entwined nature of the socio-economic and cultural injustices present in society, she continues to distinguish between them in an attempt to allocate a compatibly distinct remedy for each. In the case of economic injustice, Fraser (1997) suggests that the remedy should be a political-economic restructuring. She proposes that the term ‘redistribution’ be used as an umbrella term to discuss different aspects of what this restructuring might look like. Although an umbrella term is used, it is important to acknowledge differences in the way every unique instance of economic injustices should be treated. This could involve “redistributing income, reorganising the division of labour, subjecting investments to democratic decision making, or transforming other basic economic structures” (Fraser, 1997:5).

According to Fraser (1997), remedying cultural injustices requires a different kind of approach, which she explains to be as a sort of cultural or symbolic change. She aptly explains this change to “involve upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and cultural products of maligned groups” (Fraser, 1997:5). What this could practically entail is the recognition and positive valorising of cultural diversity. In this respect a cultural shift could call upon a radical and completely different “transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication” (Fraser, 1997:5) to be ushered in where change is actually seen in a group or community’s sense of self. Once again Fraser (1997:5) recognises that remedies could be put into action in various ways when talking about cultural

injustices, but for the purpose of understanding each idea, an umbrella term 'recognition' is utilised for further discussions.

The third facet of justice when relating it to social justice is the political aspect. The political side of justice is an important dimension, as it is the space in which struggles and conflicts over distribution and recognition are played out. It probably remains the most important part of social justice, as within this arena measures are set into play concerning social belonging, thereby defining who counts as a member in a particular society. It ultimately conveys information of who is to be included and excluded from the environment and, more specifically, who is entitled to a just and fair distribution and mutual recognition. In this dimension of social justice many questions are highlighted about who can make claims to redistribution and recognition and also how to go about deciding suggested changes and policies (Fraser, 2009:17). This aspect also bears particular importance to higher education.

Transformation in higher education must therefore be understood in terms of the constitutive meanings in which it is embedded in. In order to understand transformation, the constitutive meanings must be unpacked. Van Wyk (2005:6) places these different meanings in four broad categories: firstly, he sees transformation as it relates to equity and redress; secondly, in terms of critical inquiry; thirdly, with regard to communicative praxis; and finally, in relation to citizenship. In the following section I discuss the first two categories, focusing on a particular aspect of each.

## **2.5 Equity and redress**

When tackling issues of equity and redress in a South African context, racial discrimination cannot be ignored and is seen to be a perpetuated notion as well as a lived experience. Since the end of the apartheid system in South Africa, society today is still experienced as one in which the racial categories set in motion by the previous oppressive government dictate the interactions of members of society with one another (Seekings, 2008:1). In higher education the nature in which universities and tertiary institutions were previously racially segregated begs for a radical reassessment of how an overhaul of the past educational order can introduce redefinitions of the cultures prevalent in higher education today. While racial discrimination is not the only form of prejudice experienced, it is a large contributing factor to other forms of discrimination and many of these other forms are seen to be directly related to it.

Kivel (2004:25) remarks that whenever a particular group of people accumulates more power than another, the group with the most power constructs an environment that places those with less power at the periphery and those who have gained dominance at the centre. This remains the case at most previously white South African universities. This dominance in some cases may not even be a conscious discrimination or an overt plan to subjugate groups with less power (although in many previously white institutions discrimination is still very evident) (Soudien, 2008). Being able to identify cultures of power therefore allows individuals to recognise how power and privilege works. Recognising this sheds considerable light on who remains vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion (Kivel, 2004:26–27). Carrim (1998:301) argues that a shift in mentality is necessary to change a mind-set that is still predominantly “racist, undemocratic and authoritarian” to one that encourages both students and tertiary education employees to be “non-racial, democratic and enabling”. Acknowledging that this shift is a tall order is a realistic approach; however, to shy away from this reality would be to condone the continued oppression black students face in educational environments.

Seekings (2008:2) attributes the continued legacy of apartheid to the fact that not only did the state order society according to racial lines, but it also went far beyond the parameters of racism and racial discrimination to what Seekings says to be a “generalised social engineering around state-sanctioned racial ideology and legislation”. This consciousness of race, being deeply rooted in society, is reflected in decisions and policies made by our present and past democratic leaders. A distinction between racism by intent and racism by consequence is necessary in a South African educational context, as both forms of racism are still evident in South African society. However, I argue that racism by consequence is the more applicable distinction for the current study. It is of importance to be able to identify both, hence a brief definition of both forms is given. When racism is discussed in this thesis, it is discussed according to the historical underpinnings that are found in socially constructed knowledge about ‘race’ and ‘whiteness’. Many of these theories have their theoretical underpinnings based and documented in European and American history with a particular focus on slavery, segregation and discrimination “based on the ascription of some measure of social de-valuation imposed on non-white peoples and normatively defined as racial characteristics” (Guess, 2006:651).

Guess (2006) explains that racism by intent functions in a capacity whereby it involves the individual and is revealed to be a racial prejudice and discrimination focused towards black

individuals. Guess's (2006) research pays specific attention to how the conception of whiteness is derived from a type of racism that is grounded upon customs and tradition. Racism by consequence, however, works at the macro level of society and is reflected in the historicity of societal evolution. A gradual shift away from a conscious, almost personalised belief of the inferiority of an 'othered' race is the basic constituents of this notion. Guess (2006) further emphasises this notion by relating it to convictions that are communicated in the attitudes of prejudice and that are then acted out in discriminatory conduct. As it progresses it is followed by social practices that are at the essence depersonalised through institutionalisation. The resulting practices are marked by the decline of racial practices over time; however, "more subtle patterns of discrimination persist, supported by the inertia of custom, bureaucratic procedure, impersonal routine and even law" (Guess, 2006:651–652). Therefore, racism by intent is so influential that over time it informs institutional cultures and practices that take white supremacy over black inferiority as the norm to such an extent that when confronted by it most 'white' South Africans are not aware of their discriminatory actions (Guess, 2006:652). This is one of the biggest challenges South African tertiary education is currently faced with.

## **2.6 Critical inquiry**

Critical inquiry into the different forms of social structures within tertiary institutions is necessary in order to assess the manner in which action can be taken to address equity and redress. Van Wyk (2005:6) highlights how knowledge production, internal bureaucracy and rethinking fundamental change are seen to be some of the examples that need to be investigated in order to make sense of the context in which transformation is set to take place and to determine whether it is possible for transformation to take place within these tertiary institutions. Oloyede (2009:427) recognises that there has been an increase of black students and staff at higher education institutions since the first democratic elections. Opportunities are therefore being created in which students from racially and culturally diverse environments can interact with one another. The hope remains that these academic environments will foster students who are not only academically successful, but who are also prepared for citizenship and have been given the tools to enhance education for economic, social and scientific progress in which the breaking down of previous barriers of discrimination is at the fore. What remains an unfortunate reality, however, is that although an increase in numerical representation of black students and staff is evident, "meaningful

inter-group interaction” (Oloyede, 2009:247) is largely absent. This kind of interaction is what Oloyede (2009) believes to be the critical ingredient when it comes to learning about different perceptions. Therefore, the realities in which diverse groups interact and the readings of how we see each other in these social environments are possibly “at the core of the critical issues of transformation of public higher education institutions” (Oloyede, 2009:247).

Thaver (2010:146) brings an interesting comparison into the discussion on institutional cultural transformation when he likens the struggle for meaningful transformation to modern humans’ suffering under the deepening condition of ‘homelessness’. This has particular relevance to many South Africans’ experience in which the formation of modern South Africa emerged from “the aftermath of colonialism (land dispossession, conquest, expropriation, etc.) and apartheid (mass removals and the group areas act, Bantustans, etc.)” (Thaver, 2010:146). Presently, the struggle to maintain or rather preserve higher education institutional culture is brought into question, as the preservation of such a culture could and does presently exclude many students and staff members from feeling at home at certain, if not most, tertiary institutions. Like Oloyede (2009), Thaver (2010) too admits that democratic policy changes have allowed demographic shifts to take place; however, the main concern continues to be how tertiary institutions can find ways in which new students who “are in an asymmetrical relation to the institution’s culture are made to feel ‘a sense of belonging’” (Thaver, 2010:147).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter transformation was used as a broad concept in which to anchor the theoretical framework in which the study is situated. It is important to see how transformation is linked to educational development and how this feeds into concepts regarding social justice. From these theoretical concepts the investigation into the attitudes and perceptions of lecturers regarding a potential diploma course become valuable notions for understanding and problematising these views. In the next section I contextualise the study by looking at the environment in which the Department of Visual Arts is situated in relation to it being part of SU as well as the university’s historical past and how it has chosen to situate itself in the present.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

#### 3.1 Introduction

It is necessary to contextualise SU in light of South Africa's recent past. 'Recent' remains a relative term, but many have come to believe that South Africa, at the time of the study being 21 years into democracy, is yet to grow into a mature civil society. The pains of this growth are evident in the South African education institutional culture where institutional racism is still a reality. In this past year, 2015, many students from university campuses all over South Africa have raised their voices to talk about their lived experiences of the continued effects of colonialism and apartheid. A group of students<sup>3</sup> at SU specifically has highlighted how the language Afrikaans is still used in their environment as a language not of inclusion but as a language that serves to safeguard and re-establish Afrikaner hegemony. The effects of this are not only felt by students in their social environments, but have also been highlighted as affecting their academic progress.

In this chapter I discuss the institutional landscape prior to the current South African democratic dispensation, how this relates to tertiary education nationally as well how the social and academic landscape of SU and the Department of Visual Arts fits into this narrative historically and presently.

#### 3.2 The former institutional landscape

South African higher education historically is understood to be defined by its segregated past in which tertiary institutions were not only divided according to race, but were also separated according to different kinds of knowledge production. South African higher education systems were separated into two mutually exclusive types of institutions: universities and technikons. These institutions were further divided into eight different government departments. To understand the nature in which these institutions were divided prior to democracy (1994), Bunting (2002:65) has classified these institutions under broad categories, namely 'historically white / historically black' and 'universities/technikons'. Under the division 'historically white university' a further sub-division is given: historically white

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<sup>3</sup> This group is called "Open Stellenbosch" and they are "A collective of students and staff working to purge the oppressive remnants of apartheid in pursuit of a truly African university" (Facebook 2015).

Afrikaans-medium universities. SU historically falls under both of these categories. Evidently what the apartheid government did through constructing these divides was to create systems of separate development that separated people into distinct boundaries so that social interaction between racial and cultural groupings was minimal. Not only was there a divide racially and in terms of the nature of knowledge production, but also according to language and economic status. This is closely related to both race and knowledge production, as the apartheid government deemed the white, Afrikaans and English universities to be superior and in so doing set them up to represent institutional norms.

Historically, white Afrikaans-medium universities were run by executives and councils who established a strong support for the apartheid government, becoming one of their primary ideological characteristics. This was in line with government's own ideological viewpoints, according to which it was believed that universities were 'creatures of the state'. This made their primary function to be of service to government. One of the policies that these universities firmly established was to implement government's race-based policies. In support of the government systems historically white Afrikaans-medium universities saw their alignment with government ideologies and policies as a key aspect of their survival. Their student population became the main supply for government recruitment into civil service and the economic labour market (business sectors), which were in favour of white-owned businesses. This also played a significant role in terms of their financial support and it was therefore a mutually beneficial relationship (Bunting, 2002:66).

Inevitably, the high level of support that these universities offered to the apartheid government had a direct impact on their academic, social and governance cultures. Bunting (2002:66–65) defines these institutions as instrumentalist, which in this case is seen as an educational institution that regards its core business as "the dissemination and generation of knowledge for a purpose defined or determined by a socio-political agenda. Knowledge is not regarded as something which is good in itself and hence worth pursuing for its own sake". Knowledge therefore is very specifically used and generated for the purposes of a distinct social, economic and political goal. Jansen (2001:4, cited in Bunting, 2002:67) describes such institutions as lacking in critical discourse in more public spheres, especially with regard to social and human concerns. Jansen even goes so far as to say that "there is a pervasive and narrow problem solving, application-based pedagogy and research, but not much of a standing back and posing of critical questions in an attempt to understand, probe, disrupt

official policy or standard practice” (Jansen cited in Bunting, 2002:68). This statement rings true in today’s educational context and even more so in these historically white institutions. Their commitment to the apartheid state was therefore absolute. After the democratisation of South African education, however, these institutions’ loyalties had come into question and the shift was a difficult one to make, as these institutions had committed to the previous government in a very serious way (Bunting, 2002:68).

The political transition that took place in 1994 represents what is called a ‘pacted transplacement’. This term is defined within democratic rhetoric as a transition in which both apartheid regime elites and opposition elites come together to decide on the collapse of the old regime. The new political and economic landscape into which South Africa entered was reached by means of a compromise, as it aimed to protect existing property relations but also included the majority of South Africans in the political system. This protection meant that most white South Africans could continue their lives as usual, only making the occasional shift to allow for the new freedom that was afforded to black South Africans. Historical white universities profited from this compromise, as they could retain their support from their benefactors – these being predominantly white business owners – and still benefit from the state. However, pressure surmounted at these universities to take on a radical transformative role by reconstructing their institutional body to be more representative of the demographics of all South Africans, and this called for them to yet again remain in close relationship with the new democratic government and the policies this government created (Reddy, 2004:28–30). Transformation was therefore as much of a concern then as it is now.

In retrospect, the location of higher education in the sphere of civil society and the manner in which transition took place placed universities in quite a strong position, in comparison to the state, to either continue to perpetuate the social relations inherited by apartheid or to radically help change them. The process of transforming the social and academic arena of tertiary education has proven to be very slow, relatively speaking, as reality did not meet many of the expectations of those who struggled against apartheid. Reddy (2004:34) explains the context of these expectations as follows:

[D]ue to the high regard a university education is given by impoverished communities who historically had very little access to higher education, and the role black students played in the Anti-Apartheid struggle, both specialists and ordinary citizens have strong views on what is needed to change higher education institutions.

The majority of South African citizens are concerned about student access, affordable education, the kinds of knowledge produced, curriculum design, standards, and the type of graduates exiting universities.

### 3.3 The current institutional landscape

SU's *Strategy for teaching and learning 2014–2018* (SU, 2013)<sup>4</sup> is a document set up to operationalise the university's vision as it has been set out in other policy documents. It reflects on the context of higher education in South Africa and its intention to become representative of the diverse population of the country. From this understanding the document also sets out to define SU's expectation of its graduates. Although the largest part of the document is dedicated to the university's graduate attributes, it also focuses and incorporates its understanding of teaching and learning within this environment. This focus was developed in conjunction with the Stellenbosch University Institutional Intent and Strategy of 2012–2016. This plan "requires all sections of the University to enhance the knowledge base, staff and student diversity, student success and systemic sustainability" (SU, 2013:2).

The *Strategy for teaching and learning 2014–2018* admits that the institution still struggles with identity issues. The document states the following (SU, 2013:4):

[T]he University continues to grapple with, on the one hand, maintaining a *unique identity* [own emphasis] and, on the other hand, becoming more accessible to all, specifically in terms of diversity among students and staff. This places the spotlight on language as a medium of instruction, as a challenge as well as a potential source of richness.

In light of SU's historical position, the question that needs to be contextualised here is what is this *unique identity* that SU seeks to up hold? In admitting that it may cause conflict in terms of accessibility, how is this *unique identity* being transferred through bureaucratic systems, knowledge production and staff and student bodies? The document links its *unique identity* with the issue of language. Language therefore forms part of the question of accessibility and inclusivity, as language is not only linked to the institution's past, but also to current policy making (SU, 2013:4).

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<sup>4</sup> This document has not been made policy.

SU continues to state in this document that it has an important role to play in addressing a multitude of socio-cultural, educational and economic challenges South African society is faced with (SU, 2013:4). Yet within in its management and student and staff bodies these issues are not being addressed pertinently enough. It can be argued that SU is not able to effectively reduce its predominantly white, Afrikaans student and staff population, because of its historical past and the repercussions of still safeguarding the Afrikaans language,<sup>5</sup> which it explicitly links to Afrikaans culture in SU's language policy.<sup>6</sup> This is further highlighted in the student demographics, which in 2015 was represented by 62% white, 17% coloured, 17,7% black and 2,6% Indian students (SU, 2015).

In the Department of Visual Arts, which is the focus of this study, the student population is even more disparately represented and the lecturing staff is represented by only one black lecturer. It is evident that in a place that is largely occupied by a particular group, culturally or racially, this group will be the most powerful in terms of affecting change. In this case change continues to be validated in policy documents such as SU's Institutional Intent and Strategy, which states that it creates "inclusive and diverse experiences for our students and staff members to unleash their full potential" (SU, 2013). In an educational context, change cannot remain only a theoretical concept, but must be effectively put into practice to utilise change. However, as rightly stated by Freire (2003:62), change cannot be utilised in the same vein as using the same instruments of alienation (in this case language and institutional culture) in what SU considers an effort to liberate.

A relevant issue raised in the *Strategy for teaching and learning* is a pertinent challenge that not only SU is faced with, but also South African education in general, relating to the gap that exists between secondary and tertiary education. The document highlights how many learners in primary and secondary education do not receive the same advantages when it comes to developing skills, knowledge and attitudes, which are said here to ensure access to tertiary education. The document also acknowledges that the reform of general education is not the core purpose of higher education. It includes a viewpoint in which it admits that SU needs to be realistic about what it can achieve: "Finding creative ways to meet the challenges of

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<sup>5</sup> The University's language policy states that "*Culturally* Afrikaans is a standard language that has functioned as an academic language for decades and that is a national asset, being a fully developed cultural language. The University is committed to the utilisation, safeguarding and advancement of the academic potential of Afrikaans as a means of empowering a large and diverse community. This includes a significant group from educationally disadvantaged communities" (SU, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Home language representations at SU currently stand at: Afrikaans 42.3%, Afrikaans and English (bilingual) 1,1%, English 44,2%, Xhosa 3,2%, other official South African languages 5,3%, other 3,9% (SU, 2015)

inadequate schooling preparation remains a task for the higher education sector” (SU, 2013:4). Although the issue is important and relevant, I agree with Pongratz (2005:155–156) that in order to overcome these challenges “a pedagogy informed by critical orientation cannot be satisfied neither with bringing about harmonious integration into bourgeois society, nor by viewing pedagogic institutions simply in terms of their efficiency, functionality, or instrumental utility”. The goal to meet these challenges is therefore centred on pedagogic praxis. In this case creative ways to meet these challenges must come from the students themselves who live in the reality of this institutional oppression.

### **3.4 Academic requirements and curriculum**

In order to understand how pedagogical praxis can be used to meet the challenges of institutional transformation it is important to be familiar with the theoretical background in which knowledge is produced. As noted previously in this chapter, SU has in the past been used as a site for the maintenance and preservation of Afrikaner nationalism. In its present position it can be argued that although it has moved away from its previous nationalist tendencies, certain remnants of this past can still be found in this institutional landscape. Within this context it is necessary to place the lens on the curriculum being taught in its various departments, as this forms the theoretical and practical backbone in which students are educated. Within the curriculum certain elements must be carefully problematised to see how it is being used to ideologically further the racial and social transformation agenda to which SU has committed itself.

The Department of Visual Arts at SU has committed itself to the introduction of a potential diploma course. The university admission requirements presently require students to achieve a 60% aggregate, as well as to submit a portfolio of their original work in order to be accepted to or considered for the degree BA in Visual Arts. These entrance requirements are presently proving to be an obstacle for many learners who wish to study this degree. Many of these learners come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

The purpose of the diploma course would then be to bridge this access gap. In this way it would cater for students from a wider social standing by making the entrance requirements for their National Senior Certificate (NSC) a diploma pass instead of a bachelor’s pass. Moreover, it would hopefully increase racial and social diversity in the department. When addressing issues of academic transformation there is often an association made by academics

that by allowing more black students into an academic environment there would possibly be a lowering of academic standards. This notion of academic excellence or merit in the academy and the determining of who belongs in these institutions cannot be separated from their racial embeddedness (Howard, cited in Dei & Kempf, 2006:50).

A relevant question to ask, as Herman (1995:265) points out, is whether it is fair to continue to use selection systems for higher education in a country where, for the larger part of South Africa's history, education selection systems have been highly unequal, favouring the privileged white minority. In other words the argument when introducing a potential diploma course is then not to reaffirm the assumption that black students will more than likely be of a lower academic standard and unable to cope with the degree course in comparison to white students (hooks, 2003:91). By implementing a potential diploma course SU Department of Visual Arts attempts use it to serve as a recognition of the unequal educational practices that continue to benefit a privileged minority. The diploma course aims to become a development programme that serves to dismantle unequal educational access practices.

The content of this potential diploma course also becomes an important aspect of dismantling ideas centred on the progress of black students. Presently in the Department of Visual Arts the curriculum is centred on a Euro-American curriculum that places the self at the centre. This curriculum structure often disregards the communities situated around the university town, rendering them as unimportant, and very little interaction with these communities therefore takes place except in some graphic design courses. Although some modules are taught with a specific focus on South African visual culture, the work being produced speaks of the isolation in which this department is situated. The curriculum also reflects the lecturing staff's research focus and the students for which they are catering, which continues to be a predominantly white student body.

The introduction of aspects of decolonisation would seem to be of utmost importance in such a new course, as it seeks to recognise the complexity of identities in their present situativeness and acknowledges that colonialism has not ended. From this premise an anticolonial curriculum would seek to actively name, track, isolate and resist ongoing colonial<sup>7</sup> relations such as are found at SU (Howard, cited in Dei & Kempf, 2006:46). Here I would like to argue that by including anticolonial thought processes in the curriculum

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<sup>7</sup> "Colonial refers to anything imposed and dominating rather than that which is simply foreign and alien" (Howard, in Dei & Kempf, 2006:48).

students would be able to enter into a discussion about racial categories and boundaries that challenge students and lecturing staff to not fall into the trap of using commonplace understandings of race to render white privilege as invisible (Howard, cited in Dei & Kempf, 2006:48).

Where anticolonial thought is not only preoccupied with race, in the SU context it is an important factor, as the invisibility of race and race-related issues lead to black students having to assimilate. This understanding of race often allows students to fall into myths portrayed by a false sense of belonging brought by assimilation into the dominant institutional culture. An anticolonial curriculum would therefore challenge Eurocentric<sup>8</sup> discourses to bring to light the emancipation of indigenous intellectual and political knowledge systems. Anticolonial in its theoretical approach studies the relations formed by colonial and re-colonial enterprises and the implications these imperial structures hold for “processes of knowledge production and validation, the understanding of indigeneity, and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics” (Dei & Kempf, 2006:2).

In the decolonisation process an importance focus is also placed on indigenous knowledge systems, which identifies the value that these system hold in the reclaiming of both the past and the present. Indigenous knowledge systems have been defined as “an outcome of interactions that occur among families and communities” (Wane cited in Dei & Kempf, 2006:99). Through the identification of knowledge systems that are unique to every culture, processes of decolonisation can be put into motion by revisiting a certain culture’s creative initiatives in history. Decolonisation also calls for a redefinition regarding the social environments and the cultural universe in which colonised people are situated in the present (Wane cited in Dei & Kempf 2006:99). Although decolonisation can be viewed as a somewhat utopian ideal, it adds value to aspects of anticolonial education, as it encourages students to look outside the ‘normality’ of Western knowledge production.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter the contextualisation of SU’s Department of Visual Arts with regard to how it is historically positioned as well as its efforts to transform gives a backdrop to how the research question can be aligned and interpreted. In the next chapter I flesh out the

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<sup>8</sup> Eurocentric knowledge is seen to be characterised by dominant academic discourses presented as objective and universal (Howard cited in Dei & Kempf, 2006:50).

methodological frameworks that were utilised to formulate and interpret the research outcomes.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

Having set the theoretical backdrop in which this research took place, it is now necessary to introduce the research and methodological approaches that were utilised in this study. As with any research conducted in the social sciences, truth claims and validity of data and findings are always contested issues. However, research conducted in the social sciences, although remaining largely interpretive, aims to shed light on certain issues and areas of interest that highlight some of the social conditions and concerns in which the research is being conducted.

In this chapter I discuss how I have positioned my research within certain research approaches and paradigms. I also elaborate on the research design I adopted to conduct this study, the ways in which I have chosen to sample and collect data as well as some of the ethical concerns that inevitably form part of the research concern.

#### 4.2 Research approach

An interpretive qualitative research approach was adopted for this study, as truth claims cannot be assumed by mere speculation. The primary concern in interpretive research is to develop understandings of and discover how people construct meaning. The manner in which this can be achieved is by familiarising oneself with a particular social setting. Meaning in this instance is related to the research questions being posed, and therefore a reading and understanding of how different institutions engage with their attitudes to and understanding of transformation in higher education are pivotal and become the central thought. The study therefore incorporated data from interviews with different lecturing staff from SU and CPUT.<sup>9</sup>

It is evident that within each tertiary institutional setting certain viewpoints are adopted that become synonymous with the social and academic setting in which it is situated. Understanding different viewpoints from the perspective of the people occupying a specific

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<sup>9</sup> The core focus was on the interviews conducted with the SU lecturing staff and students, but to gain a wider perspective from universities who have either offered a diploma course in the past or who are still doing so I interviewed staff from this other institution.

environment is of utmost importance in an interpretive research approach. The lecturing staff selected were chosen specifically because they are affiliated to the Department of Visual Arts in each respective institution. Transformation, as applied to the multiple readings it entails, is often and in most cases affiliated to social action in some way. Meaningful social action is also correlated to how people attach subjective meaning to their own social actions. This means that actions are never seen as unintentional, but are always acted out with purpose and intent. Social life therefore exists as people experience it and give meaning to it (Neuman, 2003:76–77). Keeping this in mind it will also give a greater understanding of how I interpreted the research and each of the interviewees' responses to my research questions. Interpretive social science sees facts as fluid, but also embedded within a meaning system. Facts can therefore not be impartial, objective and neutral, and ambiguity must be accepted within the research process (Neuman, 2003:79–80).

### **4.3 Research design**

#### **4.3.1 Case study research**

Case study research is concerned with doing comprehensive and thorough investigations into current social phenomenon (Yin, 2009:18). Data is gathered utilising a diverse selection of sources. A case study can focus on an individual person, an event, a social activity, group, organisation or institution, making the scope for research possibilities endless yet specific at the same time (Kiddie, 2006:3). Case studies can also form part of comparative research. Here the research focus is on similarities and differences between units; “comparison is central to the very acts of knowing and perceiving” (Neuman, 2003:422).

In this study SU's Department of Visual Arts was the focus and the other institutions investigated (Department of Music, SU, and CPUT) formed the comparative basis. The aim of this research project was to understand how attitudes and perceptions regarding transformation influence its actual outworking in the Department of Visual Arts. In other words, can these attitudes and perception determine how transformation is implemented in this department? As indicated in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3, SU remains a racially homogenous environment where 62% of the student population consists of white students. Although numerical transformation is important, a central part of transformation also leans on changing people's consciousness. This aids in breeding a critical conscience that can understand many

different people's perspectives. The Department of Visual Arts however, reflects SU's social and racial demographics.

#### **4.3.2 Sample selection and data collection**

In this study I interviewed seven lecturers from the Department of Visual Arts at SU. I selected the interviewees by sending out an email and participants could volunteer to do the interview or I individually approached those who did not respond to the email. The interviewees had the right to refrain from participating in this study. I based my questions on SU's *Strategy for teaching and learning*. I used this document as it highlighted some of the key points of discussion regarding change and transformation at SU.

With regard to the other institutions I also sent out an email explaining the premise of my study. I was in contact with the particular institutions' course convener (diploma courses). This liaison put me into contact with individuals who they thought would be suitable for this research study. I interviewed two lecturers from CPUT and one lecturer from the Department of Music at SU.

I used the format of an interview, because as Yin (2009:106) argues, it is an essential source of information for a case study. The questions form part of a guided conversation and therefore the interview makes way for participants to elaborate as far as they are willing. The aim was to make the process as fluid as possible.

##### **4.3.2.1 Questions presented to lecturers at SU**

###### **Participants' background**

1. When did you start lecturing at the Department of Visual Arts?
2. What do you lecture and what are some of the other responsibilities you carry in this department other than lecturing?
3. What has your teaching experience been like here in comparison to the other places at which you have lectured?
4. What are some of your favourite aspects of being a lecturer here?

### ***Strategy for teaching and learning***

5. The university has recently updated its *Strategy for teaching and learning*. In this document the university gives certain examples of what it would like its graduate attributes to be centred on. Are you aware of these attributes?
6. What has been the most important one of the four attributes that you have incorporated into your teaching curriculum?
7. Also in this document the university recognises that the primary role of tertiary education is not the reform of general education. However, it does acknowledge that the university has a role to play in the development of creative ways to meet the challenges of a struggling primary and secondary education sector. What has been some of the ways in which the Department of Visual Arts has had a role to play in this development?

### **Point of view**

8. In what way do you think the Department of Visual Arts can play an integral part in assisting the academic, social and economic gaps that seem to be present between secondary and tertiary education?
9. The document also highlights the university's continuous struggle with issues regarding diversity. Do you see this as a struggle that we also face in the Department of Visual Arts?
10. In what ways would you say that a lack of diversity is most prevalent in our immediate context?
11. If the university would introduce an undergraduate diploma course in this learning environment, what would your feelings be towards this?
12. Do you think that a diploma course could be a good working model to combat the issues that were highlighted by the university in the *Strategy for teaching and learning*?

#### **4.3.2.2 Questions for lecturers at CPUT**

##### **Background questions**

1. When did you start lecturing here?
2. What do you lecture?
3. What are some of the other responsibilities you hold in your department other than lecturing?

##### **Questions relating to the institution**

4. What is the most important part of the curriculum you teach?
5. How has the institution changed since it merged in 2005?
6. How has this aided transformation?
7. Was this a positive change?
8. Did the university offer courses and degree programmes in Graphic Design and Jewellery Design before its merger? And if so when were these courses established?
9. Does the department offer any kind of bridging courses to aid students to study here?

##### **Observations**

10. On average how many students do you have in your classes?
11. What do the racial, cultural and gender demographics look like in your classes?
12. How do you see the arts in playing a role in development and educational transformation?
13. Can you see its impact on the lives of the students you teach?
14. From the students enrolling into the diploma courses you offer, how many of these students continue to do the full degree course?

The responses, opinions and interpretation of these questions listed above became the study's main sources of data.<sup>10</sup> From this data many implicit readings were made where the arguments and opinions expressed were interpreted from the interviewees' lived and personal experiences. In this manner attitudes and perceptions were derived from the information communicated by each participant.

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<sup>10</sup> The interview conducted with the co-ordinator of the diploma course at the Department of Music, SU was conducted without a prepared questionnaire and was conducted as an informal conversation.

Because the main part of this study was conducted in a racially homogenous environment (particularly among the SU Department of Visual Arts lecturing staff), I did not have the luxury of ensuring a racially varied group of participants.

#### **4.4 Capturing data and ethical clearance**

All the participants of this study were provided with a consent form. In this consent form the participants were made aware of the fact that they could ask to review the interview and information gathered. They were informed that if they at any time felt in disagreement with the information recorded they could ask to retract this information. The information was therefore available to all the participants of the study. The information will be erased five years after this degree has been obtained. This research project has obtained ethical clearance from the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee of the Department of Visual Arts of SU.

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

Case study research can fall into empirical qualitative research. Empirical accounts of research “contain demonstrable, testable claims about the world” (Mouton, 1996:190). Within empirical statements there are two types of distinguishable types of statements: descriptive and explanatory. In this regard an interview can contain both (Mouton, 1996:190). When analysing data collected it is important to be able to identify both of these types of statements. An inductive qualitative content analysis was used to guide the analysis process, as recommended by Creswell (2005).

#### **4.6 Validity and trustworthiness**

As the researcher I decided to transcribe the recordings of the interviews myself. This approach allowed me to gain a fuller understanding of the data collected, yet, as the researcher, it is often difficult to remain objective. This can be attributed to the fact that as human beings we add our subjective views to everything with which we interact and can for this reason never stay neutral. However, through a careful method of transcribing the interviews by rereading and re-listening to the material a number of times I hoped to represent a ‘true’ representation of the data.

The interpretation and analysis of the data remain a multi-layered process in which I add my own understandings onto the understandings and thoughts of the interviewees. For this reason

the data findings were presented to a group of participants so that they might discuss and give their interpretations of the findings. This catalytic validity process helped me to assess whether my findings were in fact trustworthy and valid interpretations of the data. This process is often used to see whether participants have in fact been empowered by the process. It aims to see whether there was an understanding of the research and whether this research changed reality while the research was taking place as well as whether the research could be applied beyond the research study to local knowledge production. The process can also be seen as dialogue validity, as the researcher engages in critical discussions about the research findings with the research participants (Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

## CHAPTER 5

### Data findings and discussion

#### 5.1 Introduction

The research conducted in this study paid particular attention to the attitudes and perceptions of lecturing staff regarding making transformation an essential part of the both the curriculum and the lived experiences of those inhabiting the learning environment of SU's Department of Visual Arts. The data presented here and the reactions of the participants can therefore be correlated to an overarching theme of transformation. Within this umbrella theme sub-themes can be identified and related to understandings of equity and redress as well as how the role of the institutional culture of SU is linked to the way in which transformation is understood. These understandings are discussed in the data analysis.

A further analysis of the data collected continued to reveal the importance of social justice through the medium of education. The two sub-themes of critical enquiry and curriculum and support were identified to be platforms on which possible strategies and outcomes for social justice can be discussed. These ideas and understandings are presented and discussed in the data analysis. The research questions formulated for this study was:

*What are the attitudes and perceptions of lecturers regarding a prospective diploma course in the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University in the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University?*

The sub-research question was formulated as follows:

*What do these attitudes and perceptions of lecturers reveal about the teaching and learning and broader context in which the prospective diploma course will be implemented?*

Information that did not add to substantiating the research question was removed, which added to the simplification of the coding process. The participants consisted of lecturing staff from two universities and three different departments. I interviewed ten participants, however, I was only able to use nine of the interviewees' data. To protect the identities of the participants I coded the participants as lecturers 1 to 9. The perceptions and attitudes of this small selection of lecturers cannot be generalised to all lecturers of departments and institutions in general.

## 5.2 Findings and discussion

In the sections that follow a discussion is presented of the first identified theme of transformation. A potential diploma course has been identified as one of the tools that can be utilised to implement a certain understanding of transformation in action. The sub-themes in this section, namely equity and redress, and institutional culture, have been identified as the thematic ways in which this potential diploma course is understood and discussed. Social justice was the second theme identified and to support this discussion two sub-themes, namely critical enquiry, and curriculum and support, have been incorporated into the discussion to give a broader understanding of how the participants understand the implications of the inclusion of such a diploma course into the learning environment of the Department of Visual Arts and what this meant.

### 5.2.1 Transformation

From the onset it is important to include the researcher's personal definition of transformation as discussed in Section 2.2 in Chapter 2. Transformation is viewed from a lens in which it enables development to take place. The goal of development in an educative environment is to give autonomy and agency to communities and individuals through access to knowledge and skills, thereby enabling social justice by instilling values of recognition and redistribution.

In the next section the data that is analysed fall under the theme of transformation, and is discussed according to two identified sub-themes, namely equity and redress, and institutional culture.

#### 5.2.1.1 Equity and redress

Lecturer 1 said,

*Personally I think more could be done there. And that's why I think the diploma course should be implemented ... Not only because it will include for example those students who are hugely talented in art but then they don't have matric exemption ... or ... they don't have exemption to do a bachelor's degree because they don't have the ... right subjects on school level and we can't except those students because of ... that. And we have had to reject many students from the previously disadvantaged groups. If we offer*

*the diploma course there between tertiary between school and university we could also include those students.*

Lecturer 2 had the following to say on this topic:

*Shoo, hey the thing is also again with being ad hoc staff I am not always very aware of the department's sort of role in that kind of stuff [administrative admission requirements], so for me I am actually pretty clueless.*

Lecturer 4 raised concerns about how wider access could be achieved:

*So in that sense I definitely think the Art department should actively think of ways to address the numbers but I think one should also just keep the larger kind of picture in mind as well because I think the university already has transformed quite a bit from where it started.*

She continued to say:

*That's the other thing ... what is the department doing to reach out to schools? That's really important because how are you going to get people if people don't know?*

Action with regard to equity and redress was identified to be an important element of transformation and Lecturer 9 had this to say:

*And you know if I look at the kids in the higher certificate ... they're so excited and ... so eager and keen and then I look at the BMus students and half of them are demoralised already. We're building up in the higher certificate and the kids in the BMus are being crushed.*

In the SU context the potential diploma course is understood to be one that will be implemented to widen access to this university environment. Lecturer 7 explained how this is different to how diplomas work at universities of technology:

*Where a shift has happened is that instead of it being that based on the colour of your skin you go to a specific institution, now [it] has become more an academic decision. So based on the type of matric that you have, so if you get a the bachelor's matric you get to go to university, if you get a diploma matric you get to go to [a] university of technology or you go to an FET college. Maybe what [has] come out of this is there's this constant push and pull between people who say, listen if we want to be a university then we need to X but the fact of the matter is we're not a university, we [are] a*

*university of technology, so yes, ... we try to push an increase in the conceptual but with the balance of realising that we [are] still [a] very technical space. So we need to equip people to be able to do something at the end of the day but to also understand why they're doing it, it's just that balance.*

### **5.2.1.2 Institutional culture**

Lecturer 1 spoke about some of the ways in which an institution can build up certain ideologies and unprecedented institutional norms over a span of time:

*I discovered what it was all about and how drawing is at a place where you can challenge, where you can push the boundaries, your own boundaries, where you can in fact challenge dogma. The dogmas of art, the way art becomes ... there are trends in art and it's very easy for students to work according to those trends and to focus on certain styles and create pleasing kinds of style. An institution develops over a number of years for example a kind of what is called institutional norms, you know? Where a certain or maybe one or two certain forms of making art become the preferences of all. ... and it becomes the norm and ... the students pay quite a high price because they lose their own voice and they simply learn to acquire the voice of the institution.*

Lecturer 9 also reiterated this when she spoke about and challenged how an institution can be concerned with the lowering of standards when dealing with transformation and how this affects ideas surrounding the institutional culture of a place:

*You will need to convince your staff and that for us was a battle. It was several meetings of opposition. We don't want these people in our building, we don't, you know. They were prepared to tolerate them in the certificate programme prior to that but how are they going to get jobs? Easy, all of my diploma students are working. Last year's diploma students chose not to study further but they [are] all creating work for themselves. They starting community projects, they are economically better off than when they came in ... Yes, they were concerned about the lowering of standards. You know when I ended up being in a lot of ... fights with staff about their attitude and now we have no problems. It also gave us guidelines as to how to work with and prepare our students when they land in that position.*

She continued to say:

*You know there are always going to be staff here at this university who can't conceive, their life is an ivory tower here and they really genuinely have no idea how poor people*

*really are. And so they have no idea why they would want to come here and study here and how we could possibly help them other than the next research paper that they have to do. This is their reality and I learnt grace with such people in the process. I initially got very angry ... but you learn grace, that's just how they are and you have to show them you won't have to deal with that, you know I'll deal with that or someone will deal with that ... and there is always someone willing to deal with that and to redress.*

Lecturer 5 talked about the idea of upholding university standards when she said the following:

*The thing is it's also I think determined by universities' criteria for students. So you have to have matric [and] you have to have above 60 ... aggregate ... and then your portfolio also has to comply [with] university standards we encourage. If you [are] limited to someone who [has] a matric and [who achieved] above 60, ... I think that kind of creates that criteria and to break that, that would have to be come from above, but then I don't know if someone who doesn't have matric wouldn't be able to pass Visual Studies. So ... definitely.. that kind of bridging diploma course can help a matric who's ... poor who maybe just passed [and it] can help them improve their ... academic skills and get them to then enter first year.*

She continued to say:

*But to help those who maybe just passed matric to improve their skills but then there will have to be an entry exam that they [will] have to write ... once they've got their diploma ... or they will have to get a certain mark or something. I suppose they won't pass if they not, you must make that at such a standard that they won't pass their diploma course if they're not ready to enter into first year. So that must be the criteria.*

Lecturer 4 discussed how bureaucratic systems can influence the way in which policy is implemented at an institution:

*I mean it's a bureaucratic system so ja, policies need to be in place ... That's also why the people who think up these things are not the people who are going to have to teach and implement it. And very often I think those people think differently and then I mean if there's conflict at that level already or conflicting ideas then how's it really going to be implemented in any kind of effective way?*

Lecturer 6 introduced an interesting concept of geographical position and how the context in which an institution is situated can influence an institution's student as well as staff intake:

*But, what I was going to say before you turned the recorder on was coming in from having lived in the States, especially a city like [city in the USA], the college that I taught at there was mostly white in a very predominantly African American city and it's another head scratcher. So it's like why is this happening? And diversity push after diversity push on the institutions' side to try and get a more economically, racially, gender-based and age group-based diversity of people. So diversity wasn't like just a racial diversity but a geographic, cultural and everything diversity and they really, really battled but at the end of the day quite frankly I would imagine it would be a similar dilemma [for] Stellenbosch: who can afford to go and the people who would be interested in becoming artists and who would be able to afford to become artists are people from a certain demographic which is not necessarily going to make everyone one particular age, colour, gender but there is definitely some particular trends going on. So in [city in the USA] it was mostly white women of a certain age.*

Lecturer 6 also revealed an interesting way of viewing white privilege in a South African context:

*On the flip side of that coming back to South Africa in particular the baggage that white previous apartheid privilege people have to deal with mind you ... my generation. It's a heavy history to bear. And those statues<sup>11</sup> are bloody reminders of that. I also want the bloody Rhodes thing down but I don't want it to be destroyed. I think it should be replaced. So there's oppressors and there oppressed and that's equally heavy. Trust me it's awful, and I think that ... it affects the way that I have a tolerance or a lack of tolerance for privileged white students here at Stellenbosch because no one knows how to sweep the fucking floor. I swear it's still a servant culture.*

Lecturer 1 felt that although some students from previously disadvantaged groups had studied at the department, she was not sure how they experienced the environment:

*I am certainly also aware of the fact that I can't really say that ... a hundred per cent of students who have studied here up till now from previously disadvantaged groups ... were absolutely happy here. In fact I remember a black student who dropped out but then I also remember the first black student and how incredibly happy he was and what a wonderful experience it was for him. So those people I think you know I think they go out and they give us a good name.*

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<sup>11</sup> A reference to the Cecil John Rhodes statue being removed at the University of Cape Town.

### 5.2.1.3 Discussion

When discussing the possibility of a potential undergraduate diploma course in the Department of Visual Arts at SU, most lecturers responded in a positive way indicating that there was a need for some kind of social and educational transformation to take place. The learning environment remains predominately 'white' in terms of both the student and the lecturing staff bodies. In the past efforts have been made to introduce learners from different social and racial groups to this learning environment. What is telling from what Lecturer 1 said, in the sub-theme equity and redress, is that many students are still being excluded from this learning environment because of the academic access requirements issued to the Department of Visual Arts by the academic administration of SU. The need for social, racial and economic transformation is clear. If the Department of Visual Arts remains a racially and culturally homogenous learning environment it will isolate itself from the communities in which it is situated and from the stark realities the majority of the South African population face, as Lecturer 3 pointed out in the sub-theme equity and redress.

*But my gut would say that what we need to focus on is racial diversity because there is in Stellenbosch already a racially diverse population. And not just at the university, which I think is still largely a fairly white institution.<sup>12</sup>*

These disparities within the Department of Visual Arts become the social and academic underpinnings for a need to radically transform the lived experiences of not only the students in this context but also the lecturing staff and the new students the department is hoping to attract through the potential undergraduate diploma course. Waghid (2000:102) sees transformation in higher education as a process of new knowledge production that entails reflexive action. This action means looking at new ways of seeing and approaching old problems by deconstructing, reconstructing and a constantly exploring surface level challenges by responding to a future he refers to as not yet imagined.

As mentioned before, most of the lecturers at the Department of Visual Arts were in agreement that there was a definite need to address issues relating to equity and redress, in particular the lack of racial diversity. What the interviews revealed, however, was that there was very little knowledge of steps being taken to achieve goals pertaining to a more racially inclusive learning environment by the lecturing staff. What remains important in this instance

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<sup>12</sup> See appendix A

is that among educators there must first be an acknowledgement that transformation, in order to reflect a multicultural and racial society, in any institution will come with fears and an element of vulnerability to change. The biggest fear educators often face is changing their own mindsets (hooks, 1994:38). For this to take place a paradigm shift is required and this shift in consciousness often requires changing not only educational bureaucracies, but also entrenched practices and behaviours (Carrim, 1998:303).

In the Department of Visual Arts many of the lecturers would not regard the environment as one that seeks to intentionally exclude potential students from the learning environment, but as Lecturer 1 said in the sub-theme equity and redress,

*I like to think that the Visual Arts department is quite tolerant, the lecturers and the students towards one another ...<sup>13</sup>*

A tolerant attitude can often hinder social transformation to take place because transformation is not seen as an urgent matter. Because students and staff are already tolerant to one another they might feel that they do not need to critically look at how others are actively being excluded from the learning environment. However, if higher education is seen as an agent for shaping critical and engaging individuals in society, the goal in learning environments such as the Department of Visual Arts must be to equip students and staff members to “initiate, implement and maintain social change” (Van der Merwe, 2000:83). In the past as well as presently higher education institutions have been agents for stability and have been actively engaged in the maintenance of continued institutional norms that serve to perpetuate histories of subordination, especially in the SU context (Van der Merwe, 2000:83). Pre-existent discourses, which often become institutional norms and are difficult to identify if it is the lived reality of an institution, are absorbed into how actions continue to, often unintentionally, serve to effectively disorganise minority identities while coordinating and consolidating white ones (McCarthy, 2003:130).

Often the very mechanisms educators think they are using to liberate become the instruments of alienation. In this case tolerance could be seen as one of these mechanisms. Freire (2003:62) likens liberation to praxis in which action is the reflection of the attitude that one holds and states that if that attitude is one that seeks to liberate, this will be evident in the

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<sup>13</sup> See appendix A

transformative actions that are practised by an institution as well as educators' teaching practices.

Lecturer 4 was concerned that many lecturers in the Department of Visual Arts would not have time to take on additional work because there was considerable pressure on these lecturers to perform academically:

*I think there is going to potentially be resistance from many people just because it's more work they have got to do and you don't have time to do what's already expected of you.<sup>14</sup>*

Lecturer 9, however, felt that it was a necessary sacrifice to make, as she could see how the higher certificate and diploma courses at the Department of Music at SU were actively building their students up and giving them the necessary skills to take back to their communities and effectively use these skills to make a positive change in their own contexts through music educational programmes.

The identified sub-theme institutional culture also revealed how some lecturers are aware of the institutional norms that are present at the Department of Visual Arts and how these influence the work of students, causing problems for the students when they eventually leave the institution. Bartolomé (2004:97) argues that although gaining access and actively creating methods of inclusion in the classroom are often heralded as the most important aspects of transformation, examining educators' own assumptions, values and beliefs and how the ideological underpinnings of their attitudes inform their perceptions and actions becomes the most essential part of transformation through educational development.

In the interviews some of the lecturers revealed that if a potential diploma course were to be incorporated into the teaching and learning environment there was a genuine concern that because these students would come from academically and economically challenging backgrounds there would be concerns about the level at which some learner would enter into the degree with perhaps a lower passing mark. Lecturer 5 said:

*If you [are] limited to someone who [has] a matric and [who achieved] above 60 I think that kind of creates that criteria and to break that, that would have to be come from*

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix A

*above but then I don't know if someone who doesn't have matric wouldn't be able to pass Visual Studies.*<sup>15</sup>

hooks (2003:91) argues that there is fear on both sides. Just as the educators are fearful that the academic standard might drop, the students entering the learning environment might also be caused to fear that they will not be able to attain the high academic standards that are expected of them. These fears, hooks (2003) argues, is as a result of the institution's knowledge production, where knowledge is identified to be structured in a way that often reinforces the dominant culture. Serving the dominant culture at a tertiary institution such as SU is to necessarily assume that most students do not need the academic support afforded to many students who more than likely come from former Model C schools.<sup>16</sup> Many public secondary schools in South Africa do not offer art and design as matriculating subjects. This forms an initial barrier, as the feeder students who are most likely to apply to the Department of Visual Arts more often than not are learners coming from schools who do offer art and design as matriculating subjects. These schools are often previously advantaged public and private schools. Knowledge production in these institutions (both tertiary and secondary) is more inclined to suit the learning needs of students who have been afforded this privilege. Educators who position themselves within the realm of education that serves to liberate in a South African context are those who seek to actively engage in knowledge production that breaks down the barriers present between tertiary and secondary education systems. In this case Waghid (2000:104) argues that redressing barriers to access might require redressing past discrimination and ensuring representation and participation as a violation of the principle of equal access. This means that students who were exposed to limited resources at school level and in this way did not obtain the right entry level matric results to ensure access to higher education were not given the same equal access and opportunity. Here he argues that equality in a context of scarce resources does not imply equal access.

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<sup>15</sup> See appendix A

<sup>16</sup> In 1990 all white schools officially had the legal possibility to enrol black students. These 'white' schools had a choice between three different models of desegregation. Previously 'white' schools therefore became Model A schools, which allowed schools to become private schools; Model B schools, which remained state schools but had an open admission policy to all races; and Model C schools, which functioned as semi-private and semi-state-owned schools. The latter model allowed these schools a certain degree of autonomy from the state. A large degree of 'white' privilege prevailed in these schools. Model C schools were however dissolved in 1996 under the South African Schools Act. These schools were however allowed to maintain certain provisions enabling them to uphold the former character of these schools. This included a high level of autonomy of the governing bodies (Carrim 1998:308–309).

This would include making a concerted effort to include and provide learning opportunities for learners who do not go to schools that provide art and design as matriculating subjects. Lecturer 3 revealed that she felt disinterested in closing the gap between secondary and tertiary education as she felt that helping to bridge the gap belonged to a different intellectual project in which she was not interested:

*I also want to say that I think there is a chasm and a disinterest and I include myself in this category [that] lecturers at university level have in terms of high school education. We see it as belonging to a completely different realm and a completely different intellectual project.<sup>17</sup>*

The institutional culture of SU is also historically associated with an Afrikaner heritage and Afrikaans as a language of instruction continues to be a point of contest. Lecturer 5, however, felt that there is already work being done to accommodate non-Afrikaans-speaking students, but also felt that SU had possibly been labelled an Afrikaans university:

*We have students who can't speak Afrikaans or who don't understand Afrikaans and we accommodate them, so I know it's not an issue for them.<sup>18</sup>*

The geographical location of SU is in a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking area of South Africa and Lecturer 6 felt that this also contributed to student and staff intake. However, to assume that students are comfortable with a language barrier because their lecturer is accommodating them continues to deny the fact that language is not only an academic problem, but also becomes a systemic one when it culturally excludes students from entering the learning environment because of its institutional power. Afrikaans in this learning environment cannot be separated from its historical role in separate development. To acknowledge the power the language has culturally been afforded at SU is to acknowledge the way in which the language was used as a tool for racial discrimination. Although the language Afrikaans cannot only be linked to Afrikaner culture, as it is a language spoken by many black people<sup>19</sup> in South Africa, the form it takes on in this learning environment often actively seeks to (intentionally and unintentionally) be used as a cultural tool of exclusion. Toni (2011:189) argues that although there are opportunities for black students to enter

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<sup>17</sup> See appendix A

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>19</sup> I use black here to refer to all students who are not white. In this instance I am specifically referring to coloured students who predominantly speak Afrikaans as their home language in the Western Cape, South Africa.

tertiary education learning environments, if the lecturing and staff populations do not match the cultural demographics of South Africa these spaces are often still perceived as hostile. SU is often experienced by black and non-Afrikaans-speaking students as a cultural environment that is expressed by a lack of affirmation that often comes from not seeing and interacting with people who look and speak the same language as oneself. To be accommodated in this sense does not offer the same affirmation that is warranted to students who not only speak Afrikaans but who also identify with the cultural aspects of Afrikanerdom.<sup>20</sup> Toni (2011) continues to argue that to accommodate is to believe that recognition and acceptance of black students and students who do not speak Afrikaans are dependent on assimilation into the dominant culture in order to survive (Toni, 2011:190). Drinkwater (2011:1) however, posits that within the visual arts educational environment pedagogical goals should effectively utilize teaching that links the arts to “multiliteracies, multiple ways of knowing and creative problem-solving” (Drinkwater 2011:1). So whilst it is important to accommodate students it is also important to encourage students to be able to use their own cultural and social contexts as a means of defining their educational growth.

hooks (2003:91) suggests that when teaching is seen as a service in which the practice of giving without receiving encompasses the ideological framework of knowledge production it can be viewed as a site of political resistance, as it becomes a counter-narrative against the dominant cultural foundations of an institution. There is often apprehension attached to this kind of teaching. However, this kind of teaching could serve as the basis for a potential diploma course at the Department of Visual Arts.

## **5.2.2 Social justice**

In the next section the data that were analysed fall under the theme social justice and are discussed according to two identified sub-themes, namely critical enquiry, and curriculum and support.

### **5.2.2.1 Critical enquiry**

Lecturer 6 had this to say about the potential diploma course:

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<sup>20</sup> A concept referring to the ideological construction of Afrikaner culture. During apartheid this concept was used to justify black oppression through the belief that white Afrikaners were a superior race.

*Well I think it's a very good investigation to do, because ... one it is needed, and two I think when people, like myself, to not speak in general terms, want to go into Kayamandi or to Gugulethu to involve some of the local artists there in projects we're doing here, it feels a little bit odd because aren't we just visiting and then popping in and popping out with no follow-through and no real inherent structure to involving these people in a sustainable way? It just becomes like a perpetuation of the old South Africa of ... you know, we're just going to spice up our own curriculum with a little bit of this, but actually give you nothing really substantial. And that's a problem.*

Lecturer 3, however, expressed her disconnectedness with this process:

*I loved every minute of doing art at high school. I absolutely thrived in the art class and I hero-worshipped my teacher and it's the reason I am an art historian today. But there is this anomaly, this incongruity that I now think of myself in this isolated intellectual community and as much as I bemoan the standard of writing and thinking of our first-year students I don't do anything about it.*

According to Lecturer 2, the Department of Visual Arts has become a space where art could be discussed for art's sake:

*What's nice about here, it's been very good, like I have taught at other universities where there is a lot more students and that gets quite intense to handle. When you have so many people it gets very difficult to give each person enough attention and I have also taught at private colleges and that's also not as nice because although there the numbers are smaller there is a distinct, I don't know, I get the feeling of like a ... corporation, it's run along a business model, you know, ... you pay to make sure people pass and there is less of an information for information sake or art for art sake thing. Ja, I guess it's really nice to be in an environment where people talk about art all day long. And it's so rare you know, it's really cool.*

Lecturer 7 said she is not so sure that transformation in the lecturing staff bodies is being effectively processed:

*We all write the same matric exam but in one school you will get like a hundred per cent extra support. So you will have a teacher and an assistant and in another school you will have a teacher with fifty students, no assistant, and one with twenty-five and an assistant. So it just makes for very different end results and that's the reality of the situation that we are in. So transformation ... it's such a multifaceted thing and so yes*

*there is transformation in terms of they are now enforcing equity in terms of employing new staff, which means you will probably be able to communicate with your students better because you will speak their language or you will have the ability to communicate with them on another level, but ... how does that filter down. So transformation in terms of human resources, you transforming your staff, how does that filter down I am not sure.*

Lecturer 8 reiterated this when saying:

*Well it [transformation] certainly happened with the student body, [but] where we sit in design at the moment is that we ... still [have] a lot of white staff ... and you can see our faculty, they constantly giving us the demographic breakdown of staff. But we have a lot of white staff, quite a lot [of] women staff, we've got some coloured staff, we've got very few black staff. It's easier for us to recruit black staff from elsewhere in Africa and it's very hard for us to recruit [South] African black staff and the rules around recruitment are now so specific that ... literally when you're writing a job description you might say well you know we're looking for a junior lecturer with a qualification with experience, you know, with a graphic design qualification and experience in online and digital media. We can't find anybody because we get lots of white applicants but we don't get any black applicants. It's really, really tough for us.*

Lecturer 4 felt that some ideas of social transformations perpetuate discourses of South Africa's past:

*It feels like the dominant kind of discourses of the academia is the social transformation that everyone knows it needs to happen in a the country and in education in general ... it feels to me like it's being handled through the same kind of dominant discourses of the past. And I don't know, I think that's a factor that can actually limit the effectivity of any kind of strategy if it just kind of [perpetuates]. It's almost like community interaction, and community development, it's so risky because it's so easy for it to just perpetuate the same kind of discourses, so somehow ... we need new discourses of what education is for and what the potential benefits thereof is too.*

### **5.2.2.2 Curriculum and support**

Lecturer 7 identified the need for a less European curriculum:

*For me it's about changing the face of ... what good design is. So instead of this very Eurocentric ... Swedish design ... it's not very culturally sensitive to where we are. If*

*people can start understanding that design is not about fulfilling those criteria, it's about making beautiful things in any context or where you are. It's a very ... economically driven thing, especially graphic design. It's all about, [as] I like to fondly call it, art that makes our money on the side. So it's [a] very commercial thing, but it could also not be. But essentially what sells is the more sort of standard, you know stuff that conforms to the sort of global standard of what design looks like. But I think ... in South Africa maybe we found our students can realise that what they have to offer could also be quite valuable.*

Lecturer 2, however, sees teaching art as developing students who can think for themselves:

*You know because for a large extent I find teaching art is quite an existential thing in a way because ... it's less about making a really perfect drawing of a fig tree or whatever and more about creating a person who is able to think for themselves.*

Lecturer 3 shared similar sentiments:

*I would say an enquiring mind. I think it's very important to understand the changing nature of education. Students have access to the same resources in terms of knowledge that I have and so fundamentally the classroom setup is no longer about me transferring my knowledge onto them, rather I see the project of my teaching as being focused on encouraging students to think for themselves, wetting their appetite for learning and training them to have enquiring minds to have critical and self-reflective approaches to learning.*

Lecturer 1 feels that it is necessary to use drawing as a language to make the invisible visible in the curriculum:

*And I would place the focus maybe on the application on certain skills in drawing, certain concepts of drawing, certain devices in drawing that needed some development. So I tried to keep that kind of balance where students were free to choose their own concerns and subject matter, to choose ... things that they were interested in. Things that resonated with them in their lives and how they experienced life. So especially towards the end of the course ... I left more room for their own ideas to come to the fore. Those things certainly ... involved some kind of critical viewing or a critical investigation or examination of certain social, political, economic, psychological concerns that they were experiencing at the time or that they were aware of but wanted to develop their awareness in that field. But I ... kind of believe that you ... can really*

*separate those things from the more physical things of drawing, you know the actual making of a mark is not really only a physical making of a mark, it's also about being creative, inventing something, finding, a new visibility for whatever it might be. A kind of language that you develop that the student develop[s] in order to bring what is inside to bring it outside. To make what is invisible ... visible. ...*

Lecturer 4 sees the need to re-evaluate what it means to include indigenous knowledge in higher education curriculums that are based on predominantly Eurocentric models of learning,

*I think that Western way[s] of thinking about what education is for ... the definition of a successful graduate from a higher education institution ... is embedded in a colonial European kind of mindset ... and if you think of capitalist kind of global society where we live in that's still where we are moving towards. So all of those things play in on the larger kind of situation, so it's also not an issue of going back to indigenous knowledge because what indigenous knowledge is in this current era is so different to what people in general in a more stereotypical way would associate with indigenous knowledge. I just think because things change so quickly these days somehow what one offers as education needs to ... work with the quickness of the change.*

Lecturer 7 acknowledged how preconceived ideas can influence teaching in the classroom:

*And again those are the things that are very personal and are people's own philosophies and so those are not things you can enforce. So when I walk into a classroom I might come with some existing knowledge of who these students are who are sitting in front of me that someone else might have no clue of and that's pedagogy, or it influences how you deal with those students and that's not something you can change by just saying you have to change, you have to transform the way you teach.*

Lecturer 9 feels that students also needed academic support because of the academic gap that is present between secondary to tertiary education:

*They are falling further and further behind in what they come to university with and the university can't really drop its academic standards, so the need for assistance is bigger and it's more emotional assistance. The problem is time management and the problem is standards and the need to change the language in their thoughts and the language they write with – that is the biggest challenges that we experience.*

She continued to talk about senior students taking on mentorship roles for the higher certificate and diploma course students as a means to add emotional support:

*We have to provide the mentors with a lot of support because sometimes they forget that they were [also] insecure ... they forget that they had once struggled, but the reason why I want to get the students to do this is because they should remember what it was like to walk in this building and know nothing and be insecure and you know the adaptation problems.*

Lecturer 7 mentioned how the bridging year allows students to adjust to tertiary education:

*It's an interesting occurrence because the idea was that when they go into first year or main stream they should be similar to someone who comes with a better grounding into first year. But what we found now is that they are doing better. They are doing better because they have already dealt with the adjustment issue and bridging their gap between school and higher education. So they [are] a lot more focused.*

Lecturer 9 also confirmed this:

*We find its working. We find that the higher certificate students when they go to first year they say joh the first years are falling around and we are okay because we worked hard last year.*

### **5.2.2.3 Discussion**

Having identified the need for social justice in the Department of Visual Arts through the medium of education, the two sub-themes of critical enquiry and curriculum and support, discussed under the theme social justice, have been recognised as categories to discuss how a potential undergraduate diploma course can be used as a tool for development. In this way social justice is seen as an end goal of development as well as a continuum to strive towards, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Through analysing the data presented from the interviews in the sub-theme critical enquiry it became apparent that there is a definite need to engage with students and staff from different racial and social backgrounds in the Department of Visual Arts. Lecturer 6 said:

*To comprehend something is to live through it ... Now if you introduce your diploma course and this agitation and poo on monuments and people dating and the[n] going*

*home. ... Let's see what happens then. Then there will be some interesting lived experiences ...*<sup>21</sup>

Lecturer 6 is referring to the lived experience that would come with having a more diverse student population. What was revealing about what Lecturer 6 said, in the sub-theme critical enquiry, was that even if she, as a lecturer at the Department of Visual Arts, wanted to engage with the communities around SU, it becomes challenging if there is no correlation between her working environment and the communities with which she wants to engage. The disparity seems to be too vast between the university environment and the communities around it. Even if community projects happen at the university there seems to be very little being done to try to include the students from these communities in the learning environment of the Department of Visual Arts. The work done in those communities ends in disconnect as there are no recruitment processes that allow learners from these communities to become feeder students. Social justice then in its practical outworking is the conscious act of decentralising power by allowing people to make their own decisions in pursuit of personal autonomy and personal development that lead to the fulfilment of a community as well as an individual's basic human rights. Education forms part of this and for social justice to take place in higher education, institutional structures must therefore ensure that a sufficient share of social resources is set aside for individuals on the basis of need (Waghid, 2014:1450).

Widening access through a potential diploma course therefore becomes a means of bridging the academic gap by making it easier for students from a wider socio-economic standing to enter this learning environment. What Lecturer 4 said in relation to this was that the only way for students and staff to engage with students from a different racial, social and economic standing is for them to experience it in the same learning environment:

*It's that experience you need to kind of experience it and feel it before you can latch onto it in some kind of way and in that case I think, bringing it back to a potential diploma course, it would be an opportunity for people to feel and experience something ...*<sup>22</sup>

Fraser (1997:2) also makes this correlation when she says that justice requires both redistribution and recognition. In the potential diploma course's aim to become a transformative remedy to the social and racial injustices of a past oppressive education

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<sup>21</sup> See appendix A

<sup>22</sup> See appendix A

system, the potential diploma course becomes what Fraser (1997:13) terms a restructuring of the underlying generative framework. Transformation is in this way correlated to deconstruction, as it aims to dismantle a previous cultural-valuation structure. At the same time it is also affirmative, as it does not seek to completely destroy the underlying frameworks that generate the educational system found in the Department of Visual Arts. It rather proposes to redress certain injustices by re-evaluating the present underlying frameworks to see whether their meaning and function still perpetuate the injustices of the past, as recommended by Fraser (1997:13). This has particular relevance when thinking of the curriculum that will be offered in this potential undergraduate diploma course.

Some lecturers expressed their concerns regarding the curriculum and felt that it should be based on more of a skills-based learning model and should provide students with the option to not only enter the degree programme, but also to only do the diploma course, acquire a set of skills and leave after their completion of the diploma course. This was expressed by Lecturer 3 when she said:

*I think it's a very good idea but I think it should be useful as a final qualification and not merely as a bridging course and because of this I think it requires very careful consideration specifically in terms of the content because I think it should be a combination..<sup>23</sup>*

She also expressed the need for the diploma course to be one that focuses on including more of South African visual culture. The need to Africanise the curriculum was also a point of discussion when Lecturer 7 expressed the need to change the face of what design means in their own curriculum. She feels that being situated in South Africa, the design curriculum needs to reflect the context in which they are and should not have to conform to Eurocentric ideals of what design means. Lecturer 8 made an interesting observation when she said that having more students from racially and socially diverse backgrounds influences the way the curriculum is understood, as the students all bring with them their own understandings of what the brief meant for them. She illustrated this when saying:

*A lot of the way your brief might be working with say working with particular design principles but what you make in the end is very embedded in context and it might be embedded in personal context or social context or cultural context. So I think that it's*

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<sup>23</sup> See appendix A

*very embedded in the context and the students are given the space to bring who they are, how they speak, what they value into the solution a lot.*<sup>24</sup>

However, the curriculum is also largely dependent on how and who will eventually teach the students in the diploma course, as a curriculum often carries with it the lecturers' own preconceived ideas. Lecturer 4 feels that even in discourses encouraging social transformation, which is what the potential diploma course is hoping to include as well as achieve, these discourses are often handled through the same dominant discourses of the past. She stated that this could perpetuate these dominant discourses. She further stated that while encouraging ideas such as indigenous knowledge in the curriculum, it should be questioned whether the dominant structures are still set in a colonial European mindset. Toni (2011:190) posits that curriculum transformation holds the key to undoing educational borders created by the previous oppressive educational system. Woolman (2001:5) argues that one of these boundaries was brought about by Western competitive individualism in comparison to African traditions of cooperative communalism. Western thought that governs in this individualism often asks of students coming from different cultural backgrounds to reject their own cultures. In terms of understanding the changing, fluctuating and often fluid nature of the cultures in which we are situated, Lecturer 4 felt that education and the curriculum being considered for the potential diploma course had to try to keep up with the quickness of this change.

The anticipation is that the students that will hopefully be attracted by this course will challenge the dominant curriculum by making their lived experiences an important aspect of the curriculum, and that they will add a new dynamic social, racial and cultural change that counters ideas of Western individualism and their own situatedness within it. Looking at new ways to incorporate an inclusive curriculum would be to understand that knowledge doesn't necessarily have to be seen as static but should be viewed from the multiple contexts in which it is situated. Akena (2012:601) argues that knowledge production refers to knowledge that is always knowing. Knowing referring to an incomplete fluctuating state viewing it from the many complex context in which all knowledge systems are produced in in which case it would mean intimately knowing the individual who is taught's context as well as the person instructing or facilitating's context. From this point of view indigenous knowledge cannot be seen as the only solution to inclusive learning but as an understanding that it too is ever

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<sup>24</sup> See appendix A

changing and to challenge the notion of knowledge production by seeing the complexities of knowledge that is founded in legacies of diverse histories and cultures such as we find in South Africa (Akena 2012:602). However, the diploma course should allow these new students to not have to compromise their cultural identities in order to feel a sense of belonging in the department, as was discussed in Chapter 2.

Thaver (2010:150) correlates this to how students perceive the administrators of an institution. Where administrators are open and responsive, students experience low levels of racial tension, hostility and discrimination. This is also reflected in the actions and attitudes of faculty members, as they have a pivotal role to play in creating spaces in which students feel valued. Moreover, 'feeling at home' is when trust and intimacy are established. What this begs for when envisioning a potential diploma course and an important point that emerged from the data is the need to not only reassess the curriculum but to also consider the necessary support systems that should be put into place to support the students entering this learning environment.

Lecturer 9 recognised that in the Department of Music's higher certificate and diploma courses the biggest need of the students is for an emotional support system. They therefore provide their students with mentors and academic support groups. These mentors are often older students from within the same department. This becomes an important part of the development process, as it becomes a system where knowledge and support become a self-generative process in which knowledge does not only form part of a top-down system, but is shared between the different parties participating in it. The students are therefore brought in from the community projects in which the Department of Music is involved. These students are supported by other Music students within the department. The diploma students receive the necessary support to do well and acquire a qualification and skill set to enable them to teach and then to start teaching initiatives in their own context after they have completed their university education.

Lecturer 7 and Lecturer 9 could both testify to the success of their bridging, higher certificate and diploma courses. They said that the students in these programmes often have no problem adapting to the academic requirements of further studies, as they have already gone through adjustment issues. When entering the degree programme, they are accustomed to the academic as well as the social environment.

### 5.3 Conclusion

Highlighting these issues as revealed by the data and discussion thereof by no means solve any of the disparities and difficulties that might arise from developing a diploma course. It must therefore be emphasised that the diploma course by no means can be seen as the only solution for transformation to take place in the department. The data does however show that the lecturers at the Department of Visual Arts are aware of the need for academic and racial transformation to take place in this learning environment and are willing to engage. It is hoped that the data will serve as a springboard for further discussion on what mechanisms need to be introduced or put into place to ensure that transformation does take place.

Some of these mechanisms have already been identified. Firstly, those involved in the development and implementation of the diploma course must be aware of their own position in this academic setting and must see how this position is being used as one that either contributes towards transformation or serves to strengthen the dominant institutional culture of the university. Secondly, the community projects in which the department is already involved can be used to bridge the academic gap between secondary and tertiary education by actively seeking ways in which the learners they work with can become feeder students into the Department of Visual Arts. Thirdly, the curriculum should be investigated to see whether there is a need for content to be focused on a more diverse racial and cultural student body as well as to orientate it to focus more on South African and African visual culture. Lastly, it should be realised that once there are students from more socially and racially diverse backgrounds there will have to be support systems in place to protect these students from further exclusion in this learning environment. This could take the form of mentorship from older students as well as employing lecturing staff who represent a wider racial representation.

In the last chapter I summarise the data findings and discuss the conclusions and implications of these findings.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Visual arts in a South African university context has been founded in a system that is deeply embedded in Western perceptions of art and its role in society. This embeddedness has in many ways solidified the perception of who may and may not enter this field of study, as it is often regarded as exclusive and elitist. SU, being a historically white university, still seeks to negotiate its role in a post-apartheid South Africa. Because of this, the university still struggles with contentious issues regarding transformation and racial integration and many have argued that transformation 21 years into democracy can be seen as a gradual process. However, the university in many ways still reflects aspects of white privilege. The Department of Visual Arts, being part of this university, shares in this negotiation process.

The Department of Visual Arts is in the process of developing and initiating an undergraduate diploma course. In response to this I deemed it necessary to not only analyse administrative processes that the development of the diploma course would have to go through, but also to take a closer look at the socio-academic environment in which it would be situated and to determine whether it is a fertile environment in which to slot the course. It was important for me to interview the key role players who define the department discursively and socially. The study hence only focused on interviewing lecturers and not students. This was done with the intent of focusing on those who would partake in the initial implementation and teaching of a potential undergraduate diploma course.

Structurally SU's administrative processes are disallowing many students from being admitted into the degree programme because of their NSC results. These are often students who are accepted to the Department of Visual Arts degree programme on the basis of their portfolios. Although this may seem to be the only barrier in place to make this learning environment a more inclusive setting, I have argued that there are more contributing factors that are not only of a bureaucratic nature.

The research questioned posed was: *What are the attitudes and perceptions of lecturers regarding a prospective diploma course in the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University?* The sub-research question stated was: *What do these attitudes and perceptions of lecturers reveal about the teaching and learning and broader context in which the prospective diploma course will be implemented?*

Ten lecturers were interviewed and the information gathered from these interviews were divided into two themes and each theme accordingly divided into two sub-themes. The first theme dealt with transformation and subsequently the two sub-themes incorporated looking at the data as revealed by the interviews pertaining to equity and redress, and institutional culture. The second theme dealt with social justice. Under social justice critical enquiry and curriculum and support were discussed as the two sub-themes.

Initiating a potential diploma course to tackle the lack of racial and cultural diversity in the Department of Visual Arts is concerned primarily with educational development, as it is linked to transformative actions. These transformative actions cannot be isolated from ideas centred on social justice, as the Department of Visual Arts seeks to widen its access to students from a broader social and economic standing who would not have been afforded this opportunity in the past.

An investigation into the attitudes and perceptions of lecturing staff regarding transformation utilising a potential diploma course as a tool to initiate more transformative actions revealed an understanding that is deeply embedded in the socio-academic environment of SU. Although the data revealed that most lecturing staff see transformation in a positive light, currently there are some aspects of the demographic makeup of the Department of Visual Arts that do not necessarily link up with its vision of the department as a more racially diverse learning space.

Although some believe the fault lies with the academic requirements of SU's administration, I am of the opinion that active steps in the past could have been taken in a more urgent manner. In the Department of Visual Arts, although accommodating those who do not speak Afrikaans, some of the lecturers' claims to it being a tolerant environment can be seen to possibly shift the responsibility from themselves to bigger bureaucratic systems that are not in their control. Change comes with discomfort and recognition and is often difficult and not always easy to initiate. This can be attributed to one having to step out of certain comfort zones. These comfort zones have been afforded to a certain group of people in privileged spaces such as the Department of Visual Arts because of its historical past. In the same breath I in no way seek to point out the lecturers as being the gatekeepers to social and racial change in this environment. I simply acknowledge that change is difficult and often easier to ignore than to engage with. From the data, however, as presented in Chapter 5, it is evident that many lecturers are willing to engage with the difficulty of this change in the future.

In the same chapter I identified from the data some aspects that I believe are integral processes in the development of the diploma course. It was made clear that there was a need for those involved in its development and implementation to be aware of their own position in this academic setting, as well as to see how this position is being used as one that contributes towards educational development or serves to strengthen the dominant institutional culture of the university.

The department also partakes in community-engagement projects. In these community projects active steps can be taken to see how the department can use these projects to bridge the academic gap between secondary and tertiary education by actively seeking ways in which the learners they work with can become feeder students into the Department of Visual Arts. The curriculum offered also dictates the ideological underpinnings of an institution. It was identified that there might be a need to look at the curriculum to see whether there is a requirement for content to be focused on a more diverse racial and cultural student body as well as to orientate it to focus more on South African and African visual culture.

It has to be realised that once there are students from more socially and racially diverse backgrounds there will have to be support systems in place to protect these students from being further exclusion in this learning environment. This could take the form of mentorships from older students as well as employing lecturing staff that represent a wider racial representation.

What the data revealed is context-specific. However, this research study is not isolated in its concerns and although it cannot be generalised, it can be used to speak of the social setting in which it is situated. SU, being situated in the Western Cape, has a role to include students from its surrounding areas and therefore cannot continue to serve only a privileged minority group. The past will continue to have a role to play in the present as well as in the future. Educational development can serve to liberate the effects that the past has had on people in the present. Liberation in any setting requires sacrifice. To move forward a deep introspection of all role players in this kind of educational development must take place.

Introspection from this angle would involve an acknowledgement that knowledge is rapidly expanding and should be equally distributed. A potential undergraduate diploma in the Department of Visual Arts may serve as a necessary platform for social justice in this

educational environment by providing access to this knowledge area to students from a wider social, racial and economic standing.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Findings

#### 5.2.1.1 Equity and redress

Lecturer 3 had this to say about the student and lecturing staff bodies of the Department of Visual Arts:

*I think principally it's a racial problem. I think we have a lack of racial diversity in the student population and if we can focus our attention on correcting that then I think it will also necessarily imply a more diverse cohort socio-economically. I don't think it really matters which way you go about it, whether you focus on racial diversity or whether you focus on socio-economic diversity; either way I think the one will impact the other one. But my gut would say that what we need to focus on is racial diversity because there is in Stellenbosch already a racially diverse population. And not just at the university, which I think is still largely a fairly white institution, but in the town and in the surrounding areas there is a massively large black population that lives in Stellenbosch and its surrounding regions and I don't see that population represented in the student body. And I think if we could focus on getting that the students from our feeder area not shipping students in from afar but students in our feeder area into our student population that just seems to me to be a logical and sensible next step. And I think it will have as a result a racial and socio-economic diversity. I also want to say you ask here in Question 10 ... how this lack of diversity manifests and I think another area where it manifests is the dearth of black lecturers and specifically black South African lecturers. I think it's very important as role models to have black intellectuals form part of the life of an academic community and department. So that is also a real absence that I feel.*

When asked what the SU Department of Visual Arts had done in the past with regard to equity and redress Lecturer 1 had this to say:

*There's diversity, as far as expression is concerned there is diversity. I like to think that the Visual Arts department is quite tolerant, the lecturers and the students towards one another I think I get the impression. ... You know there's been incidences and I see how when for example in the case of depression and even efforts to commit suicide ... it's always wonderful to see how within a certain group or within different classes students support one another. There is that kind of basic sympathy and empathy, I think that that is here. I mean we would all like to see much higher balance between white and black students, in the [past] we have tried recruitment and all those things and it worked to a certain extent and I think that what [has] begun to happen over the past maybe ten*

*years there has been a very small growth in the number of black, not black really but brown, students who enrol here. And it's good to see that they do so without having been recruited ... We do offer merit bursaries, university bursaries specifically to Indian, brown and black students when they do come here. But when I came here in 2000 there was not a single black or brown student in the department. Not a single one and there are more now. Ten years later we do have a small percentage and a couple of years ago [we] made concerted efforts to recruit students from previously disadvantaged schools and so on and we still found that we really drew only because of financial ... I mean it's expensive to study at the university ... we drew students from quite privileged levels of society, you know good-income groups. We gave them bursaries and I think what has happened in the meantime because of the recruitment efforts is that things started to begin [happening] sort of by word of mouth ... those students went out and went home and said, back to their old schools and their old schoolmates, and maybe they said oh it's a nice place, ... we learn a lot there, everyone is very friendly etc., etc. And I know that is a much slower process but I can also say that I think I believe that is happening.*

Lecturer 4, however, felt that there would be conflicting interests with regard to lecturing staff being involved in actively engaging with a potential diploma course, as she expressed that their time might be compromised:

*Being a part-time person I am very aware of budgets and money and if I do this then I've got to put my invoice in for that budget, so it really is an issue and people are overworked as it is, so in that sense I think there is going to potentially be resistance from many people just because it's more work they have got to do and you don't have time to do what's already expected of you ... Already the university expects teaching, research and community interaction and most of the staff here I think are overloaded just with teaching so they don't get to their own research and community interaction components as it is. So ... it would need to be incorporated and embedded into the structure of the ... existing structure in a very, very careful way and obviously funds would need to be available on a practical level. I think something like that would not be possible if someone doesn't say okay don't worry we are going to appoint someone who's going to run it and organise it. We might ask people with certain sets of expertise to share it in projects or whatever else but it won't increase your workload as it is. So then it's divided into the larger kind of structure but workforce will need to be added and for workforce to be added one would need more money.*

### **5.2.1.2 Institutional culture**

Lecturer 5 talked about the idea of upholding university standards when she said the following:

*The thing is it's also I think determined by universities' criteria for students. So you have to have matric [and] you have to have above 60 ... aggregate ... and then your portfolio also has to comply [with] university standards we encourage. If you [are] limited to someone who [has] a matric and [who achieved] above 60, ... I think that kind of creates that criteria and to break that, that would have to be come from above, but then I don't know if someone who doesn't have matric wouldn't be able to pass Visual Studies. So ... definitely .. that kind of bridging diploma course can help a matric who's ... poor who maybe just passed [and it] can help them improve their ... academic skills and get them to then enter first year.*

She continued to say:

*But to help those who maybe just passed matric to improve their skills but then there will have to be an entry exam that they [will] have to write ... once they've got their diploma ... or they will have to get a certain mark or something. I suppose they won't pass if they not, you must make that at such a standard that they won't pass their diploma course if they're not ready to enter into first year. So that must be the criteria.*

Lecturer 3, however, realised that tertiary institutions had a role to play in transformation that had to reach beyond only a tertiary level, but concluded with accepting her disinterest in the process:

*I think that the tertiary education sector and specifically universities that are research institutions like Stellenbosch have a central role to play in uplifting students at secondary level. And I mean uplifting them both socially and intellectually and I think primarily the responsibility that university [has] to students, to scholars or to learners is through their teachers and I would say two things about the Department of Visual Arts. The one is that we have always been involved in training of teachers. There have always been students in the department who are training to be teachers of visual arts at high school level and in so far as we have done this I think we have made a small contribution to the standard of education at high school level. The second thing I would say is that this contribution is not nearly enough and that I think our responsibility in terms of input in the curriculum and input in an understanding of the existing curriculum has not been realised and that I would like to see a far greater influence being played out between lecturers in universities and teachers in high schools. I also*

*want to say that I think there is a chasm and a disinterest and I include myself in this category ... [that] lecturers at university level have in terms of high school education.*

She continued to say:

*We see it as belonging to a completely different realm and a completely different intellectual project and we very seldom make any kind of connection even in the most abstract sense between what happens at secondary level and what happens at tertiary level and occasionally when teachers phone me and ask me particular questions about secondary education curricula I find myself gobsmacked because I have no knowledge of what happens at secondary school level and also I find myself somewhat disinterested, which I immediately recognise as a gap, as a flaw in my thinking. But it nevertheless is the current status quo.*

Lecturer 5 raised the concern that language was also linked to the institutional culture of the university and could in some way have a role to play in prohibiting students from a wider social and cultural standing from considering applying to SU:

*I think it's also determined by the language issue because I think maybe a lot of English-speaking students or people who aren't [proficient in] Afrikaans can ... feel maybe they don't feel that they can come and study here because of the language barrier; however, we take that into consideration. We have students who can't speak Afrikaans or who don't understand Afrikaans and we accommodate them so I know it's not an issue for them. But I think maybe that's something that would put students off of coming here and also maybe the town's history, the very Afrikaans town ... going to an Afrikaans university and so I think it's just kind of been labelled.*

### **5.2.2.1 Critical enquiry**

Lecturer 6, however, felt that transformation would come with a lived experience:

*To comprehend something is to live through it. When [the] Truth and Reconciliation Commission is history and when apartheid is history it doesn't register and that's the clearest answer I have gotten from these people. I have said, and they have said Lecturer 6, a vein is protruding from your forehead and I say it should be and it's going to explode and they say its history. It's not a lived experience. Now if you introduce your diploma course and this agitation and poo on monuments and people dating and the[n] going home ... let's see what happens then. Then there will be some interesting lived experiences because at the moment it's actually frightening that it is a mostly feminine, it's a bubble.*

Lecturer 4 reiterated how a lived experience can add value to a learning environment:

*It's that experience you need to kind of experience it and feel it before you can latch onto it in some kind of way and in that case I think, bringing it back to a potential diploma course, it would be an opportunity for people to feel and experience something and perhaps that is the only way for the larger kind of discourses about what art and design is and what it can do in society, perhaps that's the best way for that kind of change in thinking and attitude to actually take [place]. You need to do something to be able to change the way of thinking, so it's kind of a reverse process, almost.*

#### **5.2.2.2 Curriculum and support**

Lecturer 3 views the idea of a potential diploma course as an opportunity to incorporate more South African visual culture into the curriculum:

*I think it's a very good idea but I think it should be useful as a final qualification and not merely as a bridging course and because of this I think it requires very careful consideration specifically in terms of the content because I think it should be a combination. The content should be a combination of skills-based training, skills like writing and research, but also intellectual content. A basic introduction to visual culture studies, a basic introduction to the visual analysis of the visual culture environment and also a basic introduction to visual culture history and with a perhaps a particular focus on the history of South African visual culture.*

Lecturer 8 sees the students' embeddedness in their own personal context as agency to add value to the curriculum:

*You know I might be teaching in English and delivering briefs in English but ... [when] I've got students in the classroom who are English, ... Afrikaans, ... Xhosa, ... Zulu, ... French and sometimes Chinese ... so there's ... a lot of the way your brief might be working with particular design principles but what you make in the end is very embedded in context and it might be embedded in personal context or social context or cultural context. So I think that it's very embedded in the context and the students are given the space to bring who they are, how they speak, what they value into the solution a lot.*

## Appendix B: Ethical clearance



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Stellenbosch University  
Visual Arts Department  
Stellenbosch  
South Africa

Dear Stephané

This letter serves to inform you that your application for ethical clearance from the DESC committee of the Visual Arts Department, Stellenbosch University, has been reviewed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2015. We also reviewed the changes that you made to your proposal that you submitted on the 28th of September 2015. The committee was in agreement that your study is of low risk to the research subjects involved, and your application for ethical clearance was approved.

On behalf of the DESC committee, I would like to wish you all the best with your research project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, or if any significant changes might occur to your research project that could affect the ethical repercussions of your study.

Kind regards,  
Ernst

Dr Ernst van der Wal  
Lecturer | Visual Studies  
Theory of Art Coordinator  
Department of Visual Arts  
Stellenbosch University  
Tel: (021) 808 2568



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**Departement Beeldende Kunste / Departement of Fine Arts**  
Privaatsak/Private Bag X1 • Matieland, 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 8083052 / Faks/Fax: +27 (0) 21 808 3044

## Appendix C: Institutional permission



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15 October 2015

Ms Stephané Conradie  
Department of Visual Arts  
Stellenbosch University  
Stellenbosch

Dear Ms Conradie

**Concerning research project: *Introducing a Diploma course at a Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University: An investigation into attitudes and perceptions concerning social, racial and economic transformation.***

The researcher has institutional permission to proceed with this project as stipulated in the institutional permission application. This permission is granted on the following conditions:

- Participation is voluntary.
- Persons may not be coerced into participation.
- Persons who choose to participate must be informed of the purpose of the research, all the aspects of their participation, their role in the research and their rights as participants. Participants must consent to participation. The researcher may not proceed until he is confident that all the before mentioned has been established and recorded.
- Persons who choose not to participate may not be penalized as a result of non-participation.
- Participants may withdraw their participation at any time, and without consequence.
- Data must be processed in a way that ensures the anonymity of all participants.
- Data must be treated as strictly confidential.
- The use of the data collected may not be extended beyond the purpose of this study.
- The use of SU student e-mail addresses, student numbers, including all other information by which an individual may be identified is limited to the purpose of this study and may not be shared with third parties.
- All the data related to this study must be responsibly and suitably protected.
- Individuals may not be identified in the report(s) or publication(s) of the results of the study.
- The privacy of individuals must be respected and protected.
- The researcher must conduct his research within the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013.

Best wishes,

Prof Ian Cloete  
Senior Director: Institutional Research and Planning



Afdeling Institusionele Navorsing en Beplanning • Institutional Research and Planning Division  
Privaatsak/Private Bag X1 • Stellenbosch • 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa  
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## Appendix D: Consent forms SU (Department of Visual Arts)



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### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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Introducing a Diploma course at a Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University: An investigation into attitudes and perceptions concerning social, racial and economic transformation.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by [Stephané Edith Conradie (BA in Visual Arts (Fine Arts), MA in Visual Arts (Art Education) (ongoing)], from the [*Visual Arts Department*] at Stellenbosch University. Results of this study will be used as per the requirements of my master research. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because as a lecturer at in the Stellenbosch University Visual Arts Department your insights will be invaluable in an exploration to determine what the overarching attitudes are towards the possible introduction of academic bridging courses at the Stellenbosch Visual Arts Department.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to investigate and explore social and academic development in a tertiary education environment. The aim is to identify potential growth areas within the Stellenbosch Visual Arts Department that can create a platform to discuss how academic and social gaps can be addressed.

#### 2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

As a participant of this study you will be asked to answer a few question in the form of an interview.

This interview will be recorded for the purposes of the investigation.

Participants are asked to give a half an hour of their time for this interview.

The interview will be conducted in an environment in which the participant feels safe and comfortable.

#### 3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The interview might involve the interviewee to answer questions that are personal and in this case if the questions cause any discomfort the interviewee has every right to refrain from answering the questions.

#### 4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This study is expected to determine the attitudes and perceptions of lecturers and students towards the introduction of academic bridging courses which can be used in the Visual Arts Department to allow students into this academic environment from diverse social and cultural backgrounds who have not been given the academic opportunities to enter into a degree program.

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participants will not receive payment for their involvement in this study.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified directly to you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of substituting participant's names with a coded system. The coding system will entail replacing participant's names with numerical values, e.g. *Stellenbosch University Lecturer 1*.

The information conducted in this interview will be uploaded onto SUNlearn (Stellenbosch University research database) for the duration of one year after the completion of this Masters research.

If the participant wishes to review the interview please indicate this and the interview will be made available to the participant.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: *Stephané Edith Conradie* ([stephaneedithconradie@gmail.com](mailto:stephaneedithconradie@gmail.com)) (*principle investigator*), *Dr. Elmarie Costandius* ([elmarie@sun.ac.za](mailto:elmarie@sun.ac.za)) (*supervisor*) and *Vulindlela Nyoni* ([vuli@sun.ac.za](mailto:vuli@sun.ac.za)) (*co-supervisor*).

#### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
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## Appendix E: Consent forms CPUT (Design Department)



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### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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Introducing a Diploma course at a Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University: An investigation into attitudes and perceptions concerning social, racial and economic transformation.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by [Stephané Edith Conradie (BA in Visual Arts (Fine Arts), MA in Visual Arts (Art Education) (ongoing)], from the [*Visual Arts Department*] at Stellenbosch University. Results of this study will be used as per the requirements of my master research. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because as a lecturer at in the Cape Town University of Technology Informatics and Design Department your insights will be invaluable in an exploration to determine what the overarching attitudes are towards the possible introduction of academic bridging courses at the Stellenbosch Visual Arts Department.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to investigate and explore social and academic development in a tertiary education environment. The aim is to identify potential growth areas within the Stellenbosch Visual Arts Department that can create a platform to discuss how academic and social gaps can be addressed.

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#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: *Stephané Edith Conradie* ([stephaneedithconradie@gmail.com](mailto:stephaneedithconradie@gmail.com)) (*principle investigator*), *Dr. Elmarie Costandius* ([elmarie@sun.ac.za](mailto:elmarie@sun.ac.za)) (*supervisor*) and *Vulindlela Nyoni* ([vuli@sun.ac.za](mailto:vuli@sun.ac.za)) (*co-supervisor*).

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**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to [me/the subject/the participant] by Stephané Edith Conradie in English and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## Appendix F: Consent forms SU (Department of Music)



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### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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Introducing a Diploma course at a Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University: An investigation into attitudes and perceptions concerning social, racial and economic transformation.

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#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

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[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## Appendix G: Proof of editing

**LaetitiaBEDEKER**

1 Plumbago Close  
Hemel en Aarde Estate  
Hermanus  
7200  
Cell: 082 707 8428  
E-mail: [laetitim@webmail.co.za](mailto:laetitim@webmail.co.za)

---

### Proof of editing

28 October 2015

This letter serves as proof that the master's thesis of Stephané Conradie was professionally language edited. The finalisation of tracked changes and layout as well as printing remains the responsibility of the student.

Kind regards



**LM Bedeker**

BA, Postgraduate Diploma (Translation) *cum laude*, MPhil (Translation) *cum laude*  
Accredited member of the South African Translators' Institute (accreditation number 1001437)  
Member of the Professional Editors' Group