RHODES UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
CL No.: TR 01-90
BRN:: b1489494

Towards a collaborative approach to teacher professional development: A journey of negotiation

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of

Rhodes University

by

Susan Lorraine Southwood

November 2000

ABSTRACT

The research presented in this thesis is a case study, based on ethnographic principles, located in the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research. The focus is specifically on the development of a collaborative approach to teacher professional development: an approach that recognises and celebrates teachers themselves as resources for their own and other teachers' professional development.

The study was carried out over a period of four years with a group of twelve teachers who had recognised the need and expressed the desire to develop their teaching. The research evolved in two main phases. The initial phase was based on the implementation and evaluation of a project designed to encourage a collaborative approach to teacher development based on mutual peer support. This led to a second phase, the main focus of the research, aimed at gaining a greater understanding of the teachers' situation and situating their practice in the wider context generated by this understanding. Conversations with the teachers led to the identification of dimensions and tensions characterising their experience.

The research presented here, represents an attempt to understand, interpret and make recommendations relating to the professional development of teachers. The understanding is linked to the teachers' educational biographies and experience of the culture in which they are situated. The interpretation is based on what may be viewed as a dynamic ongoing construction of meaning - *a journey of negotiation.*

The text, described as a narrative collage, a tapestry of voices interwoven by threads of negotiation, represents a collaborative accomplishment. The teachers' words have been interpretively framed and these constructions validated in an interpersonal construction of social reality. The reader is invited to engage in an act of complicity, to collude with the text in the construction and negotiation of shared meaning, possibly finding resonance with their own situations.

Reflections on the teachers' experience reveal journeys which resonate with that of the society in which the school is located - 'a case in transition' - situated between an environment characterised by constrained cooperation and an environment characterised by freer collaboration. The overall tension may be viewed metaphorically as a 'Tug o' War'. On one end of the rope is a cultural legacy of authority, isolation, social division and conservatism, while on the other end there is a pull towards greater autonomy and interaction, to adapt rather than conserve and to work together in mutual collegial support: a struggle between cooperating with what is and collaborating towards what could be.

The main contention of this thesis is that we ought strongly to support and encourage collaborative approaches to professional development based on mutual peer support. We need to look towards a future of open professionalism where the teachers are regarded as key persons in the process. The attainment of such an ideal needs to be seen as part of systemic changes in management, policies and structure geared towards greater inclusivity and democratic practice; it necessitates a coherent approach that is based on relationships of mutual respect and appreciation.

This thesis is dedicated
to

MAX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go out to the many people who I have worked with and who have supported me both intellectually and emotionally on the most challenging journey of my life:

To all the teachers I have been working with at St Ann's - thank you for not giving up, for hanging in there and for sharing your perceptions so honestly and openly at a difficult time of great change and both professional and personal complexity. Thank you for opening your arms and your hearts.

To my colleagues in the Department of Education - thank you for your constant encouragement and contribution to this work. Thank you for your generosity, for sharing your thoughts and ideas and welcoming me as one of the family!

To my supervisors, Jaap Kuiper and George Euvrard - thank you for your guidance, support and patience.

To Pat Irwin and David Woods - thank you for having faith and making it possible.

To my wonderful friends - thank you for your inspiration, encouragement and support. To those in particular who have shared the wisdom of their own journeys and spurred me on when things got tough.

To my incredible family - despite my neglect of you, you have been the ones who have really made this all possible. Thank you so much for your unending faith, support, time, patience and love.

To Mum and Dad - thanks for always being there and being the best - I just hope you will get what you've always wanted - a photo of me in a silly outfit!!

To Jay and Max - I have missed you so and cannot wait to do it all *with* you. Thank you so much for *everything.*

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

A thesis is like a poem.
It is the distillation of a tome, the final expression, the essence.
The challenge is to distil an incredibly complex experience and capture the essence in a way that is meaningful for others and in a form that is accessible, and like a good poem,
captures and convinces the reader.
(Conversation with a critical friend, Dr Mandy Uys 13.10.00)

The text of this thesis represents an attempt to distil an extremely complex tapestry of experience. This prologue offers a narrative sketch of the whole, which, "like the notes playgoers receive as they are escorted to their seats, has broad descriptions of scene and plot. An ingot of time and space" (Connelly & Clandinin 1990:11).

The text is divided into four sections:

Orientation

This section orientates the research contextually, conceptually and methodologically. **Chapter 1**: *The Context* locates the research in its South African context and describes the specific site of the case study, St Ann's Primary School. **Chapter 2**: *The Concept* introduces the main concept of teacher professional development and identifies dimensions of a collaborative orientation. **Chapter 3**: *The Methodology* orientates the research methodologically in the qualitative paradigm - an interpretive case study based on ethnographic principles.

Voices of Experience

This section describes the theoretical landscape of the research. **Chapter 4:** *The Construction of the Text* introduces and discusses the theoretical and methodological issues inextricably implicated and echoed in the text. **Chapter 5:** *The Thread of Negotiation* identifies a praxiological theme that weaves its way throughout the research. **Chapter 6:** *The Notion of Voice* explores the dialogic nature of the research experience.

Journeys of Experience

This section focuses on two integrally related journeys. **Chapter 7:** *A Journey of a Project* outlines the experience of a teacher development project aimed at developing a collaborative approach based on mutual peer support. **Chapter 8:** *A Journey of a School* explores the teachers' wider experience, highlighting the interpersonal dimensions of a grander journey within which the teachers' experience of teacher professional development is located.

Reflection

The final chapter - **Chapter 9:** *A Reflection* - reflects on the journey of research, outlines the limitations of the research and makes recommendations for the development of a more collaborative approach to teacher professional development.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The text is intentionally presented in a non-traditional format in an attempt to echo the integral and recursive interrelations between the context and the process of the research. Throughout the text the words of both myself and the teachers are interpretively framed in the construction of a rich and personal representation of the experience of the research and the dynamic context in which it is situated.

The challenge to distill the research experience into an accessible and meaningful text which captures its essence is one that has been extremely difficult to meet. The process of distillation has inevitably entailed synopsis and simplification, which has resulted in a loss of complexity and a forfeiture of the intricacies and depth of engagement that grounded the research experience. The text, however, is not intended to chronicle the whole experience, but rather to reflect on specific dimensions[1] and tensions[2] of the experience. The construction of the text is viewed as a part of the research experience and is thus informed by and infused with the effects of that experience.

---

1 *Dimensions* is a term used throughout the text to refer to fundamental aspects or characteristics, e.g. interaction.

2 *Tensions* is a term used in the text to refer to dimensions in dynamic flux, e.g. isolation - interaction. These dimensions are not necessarily viewed as diametrically opposed but may be viewed as complementary.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The *journey of negotiation* in the title of this thesis also refers to the experience of the research. A thread of *negotiation* is identified [Chapter 5] as weaving its way through the entire research experience. The thread is highlighted throughout sections 1 and 2 of the thesis, which explore the methodological and theoretical approach of the research.

The text, which may be described as a 'narrative collage', a tapestry of voices interwoven by threads of *negotiation*, represents a collaborative accomplishment. The teachers' words have been interpretively framed, their constructions validated, in an interpersonal construction of social reality. The reader is invited to engage in an act of complicity, to collude with the text in the construction and *negotiation* of shared meaning, possibly finding resonance in his or her own situation.

ORIENTATION

This section orientates the research contextually, conceptually and methodologically. **Chapter 1**: *The Context* locates the research in its South African context and describes the specific site of the case study, St Ann's Primary School. **Chapter 2**: *The Concept* introduces the main concept of teacher professional development and identifies dimensions of a collaborative orientation. **Chapter 3**: *The Methodology* orientates the research methodologically in the qualitative paradigm - an interpretive case study based on ethnographic principles.

Chapter 1:

The Context

This chapter seeks to locate the research in the macro-context of South Africa and the micro-context of the school in which the research was carried out.

SOUTH AFRICA

> South Africa is a country of both hope and concern. Hope because we are in an exciting period of transition. The concern is whether we as a nation could make this work. (Sonn & Miller 1995:2)

The work presented in this thesis needs to be seen against the historical background of our country. The traumatic history of South Africa has reverberated through the education system[3], resulting in "the breakdown of the culture of teaching and learning". Political oppression has led to conflict, suspicion and mistrust (Sonn & Miller 1995) and to a demoralised and demotivated profession. The post-apartheid era of transformation that South Africa is undergoing has been accompanied by "a period of massive educational upheaval" (Walker 1993). The call to "rebuild a culture of teaching and learning", together with recent curricular reform, present an urgent challenge to the teaching profession. Teachers need to be prepared to meet the demands of such changes.

South Africa, therefore, is at a crucial juncture in its development. With the current implementation of radical reform, the necessity for effective professional development is paramount. The desperate need for, and importance of, professional support in schools cannot be over-emphasised, nor can the lack of it be denied. This is particularly worrying in the light of the implementation of the new Outcomes Based approach to Education.

---

[3] The historical background of education in South Africa is well documented (Behr 1988, Christie 1990, Nasson & Samuels 1990, Cross 1992, Kallaway *et al.* 1998, Hartshorne 1992, 1999). The struggles and tensions of a system plagued by racial segregation, authoritarianism and human subjugation have been written about and referenced in many places. It is not my intention to rehearse this history. Rather, the historical landscape presented in this thesis is composed of the personal histories of the teachers in the case study and the school in which they work. As Aoki points out, teaching is "a culturally shaped and culturally legitimated world": the social, cultural and historical patterns shape and are shaped by our personally experienced history (Aoki 1983:324).

> It will require sustainable strategies to hasten the transformation of social, institutional and pedagogical relationships necessary for such learning to occur.
> (COTEP 1997:9)

Despite this plea, the practice of supporting teachers has been one of one-off workshops inadequate to engender the fundamental professional development required (Kuiper & Van Harmelen 1996).

The focus of this research is on the development of internal structures of professional support, which together with improved external support, will serve to make sustainable professional development less of an ideal and more of a reality. The development of such 'internal structures' is dependent on the engagement of teachers, with each other, in a continuous process of professional development.

As recent research in South Africa has shown, however, the experience of the teacher is typically a more "solitary pursuit" (Van der Westhuizen *et al.* 1998). It seems there is a reticence on the part of teachers to 'open up' their classrooms. Classroom doors are usually kept closed, both physically and metaphorically. Teachers are often isolated within their own domains, aware only of their own experiences, and basing their practice thereon.

The phenomenon of teacher isolation and the "isolationist culture of schools" (Fullan 1993) has received much attention (Descombe 1982, Fullan 1983, Lortie 1985, Britzman 1986, Gitlin 1987, Rosenholtz 1989, Cooper 1991, Fullan & Hargreaves 1991, Nias 1993). Teaching is viewed as an "individual struggle . . . the teacher's isolated classroom existence accepted as the norm" (Britzman 1986: 449). Teachers have been isolated professionally, cut off from those who share their experiences and concerns (Fullan 1993). Such isolation, it is argued, "limits feedback and professional growth while concealing common problems and constraints" (Gitlin 1987:117). Lortie (1985) has also pointed to the isolation of teachers:

> Teaching has long been called 'a lonely profession' . . . . The professional isolation of teachers limits access to new ideas and better solutions, drives stress inward to fester and accumulate, fails to recognise and praise success, and permits incompetence to exist and persist to the detriment of students, colleagues and the teachers themselves. Isolation allows, even if it does not always produce, conservatism and resistance to innovation in teaching.
> (Lortie 1985, cited in Fullan 1993:34)

As Lieberman & Miller (1990:155) point out, "unlike other professions, teaching does not provide for a shared culture based on the movement from knowledge to experience in the company of one's peers". Once teachers are in schools they often find themselves alone in the classroom with a group of students and little, if no, support from peers. They conclude that "teaching is indeed a lonely enterprise". As they point out, this holds a tragic irony:

> With so many people engaged in so common a mission in so compact a space and time, it is perhaps the greatest irony - and the greatest tragedy of teaching - that so much is carried on in self-imposed and professionally sanctioned isolation. (Lieberman & Miller 1990:160)

Van der Westhuizen *et al.*'s (1998) South African study, 'The Lonely Teacher', challenges the notion that the individual development of teachers will bring about educational development and suggests that many existing models of in-service education are limited and may actually contribute to the loneliness and frustration of the teacher. They argue that teacher education needs to be looked at more holistically, and they advocate a life-long view of learning with a school-based model for delivery.

Nias (1993:141) in her work with primary teachers in England highlights the individuality of experience, the architectural design of schools and the lack of teacher contact time, as factors promoting teacher isolation. Nias speaks of such conditions as fostering a "solitary, even lonely" occupational context. This loneliness, she points out, is compounded by the perceived need to be self-reliant, by a lack of support and by the difficulty people have with admitting they have problems. Few teachers have the chance to observe others teaching and "feel that they must survive by their own efforts", believing in an "occupational rite de passage" which equates competence with suffering. As Nias points out, many have argued (notably Lortie 1975, and Hargreaves 1980) that teachers have little opportunity or incentive to develop shared knowledge or a collegial sense of the 'state of the art'.

Similarly to Lortie (1985), Nias (1993) argues that schools as organisations often seem to discourage such sharing, although she points out that teacher education may also be to blame. Genuine exchange, Nias argues, is not encouraged in teacher training. Teachers are trained to work with children, not with each other. Teachers are given little understanding of schools as institutions or preparation for *negotiation* with or conflict resolution among their colleagues.

While the resolution of inevitable interpersonal conflict could, Nias points out, lead to the development of shared meanings and understandings, personal differences are instead leading to further conflict.

Teachers are unfamiliar with the notion of themselves as "producers of educational knowledge", feeling secure and content to emulate teaching styles rather than question and challenge them (Walker 1993). The culture of teacher professional development has been based on the belief that valid knowledge lies in the domain of the experts. As Yonemura (1982:242) points out, we need to "relearn that 'ordinary' people can be rich repositories of valuable information and ideas, growing out of their lived-in experiences".

While such an approach might not appear particularly new when one looks at the international arena, it takes on a special significance in the context of the South African education system - a system characterised by control and fragmentation, passivity, alienation and a lack of reflection and innovation on the part of many teachers (Robinson 1994). As Walker (1991) points out, in-service support and development was not viewed as part of teachers' professional lives and their experience of INSET (In-Service Education and Training) was conditioned by the expectation that they would be told what and how to teach. Such reliance on external expertise has, I believe, among other factors, obscured the potential for internal forms of support among professional peers.

As John Volmink pointed out in his keynote lecture at a conference in 1995 focusing on the improvement of Science and Mathematics teaching in Southern Africa, educational reforms have in the past been encouraged and supported by the 'vibrant' NGO (non-governmental organisation) sector, who have assumed the main responsibility for the professional development of teachers. My own observations of working in this sector suggested that while NGOs were doing great work, their capacity was not meeting the demand. The increasing recognition of and pleas for support has highlighted an unsustainable reliance on external expertise.

The challenge to South Africa, Volmink pointed out, was "to develop and implement system wide sustainable interventions to address the problems in education" (1995). I would like to

focus this challenge at perhaps the most fundamental level, the development of sustainable strategies that will facilitate the continuous growth and development of teachers, so that they will be better equipped to deal with the problems and adapt to the constantly changing educational environment.

The contention of this thesis is that one response to such a challenge is the facilitation and development of a collaborative approach to teacher professional development - an approach which is based not only on individual engagement, but also on inter-collegial engagement, on mutual support. This thesis echoes the constructivist call for a significant shift away from the view of education as a one-way process in which knowledge is transferred from the experienced to the inexperienced. Teachers need to actively engage in the reorganisation and construction of their individual experience (Cobb, Yackel & Wood 1988) in an environment which facilitates collegial interaction and collaborative strategies of professional development.

ST ANN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

This section presents a narrative backdrop contextualising the focus of the case study: St Ann's Primary School. This backdrop has been constructed from extracts of conversations with the teachers and information from questionnaires, consistent with the dialogic approach adopted in this research [Chapter 4]. The construction is divided into two parts: the school and the teachers. The teachers' words are used to provide a rich and personal description of the research setting.

The School

St Ann's is situated in what is commonly referred to as the Albany Road area of Grahamstown, a small town in the Eastern Cape. This is regarded as the 'centre' of the 'Coloured' community, not necessarily geographically but certainly activity-wise. It is where all the communal facilities are situated: schools, churches, community halls, library, playing fields and two general stores.

When asked about the area in which the school is located, Edwin (C1) the principal said, "There isn't a name for this area - I know Ghost Town up the road but . . . ." Adam also mentioned Ghost Town together with Vergenoeg, Afrikaans for 'far place' and Hooggenoeg,

Afrikaans for 'high place': all unofficial names given by the local people to the surrounding areas. As a political constituency it is referred to as Currie Park. However, this is not a name used by the community.

The present school intake of 845 children comes mainly from the surrounding Afrikaans-speaking community[4]. The school community is also made up of Xhosa-speaking people. This reflects the bi-cultural history of the school:

> *This building started in 1953. Ok? Er . . . but . . . people inside the community said that the school actually started in Raglan Road . . . as St Peter Clavers. Ok? . . . when . . . er . . . there were no group areas[5] at that time and it was only - judging from that stone there at the school - 1953 - that is when . . . er . . . Apartheid legislation in the country actually started - 1953 Ok? When the education was started to be separate - separate for that group and separate for that group . . . er . . . that the school started to move from St Peter Clavers.*
>
> *(Adam C1)*

St Peter Claver's became the school for the Xhosa-speaking community and the new St Ann's became the school for Afrikaans speakers. The former was renamed Ntaba Maria in the 1980s.

> *The school . . . serves . . . or it was supposed to have served the so-called 'coloured' community - the intention was that the catchment area was supposed to have been the 'coloured' community. But I think . . . er . . . with changes in the country and especially in 1976 - just a little bit of background.*
> *The Catholic Church took a position that it would open its schools . . . er . . . on a multi-racial . . . on multi-racial basis So they allowed people at that time from Indian and . . . African - from traditional township areas to enter the schools. Ok? And . . . er . . . and . . . er . . . now I think the school is reflective - so now you can't say it is purely a 'coloured' school because we draw pupils from . . . from the township area and the area in which the school is situated in now which is predominantly a so-called 'coloured' area.* *(Adam C1)*

The school adopted a policy change to accommodate the new intake. In the past the medium of instruction had only been Afrikaans but now it became dual medium, Afrikaans and English.

---

[4]Language-focussed terminology, rather than the racially orientated apartheid terminology, has been adopted here to describe communities; 'Afrikaans-speaking' is used instead of 'Coloured' and 'Xhosa-speaking' instead of 'Black'. It is recognised that such terminology would not always be appropriate, but it works for the context of this study.

[5] Group Areas Act
Apartheid legislation systematically dividing land into zones in which members of only one race could live and conduct business. [1971 Encyclopaedia Britannica William Benton: USA]

Edwin explained how the school overcame the apartheid group areas policy at that time:

> *The inspectors would check the admissions register and question the surnames. We had to write which colour the children were and we would say coloured when they were really black.*
> *(Edwin C1)*

However, they couldn't overcome all obstacles:

> *In the early 70s when St Ann's was only small and the Catholic boy's school, St Aiden's College, was closing down - we wanted to move there because it had all the facilities and everything - but because of the Group Areas Act we couldn't move to a white area.*
> *(Edwin C1)*

The original building has been extended to accommodate the increasing numbers of children. In 1992 the upstairs of the school was built, sponsored by PG Glass, and in 1994 the preschool was built, with money that Sister Monica, the principal at the time, had obtained from overseas. Edwin listed the accommodation of the present school building:

> *22 classrooms, a music room, a hall, half of which is used as a classroom, kitchen plus 2 storerooms, staff room plus kitchenette, toilets, office, reception areas and preschool.*
> *(Edwin C1)*

The school also shares many of the community facilities: the library, recreation hall and clinic are all just across the road, which - as Edwin pointed out - "were very convenient for the school". The school building was also used by the wider community for other purposes:

> ***Tell me more about the links the school has with the community.***
> ***What else is the school used for?*** [6]
> *Teacher union meetings - SADTU*
> *Local 'Universals' rugby club*
> *Confirmation classes for the church.*
> *. . . the Birches factory workers hire the school for union meetings*
> *Funerals - for tea after.* *(Edwin C1)*

Despite the involvement of the school with the community and vice versa, the lack of involvement of parents in the school was cited by the Principal as one of the main weaknesses of the school:

> *Not to be derogatory or whatever . . . they haven't got a clue about the school. Parents meetings are not well attended.*
> ***Approximately what percent of parents would you say attend the parents meetings?***
> *Not many - less than 50% - maybe only 30 % .*
> *What we are doing now is having meetings to get parents in to talk about the children and progress with the responsible teacher - visitation evenings. Much better contact - parents ask about OBE and homework and sometimes why the children are doing something . . . .*
> ***Are these meetings better attended?***
> *Oh yes - more than 50% - say 60%.* *(Edwin C1)*

---

[6] Where extracts of conversations are used in the text, my words are in bold.
(C1) & (C2) refers to which conversation the extract is from: the first or second conversation.

Edwin attributed the lack of parental involvement to the socio-economic background of the children:

> *There is a problem with single parents. Most of the school's problems are with single parents - because of teenage pregnancy and no marriage they can't really manage - financially or emotionally. Lots of children are sent to school to get the grant from the government - the children's grant. . . . A social worker comes round and looks at the register and if the child is not at school they do not get their money. It is actually abuse of the children because the money is used to pay debts.* (Edwin C1)

Edwin explained how in the past the school had given lots of handouts - food, clothes, parties, etc. - and that parents found it difficult to understand why this didn't happen anymore and why they had to pay school fees:

> *It is R80 per year, R20 per term. You see, there has not been a culture for payment of education, except the black community - they had to pay for their education and books because the government did not provide, the money per capita was very low.*
> ***But there was not such a culture in the Afrikaans-speaking community?***
> *No - in fact there was a lot of waste and carelessness.* (Edwin C1)

Edwin described the homes in which the majority of the families lived as "sub-economic, built for people on the lowest income". He explained how unhealthy such accommodation was:

> *They are very unhealthy - damp causing TB. The children are often sick because of the poor type of house. All the workers here live in those houses and have all tested positive for TB. They have treatment so they are not contagious.* (Edwin C1)

Una also referred to the home backgrounds of the children:

> *The children are from different backgrounds and especially my class - they come out of a very poor community. They're Afrikaans . . . I've got Afrikaans class. . . . And . . . er . . . to understand their problems. . . . Because most of my children have . . . their parents have drinking problems.* (Una C1)

Edwin explained that the local Universals Rugby Club had been established by a young priest, Father O'Brian, "to get parents from the bottle":

> *My father told me that when the priest visited the people on a Sunday they were often drunk, so he decided to start a rugby team because he loved rugby.* (Edwin C1)

The Teachers

The school has a full complement of twenty-four teachers. Initially, all the teachers involved in the teaching of mathematics at the school had been involved in the project. However, three left the school for various reasons and two chose not to be involved for their own reasons. Twelve teachers plus the principal were ultimately involved with the project.

Most of the staff of St Ann's were born and brought up in the area in which the school is located. Their lives have centred around St Ann's, their own education as children and now their professional lives as adults. The teachers reflected on their experience of teaching. They spoke of how long they had been teaching, where they had taught, why they were in teaching, how they had got their jobs and how they felt about teaching. Many of the teachers had been teaching at St Ann's for most, if not all, of their teaching careers, careers spanning from two to twenty-five years.

Linda is the oldest and 'most experienced' in terms of years of teaching. She went into teaching 'to serve my fellow men' (Q2) and has been teaching for 25 years, only two of which were not in Grahamstown:

> ***So have you taught here for 23 years?***
> *Yeh. . . . When I came here I got Standard 3. So I taught Standard 3 and after, for a couple of years, after Standard 3, Standard 2 and then what was it . . . junior primary. . . Then Sub B, Grade 2 and then back to . . . now I am still teaching Grade 3s.*
> ***And . . . and you're happy? Are you happy teaching them?***
> *I am happy, yeh.*
> ***Good. So you've not always taught the same Grade, you've had a bit of experience . . . .***
> *Experience, yeh.*
> ***And do you like that ? Do you enjoy to change? Or . . . or is it difficult?***
> *No I enjoyed it. It was difficult. . . . It was difficult. Especially with the senior classes.*
> *Er . . . but I had to . . . do a lot and work very hard. But I enjoyed it.* (Linda C1)

Linda pointed out that she felt her teaching had 'improved a lot' over the years, particularly her communication with the children, which she felt had come with an increased understanding of their situation:

> *They are from different backgrounds and especially my class - they come out of a very poor community. They're Afrikaans . . . And . . . er . . . to understand their problems. . . Because most of my children have . . . their parents have drinking problems. . . . . And . . . er . . . I experience a lot of . . . discipline problems. But as soon as you . . . you understand them and they see you care . . . and pay them enough attention. Then they . . . .*
> *And another thing that I learn . . . is it's very important to go and visit them . . . at home.*
> ***Do you do that?***
> *Yeh. So you get a better . . a better idea . . . of how they are living.*
> . . . .
> *And it helped a lot. . . And . . . er . . . I've noticed that the parents also . . . afterwards they . . . respect you more and you get their participation.* (Linda C1)

Alison has also been teaching for twenty-five years. However, the first nine years were in Cape Town where she also grew up and did her training.

Some people go to teaching 'cos they don't know what else to do. Where I again it was what I liked. . . . What I thought I was put out for. (Alison C2)

Edwin, the Principal, has also been teaching at St Ann's for a long time. His nineteen years of teaching have all been at St Ann's, as was his primary schooling as a pupil. He explained how he had worked his way up:

You've been teaching and here at St Ann's for 19 years?
Yes
How long have you actually been Principal for?
Um . . . two years - this is my second year, two years.
. . . . and before Principal - what position did you have before that ?
I was . . . um . . . in 1989 . . . I was appointed HOD for the Senior Primary section and than in 199 . . . 5 I was appointed as Deputy Principal. . . . I worked up the ladder. (Edwin C2)

Edwin explained why he chose teaching as a career:

I like to work with people and it's challenging. (Edwin Q2)

I just feel that . . the teaching was near to my heart . . and the children - to work with children very enjoyable. (Edwin C1)

Heather also enjoys teaching (Q2). Her first teaching post was out of town on a farm, but she later returned to Grahamstown where she had grown up:

I started teaching at Kommadagga. I don't know, do you know? It's a farm school.
And then I came back home and I got a . . . the principal at the high school asked me if I can just supervise in somebody's place there for a month. [Inaudible] And I supervised that month there. And in January the next year I went to George Dickerson for . . . for 3 months in somebody else's place. And then I was at home again for a few months and then I went to . . . in . . . somebody else's place in George Dickerson . . . for three months, who went on leave. And . . . er . . . I didn't have . . . really have experience with that . . . because the one was a Sub A class, and . . . er . . . the second one was a Standard 2 class and . . . in April the next year 199? . . . 1985. . . er. . . I went to Alexandria. And there I taught for six years and there I got my experience.
And . . . er . . . in 1995 . . . '94 . . . no '91 I came to St Ann's.
So how long have you been at St Ann's? Is it . . . er . . .
8 years. (Heather C1)

Heather explained why she chose to teach:

I just like to work with small children . . . Especially if you see at the end of the year . . . um . . how the children . . . what they learned and . . . er . . . how they progress. Especially the children who doesn't know. The weak children, you see. . . .When you come to the end of the year and you see . . . you see this child I never expected that this child will . . . do so good, you see? (Heather C1)

Anna had also been at St Ann's as a student. She chose teaching because she "wanted to work with children" but also for financial security (Q2). After a year teaching in another school, Anna was invited back to St Ann's as a teacher.

Olga spoke passionately and openly about her experience of teaching:

> *Um . . . I enjoyed being at college but . . . then already I realised that I knew I wanted to teach. I have always wanted to teach or work with kids let me put it that way - work with kids. . . . But . . . um . . . when I got to college I realised that . . . it wasn't exactly what I expected it to be - you know - teaching as such where it's . . . you tell . . . that time it was you tell the kids to do this and how to do that and that wasn't my idea of working with kids.*
>
> *. . . I wanted teaching . . . I wanted learning for them . . . to be fun. . . And . . . um . . . I could see, for example, that the maths that we did at college it was . . I didn't enjoy teaching it and for some or other I didn't think the kids would enjoy it. Because I thought about my school days, you know, when I was at primary school when I also just had to learn parrot fashion and you know multiples and this is plus and this is minus, and all that, you know, and that wasn't . . . um . . . for me it wasn't really effective . . . teaching and learning as such, you know . . . um . . . and I don't think that they were really looking for creativity at that time either - you Now [Laugh] You had to . . . do what they expected you to do as a teacher, you know?. . . But . . . I . . . I went along with it . . . it was fine . But I didn't agree with it and I always thought, you know, if I get the chance I would like to change things a bit. [Laugh]*
>
> *The first three years I struggled a bit because . . . first of all teaching was new and I didn't know how to go about . . . doing what I wanted to do . . .*
> *Um . . . and of course because I was a new teacher everybody's watching to see what you're doing - Can she teach? Does she know what she is doing? You know, so that was a bit difficult. But then . . . um . . . eventually with the support that I got and, you know, people saying to me that . . . you know, giving me positive influence, you know, saying I must go for it and, if I think that this is the way I should do it and this is the way that works, then I should do it. So I did that and it did work and . . . um . . . I am enjoying it*
> *And I can see that the kids are enjoying it too, you know, from the feedback that I get from them that they want to come to school and they want to be here, you know.*
> *Even the parents, you know, say their kids enjoy being in my class and . . . that's good because that's what I am aiming at.* (Olga C1)

Olga's reason for teaching was "to make a difference in the child's education positively, by working in such a way that the child comes to school because he ENJOYS learning and not because he is forced to" (Q2).

Barry, similarly to Adam, chose teaching because he enjoys working with people (Q2); but he also explained that for him teaching seemed his only option if he wanted a career:

> *The only sort of . . . er . . . professional direction you can go to was teaching 'cos you didn't know about other sort of professional . . . er . . . careers to follow. . . And . . . er . . . it was the cheapest . . . to go to a college . . . instead of a university.*

Sure. Sure. So really for you, if you wanted to have a career . . . and teaching was . . . your only option?
Yeh. Especially in our coloured community. There wasn't a sort of a . . . there weren't . . . er . . . er . . . a arch . . . architect maybe . . . that you could look up to. Ok, he's a architect. I want to be a architect too.
No role models.
No role models. Only teachers.
Ok. What about things like doctors and nurses?
Nothing, nothing. Nurses, yes. There were nurses . . . but no doctors.
Ok. So the doctors that people went to weren't coloured people?
Yeh, yeh, yeh. We had a clinic here . . . and they always send down white doctors.
Really? That's interesting. So in terms of . . . um . . . coloured role models . . . . . . it was nurses and teaching?
Yeh, teaching.
Yeh. That's very interesting.
So was that why you chose teaching or were there other reasons?
As I said it was cheap at the time. Because my parents couldn't afford to sort of give me an education after Standard 10. So . . . er . . . the easiest and I remember when we sort of had our career days . . . er . . . with the inspectors and things like that, doing . . . er . . . [Inaudible] you want to become a teacher [Inaudible] that was the easiest way in. The obvious, for me.
And . . . I . . . what I love working with children. You know . . . from the start. (Barry C1)

For Hope the choice to teach had not been one of vocation but rather necessity:

And then it was . . . your father's the only one working you've got to go and learn to be a teacher. Actually Sue there was not a . . . choice.
What did you want to do?
I wanted to finish off my Standard 10. . . I desperately want . . . I wanted to become a nurse or something else.
There was financial pressure on you to go to work?
Yes. So I went to college in Uitenhage. Where I finished off my three years.
To tell you the truth, I never even think of teaching.
What would you like to have done?
What I had in mind was perhaps something like being a nurse, you see. (Hope C1)

However, after a period of working outside of teaching Hope realised that she wanted to continue working with children:

You say this is your fifth year, here at St Ann's.
Where were you before St Ann's?
Before St Ann's I was working for three years at Foschini - I was a saleslady
Before I came to Grahamstown, I was [Inaudible] actually in Cape Town.
There I taught for about 4 or 5 months at a primary school. It was just a temporary post
Did you find that frustrating that you couldn't do what you wanted to do, which was teach? Or did you actually find it quite interesting doing different things?
Um . . . to tell you the truth it was, you know, quite exciting, you know. To just to get a little bit away. . . from the school. And . . . er . . . but then afterwards I felt . . . er . . . to me it is better for me to work with children. Because like in a . . . a shop you have to work with adults and sometimes they can be rude.
[Laugh] And children can't ??? [Both laugh]
But at least with the children you can dominate. You know?

In my class, I feel . . you know I have spoken, they listen. Because from day one, I . . . I've . . . they've been told and that they've got to listen in my class you know? Because, if you don't do that you can forget about your discipline.
Um . . . you obvi . . . so you obviously enjoy teaching?
Yes, I do (Hope C1)

Bruce had also gone into teaching for financial reasons (Q2), but was not enjoying it:

I am still furious. Because I really didn't want to teach and now I am in here and I can't get out of it and I am trying to get to out of it.
Are you? Ok tell me why . . . why do you not want to be a teacher?
Why? Er . . . maybe for the work and . . . the kids
So why are you in it?
For the money.
Ok
A job.
Ok . . .
Tell me about your experience of teaching.
[Laugh] Ah . . . bad!
Why bad?
I think . . . mostly it is the thing about discipline. How can I say? I don't have the . . . the . . . how can I say . . . the authority so that I can tell people to keep quiet. I don't have that voice. And sometimes it just get too much. And . . . it really frustrates you.
You know, one's first year of teaching is always very very difficult. Because . . . and also when you are new to a school and the children don't know you . . . they will always always push you to see.
Yes. Comparing last year with this year, this year is a breeze.
Now why is that do you think? Why is this year so much easier?
I have learned some things - on how to handle things . . .
What do you think you've learnt?
Some things . . . [Laugh] I don't really know what . . . what things but I just learnt to do it. (Bruce C1)

Although things had got easier, Bruce remained convinced that teaching was not for him:

I am still trying to get out if it [Laugh] I don't think I want to do any more teaching. For example, in the next three to four years I don't see myself teaching.
When I was at school the teachers was the main person. If he talk, everybody was quiet. And you all listened and . . and now it's totally different. [Laugh] You . . . you're not the . . . the . . . main . . . person anymore.
Ok . . . um . . . and how do you feel about that difference?
For me [Laugh] Ok. Especially now since I understand. Because I was never sure.
Things like you don't question. And now when I come back to teaching they will all ask me questions and ask questions and saying it's not true and . . . you know things like that.
It seems to be you have a very negative feeling.
Mmmmm I have.
Both as a child and now even as an adult . . .
[Laugh] Yes I know. Because it was very boring. . . .
I try to be more positive. I am trying ways to . . . to . . . to make it more fun.
Like . . . like we do actually games and . . . [Laugh] And I make some funny stuff, pulling my face, and making my voice funny. And the kids really like it. (Bruce C1)

Unfortunately, I was unable to follow up this conversation at a later date as I did with the other teachers, as Bruce had left the school.

Una, like Bruce, was in her second year of teaching. She loved working with children but was not sure she would always teach:

> *Mm - I have only been teaching now for a year - I only started last year . . .*
> *. . . and this is my second year. . . Almost two years.*
> *I enjoy teaching . . . I enjoy the work but sometimes it's so frustrating and pressure*
> *[Inaudible] but sometimes - I don't know why - but one day the children are good and the other day they're wild and I don't know what's wrong with them!*
> . . .
> *I will say I will never teach for the rest of my life.*
> ***Why? Why do you say that?***
> *It's tiring! . . .*
> *People say "Oh teachers they have it nice - only 5 days of teaching. They are at school - weekends they're home and . . ." But when you get home you are so tired and you have to do sports . . . And it's tiring . . .*
> ***It is.***
> *And every day you are up and down with the children here.*
> ***It's very difficult . . . indeed. [Laugh]***
> *Because I am not . . . I am new to this teaching, you know. All of us have to learn teaching.*
> *(Una C1)*

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

This chapter has presented a brief overview of the South African educational context, followed by a description of the school which is the subject of the case study and the community in which it is located. It has also introduced the teachers in the case study and some of their views on the experience of teaching. The following chapter focuses on the central concept of the thesis - *teacher professional development.*
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Chapter 2:

The Concept

This chapter introduces the main concept with which the thesis is concerned: teacher professional development. The focus is specifically on the development of a collaborative approach to teacher professional development - an approach that recognises and celebrates teachers themselves as resources for their own and other teachers' professional development, an approach based on mutual peer support. This chapter outlines interpersonal dimensions of a collaborative orientation supported by the literature.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Professional development is viewed here as a continuous process as opposed to something that happens sporadically as a result of specific interventions: "it should be an integral part of teachers' professional lives" (Walker 1991). It is thus regarded as important that, in order to assist such development, we encourage the building of "enabling environments" (Sonn & Miller 1995) that foster processes of professional growth as an integral part of the teacher's experience and recognise development as a continuous process of learning.

The terms 'teacher professional development' and 'teacher education' are often used synonymously in the literature, or else distinctions made between them are unclear. In this thesis, the following distinction is made. 'Teacher education' is regarded as an aspect of teacher professional development, referring specifically to the more formalised aspects of pre-service/initial training, programmes of induction and in-service training programmes. 'Teacher professional development' refers to a more holistic view of learning and development that implies the active involvement of the teachers themselves in an ongoing process of professional development. The definition of professional development adopted in this study is consistent with a 'life long' approach to learning: *a continuous process of professional growth and fulfilment, resulting in an improved quality of educational understanding and practice.*
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The first part of this chapter identifies the following **dimensions** which may be seen as characteristic of the approach to teacher professional development on which this thesis is based: *development, negotiation, participation, internalisation, collegiality* and *collaboration*. Such characteristics emphasise the interpersonal aspects of a conceptualisation of teacher professional development based on a collective orientation.

DIMENSIONS

Development

Although perceptions are changing, Aitken & Mildon's (1992) call for a fundamental rethinking of teacher education is still relevant and of particular pertinence to the South African context. Traditionally, teacher education was the domain of the pre-service institution. It was widely accepted that initial training equipped a teacher for a lifetime career in education. According to Bagwandeen & Louw (1993), this myth has now been exploded.

Contemporary views of teacher education envisage a process of growth and development for teachers which is career-long. As Schäfer (1999) points out, a teacher's career should be seen as a continuous process of development, adjustment, progress and adaptation, an ongoing process of reflection and growth. Teaching is regarded as 'career-long learning'.

Professional development is thus seen as a continuous process which nevertheless includes certain formal phases, identified according to different stages in a teacher's career. Bagwandeen & Louw (1993) refer to the 'triple-I-continuum' of initial, induction and in-service training.

Initial training, also known as 'pre-service', usually takes place in an institution for higher education, a teacher training college or university, leading to a qualification to teach. Induction, where it occurs, takes place 'on-the-job', and consists of support and training, which new teachers may receive in their first years of teaching, in order "to enable a smooth and non-traumatic transition from their years as students to becoming full-fledged members of the teaching profession" (Bagwandeen & Louw 1993:10). The final part of the triple continuum, in-service teacher education, implies the continuation of professional

development throughout a teacher's career. It is the latter part of the continuum, the third I, 'in-service', that the present thesis focuses on.

INSET (In-Service Education and Training) is aimed at helping teachers to improve their competence and proficiency, and equipping the teacher to interpret the experience of teaching and possibly take on greater professional responsibility. The ultimate objective of INSET is the improvement of the quality of teaching: updating teacher skills and knowledge, preparation for new roles and improvement in qualifications and status.

> Ultimately the task of INSET in its totality is to build a continuing in-service system which can serve the regular development of professional competence, improve schools and schooling and advance and enrich the individual teacher.
> (Bagwandeen & Louw 1993:128)

In-service education should thus be viewed as one of the necessities of educational life for all educators (Bagwandeen & Louw 1993). As Schäfer (1999) argues, INSET is an important part of continuous professional development, a key element of lifelong learning.

Two main typologies of INSET can be identified; the 'deficit' and the 'growth' model. The former, typical of the dominant approach to INSET, is characterised by the view that teachers need professional development because they lack the necessary skills to teach successfully and require further 'training' to make up for their deficiencies and inefficiency.

> It begins with a judgement of weakness usually diagnosed by an outsider and proceeds to suggest a remedy for eradicating the weakness, usually by means of a training programme directed at changing specific aspects of the educator's behaviour in the classroom. (Bagwandeen & Louw 1993:70)

Such a model, however, is not necessarily a sound basis for effective professional development. It is prescriptive, reducing the teachers' choices and derogating rationality of their actions.

In the present study, professional development is defined in terms of the growth model, focussing on fulfilment, rather than reparation:

> Not to repair a personal inadequacy as a teacher, but to seek greater fulfilment as a practitioner of the art. (Jackson 1971:26)

Teacher professional development is about familiarising teachers with developments in their field, assisting them to become progressively more sensitive to what is happening in the classroom and supporting their endeavours to improve what they are doing (Bagwandeen and Louw 1993).

Negotiation

In line with a social constructivist perspective, learning is viewed as a process of social construction, enfolding notions of social interaction, continuous discourse and support (Ernest 1991). Such a perspective recognises the importance of the activity and involvement of the learner in the process of learning, positioning it firmly in the learner's environment, making connections between everyday experience and conceptual practice.

> Knowledge is actively built by the cognising subject . . . serving to organise and make sense of the experience. Teachers like children, learn in social contexts in which they can interact and make sense of their experiences. (Maher & Alston 1993:148)

One's knowledge is dependent on the experience one has and the environment in which one has the experience. Maher & Alston (1993:150) recognise that "teachers confined to their own classroom are trapped in narrow, isolated and repetitive environments in which experiences and responses to them are predictably guided by the models created by them earlier in similar environments". They question what kind of environments are appropriate to interrupt and rebuild this narrow cycle, in order for teachers' experience to be extended and enriched. They conclude that "situations are needed which enable teachers as learners to interact with others in the social *negotiation* of meanings derived from these experiences to provide opportunity for continued growth".

Such an approach echoes the call for "a shift from educating by imposition to educating by *negotiation*". "The role of the teacher in in-service programmes should change from being a consumer to being an active participant in the construction of knowledge" (Rakgokong 1993:259). Murray *et al.* (1990) showed that imposition is not only ineffective but highly

dangerous. They argue for a change towards socio-constructive and truly negotiative approaches to teacher education. Teachers need to be engaged in "*negotiation*, discussions and active participation in building knowledge and the making of meaning" (Rakgokong 1993:256).

Interaction

The construction of knowledge and the making of meaning thus occurs through the active interaction of people with their environment. In view of this relationship between the individual and the social context, learning and meaning production are regarded as simultaneously personal and social (Adler 1996). Lave and Wenger (1991) situate learning in participation in what they refer to as "communities of social practice". This concept provides a theoretical orientation to teachers' learning that incorporates the personal, the practical and the social. Learning is located in social arenas - in the process of co-participation. Teacher professional development is thus viewed as a "socio-cultural practice".

According to Lave and Wenger (1991) learning 'evolves' through a process of apprenticeship (Adler 1996), whereby learners participate in communities of practitioners; the 'mastery' of knowledge and skills involves a continuous progression through exposure to role models, that is, through "legitimate peripheral participation". While the use of the term apprenticeship "reinforces the notion that learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice", I share Schäfer's concern that it inevitably conjures up images of a master and servant relationship, implying not only transmission but also prescription (1999). The master teacher/expert pedagogue acts as 'exemplar', "someone on whom other teachers may model their teaching", a guide and teacher of the beginner/novice teacher, who is regarded as having "no contribution to make to the knowledge base":

> The thought that the . . . novice might teach us something new about what is possible within the constraints and pressures of schooling, that we might learn from the struggle of the beginning teacher to realise something different, that the novice's view of her co-operating teacher's classroom might enlighten the latter . . . are foreign to a discourse which places educators in a clear hierarchy.
> (Elbaz 1991:8)

Mentorship (Gray & Gray 1985; Wagner 1985, Bey & Holmes 1992, Dreyer 1998), a form of apprenticeship on which the original research project was based, is defined by Carmin (1998) thus:

> A complex, interactive process occurring between individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise which incorporates interpersonal or psycho-social development, career and/or educational development and socialisation.
> (Carmin 1988:9, cited in Bush *et al.* 1996)

Emphasis is placed on the differential of experience and expertise which traditionally characterises notions of apprenticeship and mentorship. Other forms of collegial professional support which operate on similar premises include clinical supervision (Goldhammer 1969, Cogan 1973, Smyth 1989) and coaching (Joyce & Showers 1980).

Such interaction is typically one-way, from the more experienced teacher to the less experienced teacher, an approach to teacher professional development which may be seen as perpetuating traditional forms of teaching, at the expense of more critical engagement and challenge, a more dynamic process of mutual support. While it is recognised that teachers working together is a necessary condition for improving practice (Fullan & Steigelbauer 1991), the relationships encouraged are typically hierarchical, echoing the one-way transmissive epistemology of learning typical of the traditional teacher-pupil classroom relationship.

Teacher development, however, is not necessarily a one-way affair, from the experienced to the inexperienced. Rather, it can be seen as a mutually interactive relationship. Lack of experience is not necessarily equivalent to naivety, ignorance or lack of insight. We all bring our own personal knowledge to situations. To restrict the sharing of that knowledge to certain relationships only is to make a highly value-laden judgement about whose knowledge is important and whose is not.

Maja (1997) lends support to the notion of a learning environment which incorporates peer teacher support:

> Teachers who share their problems and expertise are likely to position themselves advantageously within the broader education realm. (Maja 1997:6)

The approach to teacher professional development presented in this thesis is one based on an ideology of mutual professional interaction - a dynamic process of professional support that recognises that each person has different insights to share according to their experience, and that the 'amount' of experience is not necessarily proportional to the quality of that experience. In a mutually supportive approach to professional development, a 'novice' teacher is recognised as a contributor to, as well as a recipient of, the wealth of knowledge of the professional group.

The importance of teachers working together towards the improvement of practice is highlighted (Fullan & Stiegelbauer1991:139) and the "primacy of interaction" is emphasised as "a vehicle for learning" (Fullan 1993). Fullan called for a breaking down of barriers in order to achieve the kind of interaction he believed to be essential for teacher and school development.

Griffin (1991) shares Fullan's concern:

> For too long teachers . . . have been compartmentalised . . . with few opportunities for meaningful and sustained interactions with one another.
>
> When teachers work together to develop common bonds around shared goals, interactive decision making and mutual inquiry, there develops a school culture that is rewarding for teachers as well as beneficial for students. . . . Interactive staff development would capitalise on and provide ongoing opportunities to learn from one another and learn together. (Griffin 1991:250)

It is this concept of interactive development that is promoted in this thesis. It is recognised that while individual effort is a necessary prerequisite to learning, so too are social *negotiation*, interaction, and inter-dependence (Britzman 1986). As Lieberman & Miller (1990) comment, by looking at and understanding interactions one becomes aware of the "unrealised potential of colleagueship".

Internalisation

Teacher education has been, and still is, about input from external 'experts'. Such input may be seen as imposed, in that these experts are either brought to the workplace or the teachers are sent to them, by people in authority, such as heads or advisors (Joyce *et al.* 1983; Goodlad 1984). Such an approach too often neglects the views of the teachers themselves and may

result in teachers viewing the process as implying that they are inadequate (Stoll 1992). The approach taken here regards individual teachers as key players (Loucks-Horsley & Steigelbauer 1991). They are positioned not as passive receivers to be professionally developed, but rather as active contributors who are integrally involved in their professional development (Day 1987).

The approach to teacher professional development advocated in this thesis is in line with what is referred to as 'school-based' or 'school-focussed' INSET, an approach to teacher professional development which recognises and accommodates the central positions of the school and the teachers. It takes place both on and off the school premises and involves internal and external expertise, that is personnel from both inside and outside the school. It is an approach in which the teachers are actively involved in the identification of needs, and in the development and execution of professional development activities.

School based/focussed INSET aims not only at the individual teacher but also at groups of teachers (Feiter, Vonk & Akker 1995). It is orientated towards the needs of the school and its teachers, places the responsibility for professional growth in the hands of the practitioners and allows for shared decision-making (Bagwandeen & Louw 1993). In order for such INSET to happen, it must be initiated by teachers within the school, be sufficiently resourced, be part of an on-going programme, make use of personnel from outside the school and be monitored and evaluated by members of staff involved in the project (Griffiths 1984:17). Feiter *et al.* (1995) point out that such an approach to teacher development can not only be successful but can also have a more profound effect, developing the culture of the school as 'a learning institution'.

We need, therefore, to *internalise* professional development. Such internalisation may be actualised in two different but interrelated ways: individual internalisation and institutional internalisation. Individual internalisation refers to the recognition and realisation of one's own capability and responsibility for teacher development, of oneself (self development) as well as of other teachers. Institutional internalisation refers to the responsibility and capacity of the institution for the professional development of staff (staff development). Teachers need to recognise that they and their colleagues have a lot to teach to, and learn from, each other,

and that they themselves are in the best place for this to happen, the actual context in which they work.

In her application of Lave & Wenger's theory of social practice to the teaching and learning of school mathematics, Adler (1996) stresses the acquisition of knowledge about teaching through ongoing *participation* in the teaching community. Lave & Wenger (1991) clearly identify teachers as "a crucial source of knowledge about teaching". Knowledge about teaching is thus not simply in individual teachers' heads: it is tied to their identities and evolves in and through co-participation in the practices of the teaching community.

This approach is also supported by Bagwandeen & Louw, who argue that "teachers, as professionals, must participate in their own intellectual growth enabling them to improve their professional expertise" (1993:2). Although one might question whether participation is not unavoidable in one's own intellectual growth, I believe what is referred to here is the taking of responsibility for one's own self development. The emphasis is on taking responsibility, as opposed to the traditional view based on imposition from outside (Joyce *et al.* 1983; Goodlad 1984).

Collegiality

Little (1986) and Stoll (1992), amongst others, have identified the importance of collegiality. Wideen found collegiality to be one of the strengths of the school he was studying. There was "constant and intense interaction among the teachers" who provided a forum for each other to test ideas and receive feedback. This interaction "went beyond talk and collaboration to include support for risk taking and in some cases freedom to not collaborate" (Wideen 1992:142). Collegiality, used synonymously with the term "peer interaction", was seen as "an opportunity for growth" providing "something for everyone both in terms of improved teaching and for their own professional development". "It creates a collaborative culture from which curriculum and pedagogical reform can occur" (Wideen 1992:153).

Research on professional relations reveals that collegial work not only breaks the isolation of the classroom, but by working together over time teachers feel better equipped for classroom work, adapting, expanding and deepening their "instructional repertoires" (Little 1990). By

working together to understand and improve life in the classroom, teachers reduce the "endemic uncertainties" (Lortie 1975) that ordinarily make a teacher's hold on success so tenuous.

Grimmett & Crehan (1992) cite Little (1987), who argues that by working closely with colleagues, teachers derive instructional range, depth and flexibility. Other benefits of collegiality include: the derivation of respect from others, colleagues, pupils, parents; career rewards and daily satisfaction (Little 1987). "Teachers are more able to detect and celebrate a pattern of accomplishments within and across classrooms" (Lortie 1975:497). Professional recognition, involvement and influence, derived from collegiality, become rewards that according to Grimmett & Crehan (1992:57) keep teachers "career-oriented and help them establish a high sense of efficacy". Such collegiality can also lead to the general improvement of staff morale (Stoll 1992), relieve isolation, and increase self-confidence, classroom proficiency and professional motivation (Copeland & Jamgochian 1985).

Hargreaves & Dawe (1989:3), however, warn against the danger of 'contrived collegiality', in which bureaucratically driven systems attempt to 'create' collegiality through imposed practices. Such "administrative surrogates for more genuinely collaborative teacher cultures" (ibid. 25) lack the professional culture essential for fostering interdependent collaboration in schools (Lieberman 1989). Collegial practices "grafted on to existing school cultures" without nurturing the underlying beliefs, values and norms that make up the sustaining culture, result in apparently contrived processes of collaboration, the effects of which are easily subverted. While teacher collaboration can provide a positive platform for improvement, it can also degenerate into stilted and unproductive forms of 'contrived collegiality', inhibiting spontaneity, sensuality and creativity (Hargreaves 1994).

Grimmett & Crehan (1992) point out the outcomes of contrived collegiality: teacher resistance, deception, and compliance. These are in direct contrast to the outcomes of interdependent collegiality: teacher development, reflective transformation of classroom practice and the enhancement of pupil learning. Ideally, collegiality develops within the school, the sharing of views among the teachers occurring in "a natural and genuine way" (Wideen 1992). Hickcox & Musella (1992) agree that for collegiality to have any meaning it

has to occur naturally, or has to be a natural part of the dominant culture of the organisation. As they point out, forced cooperation is a contradiction in terms.

The question is: How does one develop a culture conducive to collegiality? And in so developing it, does it not become 'contrived'? Grimmett & Crehan (1992:81) do suggest that "all attempts at initiating collegiality are to some extent contrived in their genesis", and point out that "organisationally induced forms of contrived collegiality play a pivotal role in the implementation of educational change". As Hargreaves (1989) points out, contrived collegiality can serve as a precursor to a culture of collaboration.

Collaboration

Much international research has focussed on the notion of collaboration. The importance of collaboration is emphasised by Fullan (1985), Stoll (1992) and more recently, Christiansen *et al.* (1997). The issue of collaboration is regarded as fundamental to a mutually supportive approach to teacher professional development as advocated in this thesis.

Hargreaves (1994) points to "debates and struggles surrounding the meaning of collaboration", highlighting its "conceptual woolliness". The term is often used and understood, for example, as synonymous with 'co-operation'. These two terms, however, are used more distinctly in this thesis. It is thus important to clarify the distinction.

While cooperation is regarded as necessary for collaboration to occur, not all cooperation is necessarily of a collaborative nature: it is possible to cooperate without collaborating, but collaboration cannot occur without cooperation. Cooperation need not be exercised voluntarily. In some instances it may even be viewed as coerced: for instance, where situational demands and expectations make working together an obligation which is not necessarily welcomed. Inherent in collaboration, however, is a sense of willingness and personal commitment that may or may not accompany cooperation.

Cooperation, unlike collaboration, may occur in one direction only; it is not necessarily mutual. One may cooperate with a colleague, for example, by answering a question asked, or solving a problem given; collaboration, on the other hand, is about jointly finding solutions.

Collaboration is not something required by one of others, but desired by all, that is, mutual. It is the idea of *mutuality* that is fundamental to the notion of collaboration as used in this thesis. Striving for a collaborative professional environment motivated by the belief that the inherent dynamics of a necessarily mutual process are likely to be more conducive to meaningful development. Cooperation alone may serve to perpetuate the status quo, while collaboration, by dint of its inherent dynamic, is more likely to challenge it.

The premise of this thesis is that the design and implementation of teacher professional development must involve the teachers themselves. It should be a *collaborative* process in which the teacher is the main protagonist, identifying needs, and organising and implementing activities. Bagwandeen & Louw (1993:62) refer to the "rich potential inherent in the processes by means of which teachers can educate one another". Teachers attending courses often indicate a willingness to work together, to "both contribute from their own expertise and learn from their peers". It is important therefore to utilise teachers' professional knowledge and experience. As Bagwandeen & Louw argue, by working together teachers can acquire increasing control over their own classroom praxis, using the process to "gain a window on their own teaching" and engage in "truly emancipatory learning" (1993:137).

It is recognised that teacher development must actively listen to and sponsor the teachers' voice and create a community of teachers who discuss and develop their purposes together (Fullan & Hargreaves 1992). As Schäfer (1999) points out, teachers need to take ownership of and responsibility for their own growth, which makes their involvement in the process crucial. Teachers are viewed as collaborators in their own professional development as well as the professional development of their colleagues.

While some research has focussed on appropriate strategies for different stages or phases of teachers' careers (Burke 1987, Feiter, Vonk & Akker 1995), the contention of this thesis is that teacher collaboration and mutual support are essential components of teacher professional development throughout a teacher's career. The mutual collaboration of teachers is not, however, regarded as an approach sufficient in itself to achieve effective teacher professional development. It is rather that a working environment in which teachers are collaborating will provide a stronger and more supportive base. An approach based on mutual

peer support, as focussed on here, does not exclude external intervention that is appropriate to the needs of the teachers. The key notion is that a collaborative teacher culture is more conducive to development (Walker 1991).

Hargreaves (1994) argues that patterns of collaboration need to be pluralistic and flexible in nature rather than set on contriving or imposing whole school consensus. Collaboration does not necessitate consensus. Healthy collaboration would encourage the discussion, acknowledgment and accommodation of divergent ideas and attitudes.

> Staff development programmes must maintain a fragile balance between building cultures where collaboration and colleagueship are promoted and where individual integrity and artistry are allowed to flourish.
>
> (Lieberman & Miller 1991:108)

The notion of 'mutuality' on which this research is based does not therefore imply necessary consensus, but rather an inter-collegial relationship that is dynamically interactive, based on collegial respect and appreciation for individuals and the knowledge, experience and values they bring to the situation. By emphasising collaboration one inevitably places a premium on coherence - yet this must not be at the expense of individual inventiveness and independent initiative. The argument here, therefore, is for the co-existence of individualism and collaboration (Fullan 1993): an approach to professional development that recognises and encourages individuality without imposed isolation, and collaboration without contrived consensus.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

This chapter has highlighted specific dimensions which are regarded as characteristic of the conceptualisation of a collaborative approach to teacher professional development on which this thesis is based: *development, negotiation, interaction, internalisation, collegiality and collaboration.*
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Chapter 3:

The Methodology

This chapter focuses on - the process of the research. After a brief overview of the study its methodology is articulated in terms of *orientation, design, stance* and *process*. Methodological issues that were raised during the process are highlighted throughout the text evoking their fundamental and integral nature.

The research presented is based on work that was carried out over a period of four years with a group of twelve teachers in a local primary school who had identified the need to develop their mathematics teaching. The initial aim of the research was to implement and evaluate a project designed to encourage a collaborative approach to teacher development based on mutual peer support. For the initial two years the teachers and I worked together, employing a range of strategies to encourage the development of an interactive approach to professional development [Chapter 7 - *The Journey of a Project*].

It was while working with the teachers that I recognised the importance of understanding more about the teachers' experience and the context in which the teachers are situated (Miller & Kagwa 1997).

> If significant changes are to occur, attempts must be made to understand the experiences of teachers and the contexts in which they work . . . . It is important to understand the experiences and hear the voices.
>
> (Constas 1997:715 & 684)

This led to a second phase of the research aimed at gaining an understanding of the situation. Through the analysis and interpretive framing of teachers' stories of their experiences, an understanding was developed, on the part of the teachers as well as myself, of the situation in which the teachers are located and the experiences which had shaped and were shaping it [Chapter 8: *The Journey of a School*].

The research presented here, then, represents an attempt to understand, interpret and make recommendations relating to the professional development of teachers. The understanding is linked to the teachers' educational biographies and experiences of the culture in which they

are situated. The interpretation is arrived at through what may be viewed as a dynamic ongoing construction of meaning - a process of *negotiation*.

Much international research has been carried out which focuses on teachers and their experience of teaching (Goodson 1980, Goodlad 1984, Nias 1989). As Hargreaves (1994) points out, teachers' lives are packed with complexity and surprise, and learning about them is a continuous process of discovery. One of the aims of this study is to "provide within the research process a means and forum for the expression and examination of teachers' views and experiences of their worlds" (Freeman 1996:738). Rather than a more traditional approach to educational research based on observation and external views of the situation, the approach here is more an internal one that seeks, listens to and frames the voices of the teachers.

Although the initial project on which this research is based was concerned with mathematics education, the issues focussed on are generic to the concept of teacher professional development. The research presents teacher professional development as a situated practice, highlighting its institutional and larger social and political contexts. It is also informed directly by the concerns of the school practitioners and teacher educators, so as to generate greater awareness and understanding of their situation.

The focus is on a particular case of study and generalist claims are not being made. However, it is expected that the understandings reached and interpretations generated will resonate beyond the immediate context, and it is hoped that the recommendations made might be of value elsewhere.

ORIENTATION

> While we need conceptual frames for purposes of understanding, classifying research and researchers into neatly segregated 'paradigms' or 'traditions' does not reflect the untidy realities of real scholars . . . 'Traditions' must be treated not as clearly defined, real entities, but only as loose framewords for dividing research . .
>
> (Atkinson, Delamont & Hammersley 1988:243, cited in Lather 1991:11)

It is recognised that "the different [research] traditions are part of a dynamic context" and are therefore "in flux" (Popkewitz 1984). The methodological orientation of this research may therefore be described as "an ecumenical blend of epistemologies and procedures" (Miles & Huberman 1988).

While it is accepted that methodological perspective guides the methods one uses, it is recognised that methodological decisions need to be made according to "the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated and the resources available" (Patton 1990:38-9, cited by Cantrell 1993). Patton advocates a "paradigm of choices [which] rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness". Importance is not only placed on which methods are used, but how they are used.

The research presented here may be located within the *qualitative paradigm*. Despite the traditional dominance of quantitative approaches to research, typical of and projected from the natural sciences onto the social sciences, qualitative research methods developed and employed by anthropologists and sociologists are increasingly being recognised and used by educational researchers. Lemmer (1992) points to the considerable contribution qualitative approaches can make to educational research, making specific reference to the context of South Africa:

> In South Africa, where qualitative research still occupies marginal status, it is important that educationists become more familiar with this approach so that they might gain access to insights that qualitative studies in education are able to provide. (Lemmer 1992:292)

In the movement from quantitative positivist methods to more qualitative post-positivist methods, greater importance has been placed on the gathering of first-hand data, that is,

studying behaviour within and in terms of the situation in which it occurs. Statistical analyses have, according to Lemmer (1992), been supplemented with detailed descriptions, life histories, diaries, interviews, sketches, photographs and field notes from participant observations. Single case studies and the study of small samples have become legitimate methodological forms in a research paradigm concerned with specific behaviours in specific contexts.

> The qualitative tradition . . . focuses on the in-depth, the detail, the process and the context. (Lemmer 1992:294)

Despite great diversity among techniques employed by qualitative researchers, Lemmer (1992) identifies certain common features. These include the research aim of understanding the life-world of the individuals or groups studied from their own frame of reference (Firestone 1987); the 'natural' settings of the research; the role of the researcher as 'the major research instrument', collecting and analysing data and in turn affecting its validity through experiences and beliefs; and the detailed focus on specific cases or small samples, emphasising "the detail and quality of an individual or small group's experience" (Lemmer 1992).

Within the post-positivist paradigm of qualitative research, this study may also be identified as having a strongly interpretive orientation, focussed on gaining insight and understanding. Interpretivism is regarded as typical of the post-positivistic paradigmatic shift towards paradigms of 'disclosure' rather than 'prescription', and 'advocacy' rather than 'neutrality' (Lather 1991:7), challenging the absolutist epistemology and the purported objectivity of the positivists. While positivism still remains the dominant paradigm in educational research, post-positivistic perspectives are gaining greater acceptance. Such a shift appears "not only appropriate but long overdue":

> The complex nature of education - entangled in interrelationships, replete with social, political and economic context and laden with values - demands that an alternative paradigm drive educational research. (Cantrell 1993:87)

The research may also be described as 'critical'. Although the original aim of the research was to effect change, the term is used here in a fundamental sense to refer to the effects of the interactive, reflective and interpretive nature of the research process. While the act of intervention is recognised as "reality-altering" in itself (Lather 1986), the research approach

adopted may be regarded as naturally facilitating the conscientisation of those involved in the situation. Reflective engagement, a strong characteristic of the research process, may lead to a gain in self-understanding and to change at some level, whether it is in terms of thought or action.

It is thus recognised that the very act of research is in itself a critical one, and that the research process provides an opportunity for participants to grow through thoughtful reflection on their experiences and how these are framed in the process of analysis. However, despite its initial more critical research orientation, the aim of this particular research process became one of developing understanding rather than implementing change, and the research is therefore more appropriately located in the interpretive paradigm.

As Cantrell (1993:84) observes, interpretivism addresses more adequately the "highly complex, interactive, holistic nature of the settings and issues under study". Interpretivism seeks "to understand phenomena and to interpret meaning within the social and cultural context of the natural setting" (Cantrell 1993:84). This approach to "cultural science" (Popkewitz 1984) is regarded as "interpretive understanding" whereby the social world is understood within its context (Lemmer 1992:292).

The research became a process designed not only to encourage development, but also - and more particularly - to understand the experience of the teachers:

> Qualitative implies a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'. . . Qualitative research, then, has the aim of understanding experience. (Sherman & Webb 1988:7)

The tradition of qualitative research, and more specifically interpretivism, has developed in reaction to the positivist advocacy of "a neutral science wherein the researcher assumes the role of detached observer of an independently existing reality" (Lemmer 1992:292). Qualitative theorists, however, do not view science as neutral, but rather perceive it as value- and context-bound. Unlike positivists, interpretivists "seek subjective perceptions of individuals":

> In order to uncover what people believe and to render the meaning about their actions and intentions, interpretive researchers interact dialogically with the participants. Within this interrelationship, values cannot be sidestepped. Unlike positivists who attempt to separate values from facts and offer explanations of reality which are empirically verifiable, interpretivists accept the inseparable bond between values and facts and attempt to understand reality, especially the behaviour of people, within a social context.
>
> (Cantrell 1993:84)

DESIGN

As in Henning's (1993) research, it became clear that in order to reveal reality, including the unexpected, the research needed to be based on ethnographic principles (Hammersley & Aitkinson 1983).

> Ethnography . . . is an inquiry process carried out by human beings and guided by a point of view that derives from experience in the research setting.
>
> (Wolcott 1988:191)

Ethnography, according to Henning (1993:114), is generally regarded as "extended research in one or more sites, giving a thorough or thick description". In the present study such description is based on a variety of methods employed to gather information: research journal, questionnaires, focus group interactions, and interviews/conversations. It is recognised that while "qualitative thinking can also contemplate quantitative data, emphasis is on profound interpretation and not calculation" (Henning 1992:115).

The research design could be described as a single-sited case study focussing on a group of teachers involved in a teacher development project in a particular school. Typical of interpretive/qualitative methodology, the case study is a "small, information-rich sample, selected purposefully to allow the researcher to focus in depth on issues important to the study" (Cantrell 1993). The same sample was used for the duration of the study: a group of twelve teachers, plus the principal, from St Ann's primary school. These were the teachers involved in mathematics education who were keen to be part of a teacher professional development project [Chapter 7: *A Journey of a Project*].

The research design rests on a basis of reflection, reflection which has been fundamental in informing and directing the emergence and evolution of the research. The reflection takes place on two levels, referred to by Walker (1993) as first and second order levels. The first

order level, i.e. the reflection on what is happening, affects and shapes research at the second order level, i.e. the reflection on my own practice as a researcher: the two levels are inextricably linked or "dialectically related". The research process is thus characterised by continuous cycles of feedback and reflection:

> A never ending spiral of action, reflection, enquiry and theorising . . .
>
> (Walker 1993:107)

The design of the research may therefore be described as an interpretive case study informed by a continuous cyclical process of reflection.

Structure

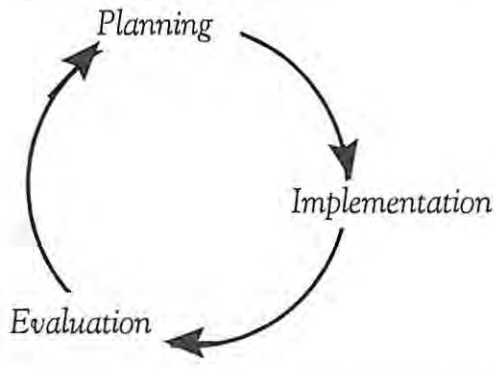
In terms of its structure, this research could be placed in the middle of Cantrell's (1993:89) continuum of design ranging from 'Prestructured' to 'Emergent'. That is to say, the research did not follow a strictly predetermined structure, nor was it without any pre-structure, but rather was based on a flexible structure which was constantly being adapted according to 'emergent' criteria. The structure evolved in response to the research context. Due to the evolutionary nature of the research, the initial plans/intentions were inevitably open to change, and issues and tensions arising throughout the research guided the progress of the journey.

> Plans, research questions, theories, data collection strategies and analysis all evolve from the beginning point as the researcher learns more about the people, places, events and processes which are the focus of the study.
>
> (Cantrell 1993:88)

The research developed a phasal structure. Two distinct research phases can be identified, each phase characterised by continuous cyclical processes of reflection:

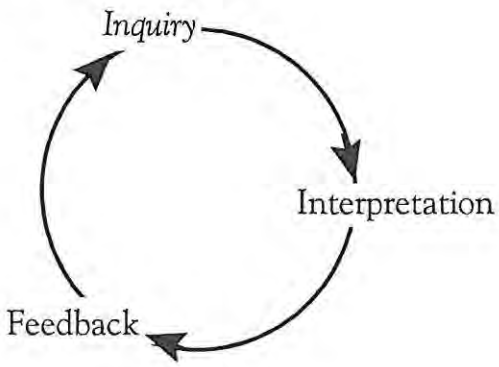
PHASE 1: [Chapter 7: *A Journey of a Project*]

Implementation & Evaluation



PHASE 2: [Chapter 8: *A Journey of a School*]

Inquiry & Interpretation



Further details of these research phases are presented in the third section of this thesis [*Journeys of Experience*] and an outline is presented in Appendix 1. It is important to point out that this structure was not pre-designed. It was the experience of Phase 1 that highlighted the need for a greater understanding of the situation being researched. In retrospect, it is recognised that Phase 2 might ideally have been carried out before Phase 1. However, its coming later in the process did derive advantage from the fact that a closer relationship had by then been established with the teachers, allowing such enquiry to operate at a more intimate, more open and possibly more informative level.

ISSUE: Immersion

'Prolonged engagement' in the situation being researched is often regarded as requisite for an ethnographic study. However, as Ely points out, the meaning of 'prolonged' is different for different researchers (1991:53). When referring to the length or depth of engagement of the researcher in the situation, Ely uses the term 'sufficient': sufficient to uncover constructions, and to facilitate immersing oneself in and understanding the context's culture.

> If the researcher stays sufficiently with the situation, then what is important in the situation will unfold. (Ely 1991:53)

While I did not immerse myself in the situation as a traditional ethnographer might, my engagement with the context has been 'sufficient' to gain an understanding of the phenomenon that the teachers recognise and acknowledge. This is confirmed through the reflective process of consensual validation.

STANCE

The term stance is used here to refer to the personal 'positioning' of the research participants, of myself as the researcher, and the research relationship between myself and the teachers.

Myself as the researcher

In my role as researcher, I adopted what Ely describes as an "ethnographic stance", a stance that "demands an attitude that puts us into learning roles" (1991:49). I attempted to look at, listen to, and interpret aspects of the teachers' lives. In order to do this I worked with the teachers in a specific capacity over an extended period of time. Throughout the process, my role was an interactive one. During Phase 1 [Chapter 7: A Journey of a Project] of the research, my role could be described as that of an 'active participant' (Wolcott 1988). The teachers and I participated as a group, in the professional development project, aimed at developing collaborative peer support. During Phase 2 [Chapter 8: A Journey of a School] of the research, my role became more that of 'privileged observer', a known and trusted person given easy access to information (Wolcott 1988). Individual conversations with the teachers were aimed at gaining an understanding of the situation.

ISSUE: Abstraction & Transcendence

Ely (1991:49) suggests that in order to understand, we must become 'the other' and learn to see through the eyes of others. However, I debate the possibility of being able to really understand another's experience. All I can claim is to present an understanding - to have constructed an interpretive framework from the words describing the teachers' experiences - an understanding nevertheless authenticated through processes of 'consensual validation' [Validation p 65].

Similarly, I lack faith in the possible abstraction and transcendence of personal assumptions, feelings and preconceptions also recommended. While it is recognised that as researchers we need to become aware of such things, I cannot claim to "bracket them" or "put them aside" (Ely 1991:50). Such bracketing, typical of a phenomenological orientation to qualitative research, could be viewed as a post-positivistic validatory strategy, attempting to get as close as possible to the 'objectivity' of the more traditional positivistic approach to research.

One of the assumptions, however, on which this research is based is that it is not possible to be objective. Stevenson (1997:116) refers to this as the "postmodern loss of faith in objectivity and a recognition of diverse ways of experiencing and knowing the world".

Working to become aware of assumptions, feelings and preconceptions and taking care to acknowledge them is, I believe, vital in order to help contextualise the research. However, achieving a transcendental understanding by means of phenomenological bracketing, I do not believe to be possible. Such things are foundational to our thinking and will have affected our choice of research focus, the process undertaken and much more. I do not believe that it is possible to dissociate ourselves from them. However, awareness and acknowledgement of the influence of the researcher's subjectivity is vital in providing an interpretive background to the research. The stance taken here, rather than attempting to cast such personal attributes aside, is one of recognition and acknowledgement of how they might affect the researcher's engagement with the research.

> Qualitative researchers cannot point to the test, the sampling procedures, the statistical treatment, the outside expert. They can only point to themselves and to how they decided to sample, to treat data, to work with others, to confer with experts, to carry out their research, and to share their findings. This is so because they are their own most important instrument.
>
> (Ely 1991:103)

It was through reading Margot Ely and her colleagues' enlightening and liberating words on the process of qualitative research that I fully recognised my own centrality to the research process and the responsibility that I had to accept. As I became the central 'instrument' of research, it follows that the process will be affected by who I am, the experiences I have had, my motivations and my understandings. While I cannot realistically expect to recognise, let alone describe, every aspect of my consciousness, I feel it is important that this account reflects the personal nature of the work that helps to make it what it is.

> What people are will shape them as qualitative research instruments. These researchers put themselves into the service of their search, analysis and presentation. (Ely 1991:103)

In this section therefore, leaning heavily on Ely's work, I attempt to take a look at myself as a research instrument, identifying personal dimensions I bring to the research process.

Flexibility

Inflexible researchers travel along their journey strictly according to plan, taking no short cuts and making no detours. No matter what insights the journey might offer, such researchers would continue relentlessly along the way they had planned, only noticing that which they were looking for. The flexible traveller, however, may begin with a planned route but is open to deviation depending on the context and situations that arise.

> *Despite an initial detailed plan of the research route, the process of research has become characterised by spontaneity and improvisation; from logistical changes of venue to praxiological changes of approach. While, for example, the initial plan had been to collect data through semi-structured interviews based on detailed outlines, the experience evolved into open-ended conversations based on one initial question. The 'reality' of the situation, what actually happened when trying to implement the planned approach, encouraged me to rethink and change my approach. The more informal approach to data collection proved to be more comfortable, not only physically in terms of the experience itself, but also intellectually. Ideologically, this more naturalistic approach is more comfortable personally than the initially planned, more mechanistic methodology.* (Research Journal 11.99)

Ely refers to such an approach as "intellectual flexibility"; being "open to the data" (Ely 1991:132). The way in which the process of this research has been based on a continuous feedback cycle made an inflexible approach impossible, unless the feedback was to be ignored. The data itself has informed each successive stage of the process. While such an approach often challenged my expectations, I learnt to respond constructively to new, unexpected and sometimes unwelcome data! The journey progressed very differently from how I had anticipated.

> The goal of any research is to add to our knowledge, to enlighten us. Therefore, it is important to be open to what is interesting and potentially enlightening about the situation being studied, even if it is not what was originally intended. It is important to allow for 'distractions', if they are important ones. (Ely 1991:55)

The phasal structure of the research process is indicative of the methodological response to the emergent nature of the research process. The process moved from a critical one based on implementation and evaluation [Phase 1], to an interpretive one based on inquiry and interpretation in the promotion of understanding [Phase 2].

> Researchers depend on their own flexibility and humour on accepting the inevitable and sometimes discomfiting notion that things are not as they seemed when they planned - even yesterday - and that change may be our only constant. (Ely 1991: 103)

Accepting ambiguity

The acceptance of ambiguity is, as Ely points out, another helpful characteristic. She emphasises the importance of 'overturning' or 'dismantling' preconceived notions and assumptions. As she quotes from a student's journal:

> During the process interpretations may change - one may end up seeing a totally different phenomenon than one imagined . . . One does not know what one will find until one has found it. (Ely 1991:135)

Initially, I approached the research with a level of understanding based on my own experience of the situation. It was during the research process, engaging with the teachers and talking to them about their experiences that my understanding was challenged and grew. What also became clear, adding to the ambiguous nature of the research, was the 'multilayeredness' of reality. I learned to listen to and develop an understanding of perspectives other than my own.

> The ability to envision a prism of viewpoints rather than merely one single perspective is crucial if one is to engage successfully in this research methodology which is based on the notion of multiple realities. (Ely 1991:133)

Involvement

To remain detached, to suppress one's feelings and personal opinions and maintain an exterior of neutrality - this was not the aim of the approach taken here. My involvement with the teachers and the relationship we built up, comprise a vital part of my role and the stance I have chosen to take. The relationship built with the teachers as a result of the study is a fundamental aspect of the research context and cannot be ignored.

> We are the primary instruments, but we are not cool, automised instruments. As human beings with warmth and feeling, our pulses resonate with the heartbeat of our research participants. While we try to maintain distance and perspective, we, too have personal responses to what we see and hear.
>
> We must acknowledge and accept the emotional aspect as part and parcel of the method. In the larger sense, we strive to harness this aspect to become more aware, more able, more insightful. (Ely 1991:108 & 112)

Ely both recognises and affirms "the affective component" of research. Such research is a human endeavour, requiring personal engagement in the lives of other human beings, "going beyond the superficial mask of public impression and entering a highly personal realm of private thoughts, secret passions" (Ely 1991:112).

While there may be concern that emotional involvement with the participants may "distort" or "interfere" with the data (Ely 1991:114), involvement to some degree in the situation is inevitable, and could even be regarded as essential for the research to take place. Accepting the human nature of the situation and consequent inevitability of personal involvement, I would concur with Glazer (1980) that such an approach may result in enhancing the research, leading possibly to "rare analytical insights". However, as Glazer also points out, there is a need to remain "emotionally vital enough to step back and perceive the contours of the data. It is a rigorous, affective exercise demanding emotional reserves and critical perceptiveness" (Glazer 1980:29).

> It is typical for the researcher to experience a slew of unanticipated, perhaps chaotic or disorganising emotions during the course of the research.
> (Ely 1991:109)

This was comforting to read. My experience of the research process has been characterised by a roller coaster of emotions. Feelings of insecurity, anxiety and fear, were interspersed with feelings of insight, excitement and elation; doubt and uncertainty regarding my ability and what I was doing, countered by excitement at finding a piece of literature which affirmed what I was doing; anxiety about the teachers' response to the process, interspersed with elation when a conversation revealed how enlightening the experience had been; fear of committing ideas to paper, dispelled by affirmation from critical friends.

Ely emphasises the parallel nature of the cognitive and affective aspects of research, referring to her own experience:

> Our hopes, fears, and passions, had at least as heavy role to play as our cognitive grasp of the field in how we came to, planned for, and carried out our work . . .
> Our educational philosophy - shot through inseparably with both feelings and information. (Ely 1991:37)

Ely's student takes a very philosophical viewpoint:

> It is an advantage to be able to view emotion as a source of strength and to be open to mining ones's emotions for their intellectual lessons. (Ely 1991:136)

My feelings were recorded in a personal research journal written throughout the journey. This journal not only provides important data regarding the process itself, but also highlights the "emotional pebbles and potholes" (Ely 1991:111) of the journey.

Self Critique

A fundamental dimension of the research process was reflection, not only the procedural cycles of reflection, but personal critically constructive reflection. I constantly reflected on my own role in the research process.

> *When transcribing the initial 'conversations', I was horrified to realise how much of the talking I was doing. As in my everyday conversations, I filled silences and 'helped' the teachers say what I thought they were trying to say. On reflection, I realise that what I was doing was actually proving more of a hindrance than a help. However, having become aware of this, I have made a conscious effort to say less, not to interrupt and generally leave more room for the teachers to talk. It has been personally challenging . . I have surprised myself by how much I listened and allowed silence (not what I am usually good at!)*
> (Research Journal: 11.06.00)

The research relationship

I began the research journey with a desire, based on an ethical belief in democracy, to engage in participatory action research. It seemed only appropriate that the study, focussing on a collaborative approach to teacher professional development, be a collaborative venture, in which we all, as maths teachers, could work together, supporting and learning from each other, and documenting and reflecting on the process. The approach to the research would thus be a kind of meta narrative of the subject of the research - collaboration.

The reality proved to be ironic in its own meta narrative. I recognise, in retrospect, the paradox of my own naivety. I had been expecting to work with the teachers in the very way in which I had observed wasn't happening and was trying to encourage, that is, collaboratively! I had, also naively, assumed that the teachers would accept me as 'a peer', another maths teacher, who was helping to facilitate a process of professional development through mutual support and collaboration.

As the journey progressed, I began to recognise how the teachers were regarding me, as opposed to the way in which I regarded myself and expected others to regard me, and acknowledged my own responsibility in this relationship. It became clear that while I could be regarded as a 'participant' in the research process, the mode of participation was different from that of the teachers, and therefore the roles needed to be differentiated. While the teachers could be regarded as 'research participants', I myself was a 'participant researcher'.

What remained important about the research relationship was that it was dynamic. While there was a clearer distinction of roles than I had initially hoped for, the relationship was not monologic. I took responsibility for initiating and facilitating the process, but the teachers worked *with* me, engaged right from the beginning in identifying what they wanted and evaluating what was happening. The teachers became part of *my* journey and I became part of *their* journey: **A journey of *negotiation.***

ISSUE: Control/Ownership

Despite involvement of the teachers at every stage of the research, I recognise that the agenda and process of the research were ultimately in my hands. While the process evolved in reaction to the involvement and response of the teachers, the onus of 'control' was with myself. For instance, whilst the overarching issue of peer support was recognised by the practitioners as a useful strategy for professional development, it became my personal research goal to attempt to gain an understanding of the context. At the same time, it is recognised that the teachers' control of their involvement - if and how they were involved - and the process of consensual validation gave them a level of ownership.

Unlike traditional research conducted on practitioners, the present research is conducted *with* the practitioners, involving them in the generative phases of the research process. While I am content to label this relationship as 'participatory' and 'co-constructive', I am not comfortable with calling it 'collaborative'.

To be truly collaborative, the research, I believe, is not just done *with* the research participants, but also *by* them. While the teachers worked with me, they did not actually conduct the research. The teachers have input into the research by contributing to parts of the process, but the research is not an ongoing part of their practice.

Despite the desire for a democratic, egalitarian partnership with the teachers in the research process, I could not escape the fact that it was their situation that was the focus of the research and I was too distant from the situation to ever claim an equal 'status'. The dynamics of the situation were not conducive to my ideal of research. In retrospect, it is clear that to even try negotiating such a partnership would not have been appropriate. I realised that while we were all participants in the research process, the nature of our participation differed.

The relationship between the research participants, myself and the teachers, may be regarded as one of *co-construction*: an "interactive and reciprocal relationship in which practitioners contribute to the construction and reconstruction of knowledge" (Stevenson 1997:107). By describing their situation and experiences, explicating their personal/private theories, commenting on and reacting to concepts, ideas and frameworks presented to them, critically examining preliminary interpretations and conclusions, I have attempted to co-construct with the teachers an understanding of the issues grounding their experience of education (Stevenson 1997:114). In the dialogue between myself and the teachers, they contribute their 'private', experiential knowledge i.e. "concepts and ideas derived from experience or personal practice" (Stevenson 1997:109) to my public knowledge, which is also influenced by my own private knowledge, i.e. the "co-construction of the reality of practice".

The research process has involved all participants in the identification of needs, and in the planning, carrying out, reviewing and sharing of experiences. The teachers were involved continuously and deliberately in the evaluation of what they were doing and in the development of any strategies and changes in approach which evolved. The design of the research was based on a dynamic relationship in which I worked with the teachers to help resolve identified problems and the teachers worked with me in the development of a greater understanding of the situation. Working together in the initial phase of the research proved vital in establishing relationships of trust and cooperation which were fundamental to the more intimate *negotiations* characteristic of the second research phase. The relationship became one based on "openness, reciprocity, mutual disclosure and *negotiation*" (Malone 1994:26).

PROCESS

This part of the chapter focuses on the collection of data, and the processes of its analysis and validation. Although these are separated here in the text, in reality they were integrally related.

Data Collection

Typical of interpretive/qualitative research, the *data* used in this study consists primarily of *words*. The teachers' words and my own are interwoven throughout the thesis as evidence and illustration. The data therefore emanates from two primary sources: there is that provided by myself as the researcher and that provided by the other research participants. The former includes my own personal reflections as the researcher, in the form of informal field and reflective, analytical notes, which are referred to as my *research journal*. The latter includes the teachers' reflections, collected using *questionnaires, focus group discussion,* and *conversations*. At different stages in the process, these sources were used in the production of secondary data sources: presentations, a report, a chapter in a book on teacher development and finally the thesis. These 'documentaries' were ultimately woven into the process, acting as secondary pieces of data which were reflected on, generating further data and fuelling further interaction.

Research Journal

> The place where each qualitative researcher faces the self as instrument through a personal dialogue about moments of victory and disheartenment, hunches, feelings, insights, assumptions, biases and ongoing ideas about method . . . receptacle of a researcher's description, vision, views, feelings, insights. (Ely 1991:69)

My research journal is a space where I recorded personal reflections on the research journey, "a written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data" (Bogden & Biklen 1982:74). The journal is on the one hand a record of the "cycle of ongoing data collection and analysis - that continual conjoined activity that characterises and powers qualitative field work", and on the other, "a safe place, a haven where feelings, fears, doubts, suspicions, intuitions all have an honoured place" (Ely 1991:18).

The structure of the journal is informal, its content erratic and its style idiosyncratic. The journal is made up of field notes, providing a chronological account of what happened when, why and how, including schedules, outlines, letters etc. The journal includes plans, descriptions and what Bogden & Biklen (1982) refer to as "reflective jottings": notes written after the fact. Occasionally notes were made 'at the scene', but this was avoided unless necessary (e.g. during a conversation with a teacher who was uncomfortable about being taped) - as I felt it was intrusive, hampering my own engagement and restricting the ease of the other participants. These notes are interlaced with a personal dialogue of emotions, questions, dilemmas, issues, struggles and triumphs:

> Conversations with oneself about what has occurred in the research process, what has been learned, the insights this provides, and the leads these suggest for future action. (Ely 1991:80)

Reflective jottings or "analytic memos" serve an "important function in moving the methodology and analysis forward" (Ely 1991:80).

> Analytic memos allow room for speculation and integration. They allow us to look back so we can check our beginning assumptions, analysis, and conceptual frame, and they allow us to look forward so that we can create directions for our work. (Ely 1991:82)

The reflective process of writing the journal proved to be a fundamental aspect of the research process; facilitating greater personal insight, greater connection with the 'events' and greater realisation and understanding. Making the time and using a physical space in which to record one's thoughts facilitates a level of reflection that is not possible at the time when one is actively involved. In retrospect, I regret not using my journal more than I did. So many of my thoughts and impressions were not recorded. So while I do not claim that my journal is a 'complete' digest of all that happened 'out there' and inside my head, I do value it as a vital source of data: a log that although inevitably incomplete, nevertheless provides rich, informative data.

Questionnaires [Phase 1]

Questionnaires were used during the first phase of the research to find out specific details about the teachers and to generate evaluative information regarding the MSP teacher development project [Chapter 7: *A Journey of a Project*]. The questionnaire was chosen as an appropriate technique as it is regarded as an effective instrument for the collection of certain data in terms of time and effort; more efficient than, for example, securing all the information through interviews. Questionnaires also allow the respondents the advantage of time and space in which to respond.

An initial brief questionnaire was used at the beginning of the research to gather information about the individual teachers and to ascertain their desired level of involvement in the project, any concerns they might have had, and what they hoped to gain from the project [Appendix 2: *Questionnaire 1*]. A second questionnaire conducted during the project focussed on the teachers' experience of professional development and collegiality [Appendix 2: *Questionnaire 2*].

At certain points during the initial phase of the research, questionnaires were also used to evaluate the teacher development project [Appendix 3: *Evaluations*]. Responses to all questionnaires were collated and fed back to the teachers, proving vital not only in informing the participants about the research context, but also in informing the next stage of the project. These evaluations were therefore a vital form of communication regarding the evolution of the project.

Focus group discussions [Phase 1 & 2] (Kitzinger 1994)

Focus groups were used in both phases of the research, in order to seek an understanding of the meanings that are developed by people within the group setting. During Phase 1 the strategy was used when discussing specific issues and at the end of Phase 2 it was used to reflect on the personal experience of participating in the research process. Focus group sessions took place as part of the teacher development project in Phase 1 of the research. The final focus group session took place at the end of the research process, as part of a general reflective session marking the end of the field work.

The general structure followed was that once the purpose of the exercise had been explained, the teachers would be given a preliminary period of time to think about the focus issue alone. Then they would discuss the issue in groups of three or four. 'Props' were used to stimulate the discussion. In Phase 1, questions and statements were used, while in the final reflective session magazines were used to produce graphical representations of the teachers' responses. The main points were recorded and finally fed back to and discussed with the whole group. While the teachers were conversing I would circulate, contributing to their discussion and sometimes asking probing questions to stimulate further dialogue. I made a deliberate choice not to video- or audio-tape these sessions, to avoid discomforting participants or stifling the conversation. Photographs were taken as a visual record and the teachers' notes as well as my own field notes provided textual data.

ISSUE: Personal dynamics

The focus group technique was chosen as personal experience with such an approach has shown that it can have a synergetic effect, encouraging people to open up more, freeing people up to be more honest and critical. It is recognised, however, that while such an approach may be conducive to productive discussion, the dynamics within the groups may also serve to stifle it. The dominance of 'stronger' members, for example, - may result in the 'silencing' of other members and skew the outcome of the discussion. It is felt, however, that such dynamics are less inhibitive in small focus groups than when all the participants are together in one large group. Both the freeing and constrictive nature of personal dynamics are recognised as natural aspects of any human interaction and are therefore inherent characteristics of any research technique involving personal exchange.

Interviews - Conversations [Phase 2]

> Interviews are at the heart of doing ethnography because they seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity. (Ely 1991:58)

As Cantrell (1993:96) points out, "the purpose of the interview . . . is to allow the researcher to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words and to access the unobservable", enabling the inquirer "to develop insights into how the participants interpret and make meaning of the world".

Interviewing formed the central data-gathering method in Phase 2. The technique, however, developed rapidly from an initial semi-structured approach with detailed outlines, to a far more open approach where an open-ended question was used to initiate what became conversations rather than interviews.

Initial 'interviews' were aimed at situating the case study, at finding out specific details regarding its context. They could be described as semi-structured, directed and focussed on specific areas. These interviews were designed to elicit information regarding the institution, as opposed to information regarding the individual, which had been gathered through questionnaires. These interviews were carried out with two of the participants who had been at St Ann's both as children and as adults; the principal of the school (Edwin) and one of the teachers (Adam). The dialogue was guided by a loose framework, referred to as an 'outline'; a list of issues to be covered, shared with the interviewee prior to the 'conversation' and used if necessary during the conversation in order to maintain the focus [Appendix 4: *Interview Outline*].

Further interviews were then planned to follow up on a more personal level the information provided in the questionnaires, to interrogate the data more deeply. A basic interview schedule was designed and the plan was to adapt it according to information provided in the questionnaires. Having explained the purpose of the interview, an initial request for the teachers to tell me a bit about themselves and their experience of education was planned to facilitate a comfortable transition into the interview situation and make the teachers feel more relaxed.

> *Adam. Thank you very much for coming . . um . . and agreeing to be taped particularly. Um . . the purpose of the interview really is to just . . um . . generate some information - background information - about St Ann's and the community - to help me contextualise the study. I am writing a research report at the moment and I just want information from the people who actually work there and live in the community to support my . . context. So thank you very much. Um . . first of all about you if you don't mind . . um . . have you always lived in the area or . . where were you born and brought up?* (Adam C1)

> *Ok Olga thanks ever so much for coming and . . um . . also particularly for agreeing to be taped - that's really helpful. Um . . I've just . . we've just gone through the purpose - to generate some information - background biographical information about you and just to confirm some of the information and consolidate information you provided in the questionnaire. If there's anything you would like to add . . that I don't ask about, please do. If you want to ask me any questions at any point, please do. Ok?*
> *Ok*
> *Alright . . um . . first of all - would you just, you know, tell me a bit about yourself . . .* (Olga C1)

What became apparent, however, in the first interview (Adam), and was confirmed in the second interview (Olga), was that letting the conversation flow naturally from this initial request to tell me about themselves elicited rich and relevant data, that may not have been forthcoming had I kept to the interview outline planned. It therefore became clear that the tightly structured nature of the original interviews was not necessarily the most appropriate way to continue. I realised that by focussing the questions, I was risking missing much data that may have otherwise been offered. I decided to continue with a more informal interview approach based on open-ended questions.

> Open ended questioning can unearth valuable information that tight questions do not allow. (Ely 1991:66)

Asking Adam to tell me about himself and his experience, the initial question, aimed at making him feel comfortable, led to a more natural conversation, generating a rich dialogue, providing vital insight into his personal experience. Adam chose to tell me things I would not have thought to ask about specifically, but which came spontaneously in response to an open question. As a result of this conversation, I adapted my technique and began all dialogues with the teachers in this way, letting the conversation develop naturally from it. What was initially designed to make the teacher feel comfortable and to ease him or her into the

'interview' became *the* thrust for further conversations. Rather than an interview, dialogue evolved of a more informal conversational nature.[7]

As Bogden & Biklen (1982:135) point out, an interview is "a purposeful conversation usually between two people . . that is directed by one in order to get information". The informal, conversational 'interviews' I conducted were of a more interactive nature. The teachers asked as well as answered questions, and I answered as well as asked. The teachers shared their experiences and at times I shared my experiences alongside theirs.

> *. . . maths . . . it just wasn't there for me . . . I did try my best always . . . but . . . but my best was never enough because I had lots of friends who were very very good at maths. They would get 300 out of 300 . . . or something like that and I would always get 200 or less! [Laugh]*
> ***Did you feel quite alone in your experience?***
> *Yeh*
> ***Because your experience is actually . . . from the work that I have done, from my own experience, from research and everything . . . your experience is the most common experience. Most people go through school mathematics not understanding and hating it . . . um . . . in fact myself I never intended to be a maths teacher. I went through school - I never hated it, but I didn't understand it and I just did it to get by. But it was only when I went to teachers' college and they showed me the new maths - you know, a new way about maths that . . . um . . . that then I started to understand. It was only at college that I started to understand maths and then I went to show the children. So it's not unusual - your experience.*** (Bruce C1)

> *The intersubjective nature of the conversations is both intentional and important. I felt it was a more naturally conducive way of eliciting 'information' from the teachers. The teachers while initially very aware of the tape recorder and occasionally notes in hand, soon relaxed into a more informal mode of conversation and forgot about both.*
> (Research Journal 13.10.99)

ISSUE: Recording

Recording of the conversations took two different forms: audio-tape recording or written notes. While the former is preferable for reasons of ease, accuracy and validity, it may be regarded as inappropriate, for example, where a conversant feels too intimidated or uncomfortable. This happened only once, when written notes were taken instead. Perfect accuracy was traded for richness of information: accuracy lost in

7 The consequence of such an approach were conversations rarely lasting for less than an hour and transcripts amounting to approximately 300 pages. For this reason the full transcripts are not included in the text.

a written recording is outweighed by the richer quality of information gathered from a more relaxed conversation.

The presence of the tape recorder made some of the teachers initially nervous, but all seemed to lose their self-consciousness and get absorbed by the conversation. Ursula was happy for me to tape but was very aware of the tape recorder and began by telling me she hated her voice on a tape:

> ***I sound like a five year old or something!***
> *Me too! [Both laugh] I don't like that.*
> ***I think it's the same for everybody. No problem. Um . . . would you like to start by telling me where you were born, where you grew up . . . school . . .***
>
> *I'm so aware of this [Indicating towards the tape recorder]*
> ***Don't worry***
>
> *It is just a pity that it is my second language now and this tape is terrible.*
> ***I know. I understand.***
> *You mustn't let any . . . anyone listen to it [Laugh]*
> ***No, I won't. Only me.***
> *Then you must wipe it off again! [Laugh]*
> ***Um . . . Ok that's great.***
> *[Laugh] Because I don't like my voice on a tape.*
> ***No. I understand. I understand. Um . . . what I will do is I will type this up and then I will give it to you to see, and if there's anything you think you would like to tell me that you forgot . . .***
> *Forgot, yeh.*
> ***. . . you can always write it on the back of the page or something.***
> *Ok. Because we've got to send the page back? This little thing that you're gonna .?*
> ***Yeh - the writing and then if you want to make any changes, you can.***
> *Oh, that's good.*
> ***Sometimes we say things and we think "Oh no, that's not right!"***
> *Mm*
> ***You know, I didn't mean that . . . I want to change it.***
> *Yeh*
> ***But it's up to you . . . um . . . ok . . . thank you so much Ursula . . .***
> *Oh it's a pleasure!* *(Ursula C1)*

The fear of 'committing oneself' to tape was an issue that I tried to alleviate by assuring the teachers that they would have editorial rights over their transcript. I recognised I risked possibly losing significant information, but felt that the more comfortable they felt, the more forthcoming they were likely to be. The gamble paid off. There was only one piece of conversation that was asked to be deleted. The only other editorial comments were corrections of their own spoken grammar.

A vital part of the process was the process of transcribing the conversations. While it was extremely time-consuming, and while there were times when I ached for someone to do it all for me, it proved absolutely vital in familiarising myself with the data. More than this, it facilitated an ongoing process of inductive analysis: as I listened and typed I found myself identifying tendencies as I went along. The process of transcription facilitated greater understanding and insight into the content of the conversation.

> Transcribing helps to recall the experience, expands the details and often provides a fresh perspective on the material.
> (Ely 1991:82)

As Spradley (1979:75 cited in Ely 1991:83) points out, "tape recorded interviews when fully transcribed represent one of the most complete expanded accounts". Audiotaping not only saves the intrusion of making notes, but provides greater accuracy, adds the nuances of a person's voice to the words, giving a greater depth and feel to the data, and allows for analysis through repeated study.

The aim of the conversations was to investigate the teachers' experience, in order to construct a greater understanding of the context in which they were working - 'the bigger picture'. Having greeted the teachers and expressed my gratitude, I would ask them to tell me about themselves; where they grew up, their family, where they went to school, etc. Then I would ask them more specifically about their experiences of school, both as a learner and now as a teacher.

> ***Ok. Olivia, thank you so much for agreeing to talk to me and . . um . . agreeing to be taped as well. Um . . I would just like to build up a picture of your experience of education . . like I said in the letter . . um . . . both as a student at school, at college and now as a teacher. So . . um . . could you just start off by telling me where you were born and brought up and where you went to school.*** (Olivia C1)

How the conversation progressed depended on the contributions made and the information gleaned from previous conversations. In Ely's words, rather than "manipulate the interview flow" or "hog the scene", I aimed at "support" and "facilitation". The result was a series of "ethnographic interviews" characterised by "interwoven dances of questions and answers in which the researcher follows as well as leads" (Ely 1984:5 cited in Ely 1991:59).

The evolution of the research process into conversations gradually took on a personal metaphorical significance. Reflecting on the journey, I began to see it in terms of an interweaving mesh of conversation: conversations between myself and the teachers, conversations between the teachers, conversations with myself, sometimes articulated in my research journal, conversations with peers and colleagues. In a different way, even the process of analysis could be viewed as a conversation with the data.

ISSUE: Language

It is essential to point out that while English was the medium of communication, it was not the first language of all of the participants. The conversations therefore appear at times to lack fluency, and interpretation of the conversations has to allow for linguistic inaccuracies. While frustration of the intended message is somewhat relieved by the cyclical feedback processing of the data, the issue of language was a concern mentioned in all the conversations. If the teachers didn't mention it first, I would raise it as an issue because I was aware of it and appreciated the difficulties it might cause.

> *It's because I . . I speak Afrikaans . . It's difficult to express myself.*
> ***No, sure. Actually that's something I really recognise, is that . . um . . it's always better to express oneself in one's first language. And unfortunately I cannot speak or understand Afrikaans.***
> *Is it?*
> ***Otherwise I would . . um . . I . . we would do it . . it in your first language.***
> *[Laugh]*
> ***So I am sorry about that - I recognise it's much more difficult. Um . . and I appreciate that you are speaking in English, you know, for this. Um . . . . .***
>
> (Bruce C1)

> *. . . the days when Sister Monica was here those . .*
> *. . . something like those photos were put up.*
> *She made a hell of a oppe of us, this ballet, here at school.*
> ***Hell of a . . ?***
> *Op . . op. How do you say now?*
> ***Um . .***
> *She was . . . How do you say 'oppe' - in Afrikaans?*
> ***I don't know. This is the . .***
> *She was very fond of us - what is 'oppe' now?*
> ***No no no don't worry. I must say . . .***
> *She had . .*
> ***I think that um . .***
> *She was very fond of us and . .*
> **Ahh.**
> *What is 'oppe' now ?*

You know . . this is a problem with the language because I recognise . .
The language
. . . you are using your second language and I can't speak Afrikaans
and I am very sorry about that.
Yeh. It is my second language also.
I know and I really appreciate that.
It's not easy, yeh.
I appreciate that. (Ursula C1)

After previous experience of being 'interviewed' in English, Edwin emphasised this problem at the beginning of our next conversation:

Thanks Edwin for . . um . . for agreeing to chat to me again . .
[Laugh]. . I know your time is . . is so limited
Yeh and all the time it's in English [Laugh]
That's interesting. Why do you say that?
Do you find it difficult?
My home language . .
Yes
My mother tongue is Afrikaans. .
Yes
And we've been brought up with Afrikaans in those days . .
So you would have felt more comfortable . .
No no
. . if I interviewed you in Afrikaans
No, it's not that.
No, I understand. Sometimes it's more difficult to articulate yourself . .
Mm . . . But it doesn't matter. (Edwin C2)

While I recognised language as a fundamental issue from the beginning, I felt it was methodologically more appropriate for the conversations to be between myself and the teachers rather than mediated by an interpreter or carried out by a mother tongue speaker. The relationship between myself and the teachers, in my mind, was the most important criterion affecting accessibility. We had worked together as a group over a period of two years prior to the conversations. The familiarity that resulted from the relationship was, I believe, fundamental in creating a freer atmosphere and encouraging a more open approach. The conversations were, I believe, richer and thus more informative than they may have been without the background of such a relationship.

ISSUE: Vulnerability

It is recognised that, as with any data collection technique relying on personal response, the data provided is inherently subject to individual perspectives and prejudices, state of mind and body, researcher's expertise, the personal relationship between the conversants and other factors relating to the context in which it is elicited. But while one needs to be aware of such affective factors, they do not necessarily make the data less valid.

Rather, in so far as such factors find articulation in the words of the teachers, they become part of the primary research data and are imbued with the significance of their articulation. What was initially regarded as problematic, is recognised as not just unavoidable, but in fact a vital characteristic of research that is focussed on personal experience and personal reflection on that experience.

ISSUE: Transparency

Throughout the research process, transparency was regarded as vital. The reason for conducting the interviews and the use of the teachers' words as research data to support identified issues/dimensions was clearly explained. Each transcript was fed back to the individual teachers for their perusal and editorial comment. They were free to add or delete text as they wished. Any writing in which the teachers' words were used was also fed back to them for their comment and potential editing. This feedback process informed the structure of the research path, providing vital stepping stones along the way.

ISSUE: Confidentiality

Each name was changed for the sake of confidentiality. An air of anonymity appeared to serve as a form of 'release', liberating people to be more open in their contributions to the conversations. Interestingly, the teachers took great delight in finding out what pseudonym I had given them and then trying to identify to whom the other pseudonyms belonged.

Because . . er . . Una was just telling me . . [Both laugh] we were talking and . . er . . she saw I was reading it [referring to the chapter]
Yes
And . . er . . and she said . . er . . who do . . do I think is Anna. [Both laugh] And I show her Anna and she was laughing![Both laugh] It was . . er. . er . . in the middle of the discussion of tomorrow's Feast Day. And .
Tomorrow's ?
Feast day - Assumption. Feast of Assumption.
Oh, ok.
And everybody was looking to us. [Laugh] And we were laughing.
And she said, "Yes, you are quite right!" [Both laugh]
I think people . .
You can identify the names with . .
Sure. Now do you . . . is that a problem, do you think?
No, it's not a problem, but it's so interesting . . How we know each other!
Right!
Yah, you see?
That's a very good point.
And Anna was laughing and say, "What are you talking?" and I show her and I said, "You are Anna" and she say "Yes". [Both laugh]
I know when I came before there was Una and Anna and Alison and . . Hope, I think, standing together and all talking about it and saying, you know, we are just trying to work out who everybody is !!
Who's everybody, yeh.
No some of them are very obvious. Um . .
Mm. Because it's a . . it's very honest, you see? (Una C2)

Analysis

> Analysis involves working with data, organising it, breaking it down, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others.
> (Bogdan & Biklen 1982:154, cited in Cantrell 1993:97)

While analysis is treated separately here, it is not viewed as a separate part of the research process. Initially, I viewed the processes of collecting and analysing data as quite distinct, the former preceding the latter. However, in reality the two have proved to be both simultaneous and sequential. While analysis does happen after data has been collected (deductive), much analysis happens as the data is being collected: in-process, recursive analysis (inductive).

> Analysis is part and parcel of the ongoing, intertwined process that powers data collection.
> Qualitative researchers are deeply immersed in the analytical process all through the data-gathering stages. (Ely 1991:86 & 92)

A distinction is made here between informal (inductive) and formal (deductive) forms of analysis. Hammersley & Aitkinson (1983) make a similar distinction between 'inductive' and 'consolidation'. The former occurs throughout the process of research, while the latter more typically occurs at specific points in the research, after certain data has been collected, and is more specific in technique. It is recognised that the form of analysis employed needs to be appropriate to the data being analysed and the purposes for which the analysis is being carried out.

Informal analysis occurs mostly during data collection and at one level may be described as cycles of thought about existing data and generating strategies for collecting further data (Miles & Huberman 1984). Initial insights and interpretations are confirmed, modified or corrected as the research process continues. In addition to being scrutinised within my own reflective progression, ideas were also 'tested' by bouncing them off the participants, ("face validation" or "member checking") (Cantrell 1993:98), and in discussion with friends and colleagues ("peer validation"). Such informal analysis in the present study is fully documented in my research journal.

Formal analysis occurs mostly after data has been collected and involves sorting the data in some way in order to make 'sense' of it, to find out what meaning can be made of it. The research presented here employed a form of data analysis referred to as "coding through content analysis" (Cantrell 1993:98). An emergent process of systematic patterning has been employed to analyse the data (Miles & Huberman 1984). While the analysis is systematic in its application subsequent to the collection of the data, it is also emergent through induction during the process of collection. Data is sorted and classified according to categories or themes. Patterns are systematically identified and documented (Miles & Huberman 1984) and concepts are mapped/linked to each other. Such analysis "does not involve explicit measurement but serves to indicate tendencies" (Henning 1993).

> The process of establishing categories is a very close, intense **conversation** between a researcher and the data. (Ely 1991:87)

Throughout the process of analysis, the raw data was selected, focussed, simplified, abstracted and transformed in what has been called a process of data reduction (Miles & Huberman

1988). As Cantrell (1993) points out, such analysis occurs at different stages of the research process: 'anticipatory' data reduction occurs before data collection in the design of the study, when foci and parameters are set, 'interim' data reduction occurs during collection, with the aid of summary sheets, coding, etc. and finally 'post' data collection reduction occurs involving the ultimate selection of data to be used.

The main process of analysis [Phase 2] is described in four 'layers' [Appendix 5: *Data Analysis*]: Initially, certain themes or 'dimensions' were identified from the transcripts [Layer 1], which were then categorised or interpretively framed [Layer 2]. At this point the analysis focussed in on the specific frame of what was labelled 'relational' dimensions. The transcripts were then re-analysed with an inter-relational focus, and further dimensions were identified and juxtaposed into a range of tensions [Layer 3]. Finally, these were condensed into four main tensions which are used to interpretively frame the teachers' experience [Layer 4].

As Ely (1991:87) points out, it is important in the process of such distillation to "keep hold of the large picture". This deconstructive process of analysis not only helped to generate an understanding of the context but also, through the dimensional nature of the interpretive frames, served to present a dynamic representation of the bigger picture.

ISSUE: Perspective

> It is an awesome, even frightening responsibility to bow to the fact that 'self-as-instrument' inevitably means one must create ongoing meaning out of the evolving and evolved data. (Ely 1991: 86)

The personal, naturalistic nature of such research, requires the researcher to "rely on his/her own talents, insights and trustworthiness and in the end go public with the reasoning that engendered the results, while accepting with equanimity that other people may make different meaning from the same data"(Ely 1991: 86). It is recognised that the same data may be analysed differently according to perspective and personal experience. Two different researchers may analyse the data differently.

> The researcher, by virtue of being-in-the-world which he [sic] is investigating is inevitably involved in the way it manifests itself to him [sic]. (Stones in Kruger 1988:141)

While all the data collected was analysed, the wide scope of the data necessitated a process of selection. Primary data collected included questionnaires, conversations and my research journal. Secondary data include presentations, a research report and a research paper. All this data had to be meaningfully condensed. I was comforted by Patti Lather's advice to "Do more with less" (Lather 1986). While I did not initially want to 'ignore' data, it became clear that it was unnecessary to include data for the sake of inclusion.

Primary data selected for quotation in the text is regarded as 'illustrative' of the dimension or aspect being represented. The analysis is qualitative, not quantitative. It is not regarded as necessary to detail how many or what proportion of the teachers said or experienced a particular thing. Emphasis is on the nature/quality of the experience. A theme occurring only once is not regarded as less important than a theme occurring ten times, for example. The emphasis accorded it may be different, but while keeping in mind 'the large picture', one must not forget the individual complexities which make up the picture.

> The outside world . . . is related to the inside world of the participants and the complexities of situations, processes and action and interaction . . . are revealed. (Lemmer 1992:294)

It was clear after one round of conversations that a further one was necessary to follow up the first and provide a forum for feedback. This second round was designed to substantiate, consolidate and validate the constructions made from the analysis of the data from the first round. My initial response to the contribution of 'new' data in the second conversations was one of fear: fear that there would be too much data to manage, fear that the constructions I had made would no longer be appropriate and I would have to re-analyse all the data; and finally, fear that the process would become interminable.

This feeling of fear soon became excitement as I realized that the constructions from round one were not inappropriate, but - in the light of new data from round two - needed to be extended. Analysis of the initial conversations had led to a somewhat linear construction. However, the second round of conversations contributed data that did not fit the progressive movement along a 'continuum' identified initially. While the new data was not exactly

repeating itself (Lincoln & Guba 1985), what it did appear to do was illustrate a more recursive pattern [Chapter 8: *A Journey of a School*].

ISSUE: A metaphorical trap

Analysis of the initial phase of conversations was metaphorically constructed as a journey. This was fed back to the teachers and provided the basis of the follow-up conversations. It became clear to me that what I had wanted, and was therefore looking for, was confirmation; further data to support the analysis as it stood. While much of it did, what I had naively discounted was time. Many months had passed between conversations and much had happened.

When 'new' data was contributed to the conversation, my initial reaction (which I did not articulate), was "No stop, I don't want any more! If you tell me this I shall have to include it and I don't want any more! What will I do with it?" The new data did not 'fit' the picture of the teachers' journeys I had constructed. Circumstances occurring in the time between the initial and follow-up conversations revealed a change of direction and a change of attitude. This new data could not be ignored. In my role as researcher, I could not, ethically, tease this data from that which confirmed the initial picture I had painted. I recognised that the new data, while unanticipated and initially undesired, added a vital if not fundamental aspect to the picture that had not been revealed in the initial phase.

My initial fear had been that the construction I had formed would now be inappropriate. I realised, however, that I had caught myself in my own metaphorical trap. I had been using the metaphor of journey in a very linear sense. I now recognised that journeys weren't necessarily about moving 'forwards' in one direction. In many of life's journeys we may not always feel as if we are moving forward; circumstances sometimes make the journey more difficult and frustrating and may apparently knock us back, but we are still travelling. We may revisit places that look familiar, but we do so with the experience of the journey between the spaces.

The journey, for me, became not a linear path with the odd diversion off 'the straight and narrow', but rather a complex of interweaving pathways of experience, crossing and reflecting back on themselves. Each step of the journey was not only informed by the previous experience of the traveller, but was also affected by the circumstances surrounding the traveller. Such experience may thus be viewed, not as a neat, linear progression, but rather as a recursive process, building on the past and responding to the present.

Validation

The issue of validation is an important and complex one. Traditional notions of validation have been based on positivist standards of objectivity and neutrality, standards abandoned here as "at best unrealisable, and at worst self-deceptive" (Hesse 1980). Within the openly ideological context of this research, such standards are viewed not only as inappropriate, but impossible. I would further argue that any attempt to be objective or neutral is, due to the human nature of such enterprise, an impossible ideal borrowed from the traditional scientific researcher.

While qualitative methods of research have been accused of being 'soft' options, Henning (1993:114) argues that the depth of rigour required in the validation of qualitative research makes it more 'hard' than 'soft', because "the concept of validation has to be scaffolded into every research act".

In attempting to articulate the process of validation I have consciously avoided use of positivistic terminology such as reliability, credibility, dependability, transferability and generalisability.

> The language of positivistic research is not congruent with or adequate to qualitative work and its use is often a defensive measure that muddies the waters. (Ely 1991:95)

The issues of 'reliability', 'credibility' and 'dependability' are encompassed in the term 'validity'. Meanwhile, as Jaworski (1998) points out, issues of 'transferability' or 'generalisability' are regarded as particularly problematic within an interpretive research frame.

The focus of this study is on the interpretation of an individual case and that interpretation is not intended as a generalisation. Jaworski, however, does point out that it is possible to "clarify relationships, pinpoint critical processes and identify common phenomena" from which "abstracted summaries and general concepts can be formulated, which may, upon further investigation be found to be germane to a wider variety of settings" (Jaworski 1994:15). The validation here in terms of such principles of transference or generalisability is articulated in the resonance that such interpretation has for the reader (Breen 1999).

Validation, it could be argued, is based on the fundamental pursuit of both relevance and rigour. The lack of clarity regarding post-positivist methodological strategy demands, I believe, rigorous attention to the issue of validation; not as an adjunct to the research process, but rather as an integral part of the process. While the relevance of this research is, I contend, shown by the evolution of a naturalistic and personal praxiology, focussing on the individuals and their contexts, its rigour is demonstrated through the reflexive nature of the research process itself.

It is important to note that validation is used here specifically with reference to the process of the research, justifying what has been done and how it has been done - not with reference to the data itself. The data, the words of the individual participants, is not in question. To infer that validation of such data is necessary is, I believe, ethically problematic. It is the use of that data, the way in which the participants' words are interpreted and framed, the methodology, that is open to questions of validity.

Lather's reconceptualisation of validity informs the approach taken here. The challenge is to "construct research designs that push us toward becoming vigorously self-aware" (Lather 1986:66).

> The vitality of post-positivist research programs necessitates the development of credibility checks that can be built into the design of openly ideological research. (Lather 1986:77)

The research journey is characterised by a continuous process of cyclical and mutual feedback, referred to here as 'consensual validation'. I contend that it is this continuous feedback

process that makes the process both relevant and rigorous. Different validatory processes, or 'credibility checks' can be identified: *self validity*, *face validity* and *peer validity*. Although consensual validation is more commonly used to refer specifically to face validity, it is used here to refer to all three validatory processes, for each process involves consensus, whether it be with oneself, with the other research participants or with one's peers.

Self Validity

Self validity, also referred to as "metacognitive observation" or "reflective self-controlled observation" (Henning 1993), is recognised as central to the research process (Goodman 1992). Such validation refers both to the acknowledgement and articulation of 'position' - orientation and stance (Lemmer 1992, Jaworski 1998) - and to the continuous process of self-reflection and monitoring, which includes a constant engagement with the theory-practice dialectic. It demands a 'systematised reflexivity' built into the research process that challenges the construction of the process, the construction of participant roles and the constructions that emanate from the process.

Strategies of self validation employed include the recording of personal reflections in a research journal, in which the research process was reflected on and analysed, both at a methodological and a theoretical level. This personal engagement of self reflection throughout the process proved vital in sharpening my awareness of and challenging my research 'position', personal theories and interpretations, etc. At an interpersonal level, the strategies of face and peer validation also proved vital.

Face validity

Face or participant validation, also referred to as respondent validation (Cantrell 1993) or "member checking" (Guba & Lincoln 1981), was deliberately built in as a basic element of the research process. Recycling analysis through the participants was not merely regarded as a strategy for 'checking' or validating the interpretation of the data, but was fundamental in supporting the construction of the research process and instrumental in generating further data.

Feedback to the participants took a variety of forms. Evaluations of the MSP [Appendix 3: *Evaluations*] carried out during Phase 1 of the research were fed back and discussed. At the end of Phase 1, a report was produced which was fed back to the teachers for their responses and reactions. During Phase 2, transcripts of conversations were fed back for amendments, and consequent constructions were also fed back and discussed, the conversation informing the succeeding stage of the research process. In addition to providing a validatory strategy of confirmation and refinement, it also proved to be a procedurally formative one. The reciprocal and negotiative manner of face validation echoed the fundamental dialogic nature of the research design.

Peer validity

Lather (1986) emphasises the essential importance of making our data and analyses as public and as credible as possible.

> What is needed most is for practitioners to experiment with the new designs and to submit their attempts and results to examination by other participants in the debate. (Polkinghorne 1983 p xi, cited in Lather 1986)

Peer validation has proved fundamentally important throughout the research process. Such validatory interaction has taken a variety of forms, categorised here as either formal or informal, though the distinction is in reality not altogether clear. Formal peer validation has taken the form of collegial supervision, research support groups and what I refer to here as 'academic interfacing'. Meanwhile, informal peer validation has occurred through more natural interactions with 'critical friends'.

The nature of the more formal validation of supervision has evolved as the research process and personal relationships have developed. Such supervision has not only guided, advised and provided a sounding board, but has in the process performed an important role as validation. This form of validation is not only an institutional requirement but has proved a vital support in terms of a continuous process of critically constructive dialogue and monitoring, validating both the process of research and its articulation.

Alongside supervision, peer 'research support' groups have also played a useful role in validating the process. My personal journey has been characterised by two different, but complementary, types of support groups which have provided and continue to provide a vital supportive and validatory role. The 'Brown Bag', a forum of lecturers in the Rhodes University Education Department in which I am based, aims at validation of the more intellectual aspects of the process, and is characterised by research presentations and discussions on research-related issues. Meanwhile, the 'Blue Circle' research forum, a group of Masters and Doctoral students who met informally at my house, aimed at support and 'validation' of the more affective aspects of the research process, and focussed on sharing and discussion of the experience of doing research.

Such 'support groups' have proved helpful in providing valuable insights and encouragement and generally helping to facilitate the constructive progression of the research process.

> Support groups can consider each member's emerging findings, suggest alternative explanations and act as auditors of the research process.
> It is also a comfortable place for airing gripes and frustrations as well as testing new ideas. (Ely 1991:99)

The term 'academic interfacing' is used here to refer to the more formal collegial interactions that take place through, for example, conference presentations and written papers. Collegial responses to presentations and papers relating to the research journey have also proved a vital aspect of the process of validation. Attending a Research Methodology course was, for instance, a very valuable experience.

> *I find it very stimulating to be back in a more 'formal' learning situation with other students, immersing myself in academic discourse. . . . It has been an extremely interesting experience to resituate myself within the theoretical framework of research. (Research Journal 20.02.98)*

Through engaging with fellow academics and their work one encounters alternative frames for interpreting experience and enlarges one's vision by having one's attention directed to important aspects that might otherwise have gone unnoticed (Prawat 1991).

Informal peer validation also occurs naturally in different contexts: the tea room at break time, collecting mail in the post room, in the corridor on the way to the office, in the car park

on the way home, over lunch and even at parties. Such collegial conversation has proved, in my experience, to be extremely helpful in validating the process. Informal sharing of work in progress with trusted peers has also proved a valuable validatory strategy. The articulation of thoughts, ideas, plans, etc. has been very constructive in aiding personal clarification and consolidation, etc. Collegial responses may challenge, corroborate, confirm, contradict, etc. - all of which are useful in developing one's argument - fuelling the struggle!! Different perspectives, and reactions to the ones presented, as well as support and confirmation of those offered, were sought from and provided by 'critical friends'.

~~~~~~

This chapter has presented a personal reflection of the research journey. It locates the research methodology within an interpretive orientation. The research may be described as a case study, based on principles of ethnography, focussed on different planes of experience and informed by continuous cyclical processes of reflection. As the 'instrument of research' I have attempted to interpretively frame the teachers' reflections on their experiences, authenticating the interpretations made through processes of consensual validation. The dynamic relationship between myself and the teachers participating in the research is characterised by the dialogic and co-constructive nature of data construction. In this respect the chapter may be regarded as a metalogue: "a conversation about some problematic subject . . . Such that not only do the participants discuss the problem but the structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject" (Bateson 1987:1). The interwoven extracts of the participants' voices, and the interspersion of methodological issues and ethical dilemmas echoes the narrative form of the research and the 'reality' of the experience.
~~~~~~

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

This section presents what may be viewed as the theoretical landscape of the research. It is divided into three parts, each echoing the interdiscursive and dialogical nature of the process of research presented in this thesis. **Chapter 4** looks at the theoretical and methodological implications in *the construction of the text*. **Chapter 5** identifies *the thread of negotiation* which weaves itself throughout both the theoretical and methodological aspects of the research. Finally, **Chapter 6** focuses on *the notion of voice*, based on the Bakhtinian construct of dialogicality and mutual construction, the epistemological foundations of the research presented in this thesis.

Chapter 4:

The Construction of the Text

This chapter looks at the theoretical and methodological implications of the research echoed in the construction of the text.

Poetic construction

> The ethnography cannot inhabit a world of texts where conventionality is taken for granted, or where language is treated as unproblematic. The fully mature ethnography requires a reflexive awareness of its own writing, the possibilities and limits of its own language, and a principled exploration of its modes of representation. (Atkinson 1990:180)

Throughout the research process, I have been concerned with the poetic construction of the text: not the everyday sense of poetry, but "the study of conventions whereby the texts themselves are constructed and interpreted" (Atkinson 1990:3). My concern has not only focussed on the textual form and structure, but on its content in terms of style and representation. As the research process evolved it became increasingly vital that the text produced was not only accessible to the participants, but was also regarded by the participants as representative of both the context and the process.

The text may be viewed as analogous to a tapestry, woven with threads of different textual elements and a multiplicity of voices: that of myself, the researcher; those of other researchers that I refer to, and those of the other participants, the teachers. These are all woven together to form a detailed and complex composition. The appreciation of the tapestry is a collaborative accomplishment of the speakers (the teachers), the hearer, interpreter and writer (myself) and the reader (yourself).

This text presents the reader with "a complex and variegated surface . . . extensively and densely illustrated with extracts from the author's field notes, stretches of talk . . . to furnish evidence and support the author's argument" (Atkinson 1990:82). However, as Atkinson points out, to view such textual devices only as evidence or illustration, belies their more

complex discursive function. Rather than 'evidence' in the 'typical' sense, such citations may be regarded as "rhetorical devices for enabling and encouraging readers to perceive the force of general remarks" (Edmondson 1984:50, cited in Atkinson 1990:91), "rhetorical devices which may help the readers to enter into the author's argument" (Atkinson 1990:91).

The research presented here may be regarded as an 'ethnography' in terms of both its procedural style as well as its status as textual product. As Atkinson (1990:91) points out, the form of the ethnography echoes the process of ethnography [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*]. The ethnographer's understanding is gained by active involvement in and interpretation of the social world, as the reader's understanding is furnished by her active involvement with and interpretation of the text. This study is in many senses typical of an ethnographic genre of cultural representation - "a genre which reports (claims to report) social worlds and social realities in an authentic manner" (1990:56).

A construction of reality

The text, typical of an ethnography, is recognised as a construction of reality: "the ethnographer constructs versions of social reality". As noted by Atkinson (1990:2), "the conventions of text and rhetoric are among the ways in which the reality is constructed". Initial observations and inferences are transformed into personal narrative and a textual 'reality', which constructs and describes a social world (Atkinson 1990:61).

The 'reality' being studied is not regarded as "a fixed entity independent of our perceptions of it" (Cameron 1992:8), but rather as one fundamentally shaped by our experiences and our perceptions of those experiences.

> We live . . . lives based on selected fictions. Our view of reality is conditioned by our position in space and time . . Thus every interpretation of reality is based on a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed. (Durrell 1963, quoted by Gough 1991)

Recognising the fundamental role of language, "one cannot ignore actors' own concepts, descriptions and understandings of reality", nor can one be "detached from the social and political context in which language is used" (Cameron *et al.* 1992:13).

While there is no doubt as to the implication of the writer, Atkinson points also to the implication of the reader, in the "complex processes of reality construction and reconstruction" (1990:2).

> The narratives and descriptions, the examples, the characters and the interpretative commentary are woven together in a highly contrived product. The world we enter into, as readers, is not a direct experience . . . ; we are engaged in the interpretation of the society as reconstructed . . . .
>
> (Atkinson 1990:2)

It may be argued that "the texts themselves are implicated in the work of reality construction" (Atkinson 1990:7). The text is regarded as "an artifact of convention and contrivance" with no possibility of neutrality. The argument is implicit in the textual organisation, in the way in which the content is selected, written and structured. However, as Atkinson points out, the text cannot totally determine how we as readers will interpret it. Our reading of the text is necessarily based on our own background knowledge and assumptions. The construction is therefore essentially an interpersonal construction of social reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966).

A narrative of narratives

> Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. . . . the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories.
>
> (Connelly & Clandinin 1990:2)

The whole text may be regarded as a narrative which includes specific narratives within it, each with its own internal coherence, "the relations between these narratives furnish[ing] a broader framework of relevances and coherence" (Atkinson 1990:105). Atkinson refers to the "duality of narrative function" and "the interplay between two levels". In the case of this research, the interplay can be identified between the contextual narrative, i.e. the interpretive framing of the data, and the procedural narrative, i.e. the theoretical and methodological explication. In the text, the former is framed and interspersed by the latter.

> The ethnography incorporates the twin narrative texts, each of which may be fragmented and mingled with the other. (Atkinson 1990:110)

The text thus shifts continuously between these two narrative planes: a primary plane of 'biographical' narrative which is embedded within a secondary plane of 'academic' narrative. Extracts from biographical narratives are interspersed amongst theoretical and methodological textual components. Participants' stories about their life world have been collected, from which extracts have been taken and embedded in the text. For instance, the teachers' words, extracted from conversation transcripts and written evaluations, and my words, extracted from my research journal, are placed in the text for the purpose of theme development and dramatic illustration.

The biographical narrative involves stories of lives (Butt & Raymond 1987). Biography is useful in revealing not only what teachers think and do now, but more importantly, how events in their past may have influenced how they think and act in the present: "Access to past influences on present actions can only be gained through individual teachers themselves". The potential influence of the past on the present is "illuminated directly through the person him or herself" (Butt & Raymond 1987:76). Butt & Raymond (1987:88) advocate the use of biography for understanding, recognising the need to capture unique individual experience as a means of generating understanding.

> Both unique individual experiences . . and collective understandings can be examined through forms of collective biography. (Butt & Raymond 1987:88)

This research narrative attempts to represent the voices of the participants alongside the lived experiences of the researcher (Malone 1994:31). The narrative "emerges from the lives" of the teachers and from my own as researcher: "research as lived experience" (Malone 1994:30).

In this study, the focus is on teacher experience and its interrelationship with action. It is only logical then to focus on teachers' personal accounts of their experience. Mere observation is not regarded as sufficient. "One needs to go further to understand the relationship . . . through engaging in dialogue with the teacher" (Butt & Raymond 1987:71). Meaning construction is necessarily based on experience. It is therefore necessary to take into account such experience, to consider previous histories and current situations and encourage

reflection on experience through dialogical methods such as discussion, *negotiation* and debate (Brodie 1994).

The primary narrative plane may be referred to as a 'collective biography', "the investigation of actors . . . by means of a collective study of their lives" (Stone 1972:107, cited in Butt & Raymond 1987:64). Individual reflections on the teachers' experiences are constructed into a 'collective narrative' or 'narrative collage', in which the individual features as part of a group: "The various data about the individuals are juxtaposed, combined and examined for 'significant variables' " (Butt & Raymond 1987:64).

It is recognised that such narratives are situated within both the context of the person's individual life history and that of the setting:

> The teachers' voice must speak from an embeddedness within the culture of the particular school, school system and society in which the teacher lives and works. (Elbaz 1991, citing Clark 1986)

Personal history is thus recognised as being of fundamental importance in researching and understanding the ways in which our experience is formed by social, cultural and historical conditions (Krall 1988). In line with a socio-cultural approach, it is recognised that interpretation of one's experience and the meanings attached are inextricably linked with the socio, historical and political context in which one is situated.

As Ivor Goodson (1980) explains in his paper on life histories, studying the lives of individuals reveals new perspectives on their culture, which are not accessible when one relies merely on observation. Borrowing Dollard's words, this study looks at "strands of a complicated collective life which has historical continuity" (1949:15). Goodson argues for the juxtaposition of personal biography and historical background "to explore elements of individual difference and change through personal biography and to integrate historical factors by studying the evolving background of the teacher's professional life" (1980:74).

> Life histories, like ethnographies, tune into the process and flux of life, with all its uncertainties, vicissitudes, inconsistencies and ambiguities . . . they reach the subjective realities, pull in the historic and contextualise the present within the total framework of individual lives. (Woods 1985:17)

The teachers were asked to share their personal stories of their experience of education. The notion of story (Elbaz 1991) is used not only as a method of "getting the narrative . . . and using it to make a point" and "a device which allows for the effective presentation of data that is rich and voluminous and would otherwise be difficult to convey", as well as "a means of casting research in a form that will be accessible to teachers". The notion of story is also recognised as the "landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers", and within which our experience may be interpreted (Elbaz 1991:16).

> Stories function as arguments in which we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as lived.
>
> (Connelly & Clandinin 1990:8)

I am not concerned here with the conception of biographical unity and wholeness (Connelly & Clandinin 1986). Such personal stories are recognised as dynamic and changing. It would be impossible to present the whole story. It is recognised that the story of these teachers goes far beyond what is presented here. What is presented here is only a snapshot - taken from one specific angle, "a glimpse of the vast and intricate network of the complexities". It is acknowledged that the multiplicity and complexity of lived experience far exceed the frame of reference here (Lather & Smithies 1997). Nevertheless, a rich snapshot is regarded as generative of more insight and understanding than a poorly painted mural.

As Elbaz (1991) points out, the story one obtains is that which, according to one's present perspective, appears to be relevant. The 'experience' focussed on in this study is that which the participants, including myself, have placed emphasis on, whether consciously or subconsciously. It is experience which has significance for the participants in the space and at the time of reflection.

> Narrative, like life is a continual unfolding . . . . The narrative is unfinished and the stories will be retold and lives relived in new ways.
>
> (Connelly & Clandinin 1990:9)

Truth and authenticity

The finished product, the ethnography, is woven out of a range of textual elements, the meaning of which is negotiated between the text and the reader (Atkinson 1990:83). This *negotiation* is regarded as fundamental in authenticating the text:

> The 'authenticity' of the text is thus provided not by the 'scientific' canons of evidence, but by the active involvement of the reader in the construction of the text. (Atkinson 1990:91)

It may be argued that the authenticity of the text lies in its persuasion of the reader: It must persuade the reader of its plausibility (Atkinson 1990:57). According to Atkinson, the authority of the text depends on the "internal coherence and plausibility of the overall product . . . the text should be found to be true to itself" (1990:55).

This text is not highly personalised in terms of intimate knowledge of the participants. The participants are anonymous, disguised by pseudonyms. Although they share certain aspects of their personal experience, these are not situated within in-depth personalised biographies. The individual experiences are regarded as exemplars of the collective experience.

> The authenticity of the account is warranted not by the intimate knowledge of individuals, but by the aggregated accumulations of an 'outside' observer. (Atkinson 1990:133)

I do not claim that the text's authenticity rests on any superior knowledge or greater understanding on my own part, but rather appeal to the complexity represented in the text and the reader's complicity in recognising the verisimilitude of such complexity. The strongly narrative style of the text intends a more personal engagement with the reader than a more formal style might, "inviting the reader to a pact of complicity" (Atkinson 1990:113).

A good narrative may be regarded as an invitation to participate, similar to Guba & Lincoln's (1989) notion of the vicarious reading and living of case studies by others. The constructions presented here are perspectives on the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit others' sensibilities and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. Referring to the

question of authenticity, Connelly & Clandinin (1990:8) point out: "it is the particular and not the general that triggers emotion and moves people."

While the data is framed in a way that implies a level of generalisation, it is important to point out that it is recognised that "what is both generalisable and educationally significant is going to be complex and perhaps paradoxical, leaving room for some uniquely individual manifestations" (Butt & Raymond 1987:73). However, as Butt & Raymond illustrate, "biography can encompass the universal within the particular" (1987:80), and a story about the lives of others often convinces us through some resonance with our own experience.

> The truth or accuracy of the data cannot simply be confirmed through a process of triangulation or reference to the external world. Instead, it is established in part by the understanding it triggers in those who hear or read it.
> (Freeman 1996:750)

Jane O'Dea (1994), in her paper on 'Pursuing Truth in Narrative Research', reacts to the criticism often aimed at narrative researchers for devaluing the notion of truth. She explores the notion of 'authenticity' as the aim of narrative researchers in their bid for 'epistemic respectability'. Criteria for the authentication of empirical or quantitative 'truth', such as reliability, validity and generalisability, are simply not relevant in the case of a research method which "far from eschewing subjectivity, instead openly endorses it" (O'Dea 1994:162). O'Dea espouses the notion of 'authenticity', a notion, she points out, connected with genuineness, honesty and truthfulness, the honest and truthful voicing of one's perception of events.

The approach taken here challenges the notion of "neutrality and objectivity and emphasises the principles of subjectivity, involvement, insertion and consensual validation in order to develop its methods of data collection and analysis" (Tandon 1988:5,15, cited in Malone 1994:28). The "importance of human subjectivity and consciousness" is emphasised.

> By acknowledging and documenting our subjectivity as a social construction of our personal and political history, we are identifying the multiple positions we assume in our lives and the influence this has on our research.
> (Malone 1994:32)

> Who we are, our subjectivity is spoken into our existence, in every utterance . . .
> (Davies 1992:73 cited by Malone 1994:32)

> Subjectivity as lived experience legitimates individuals' consciousness that social reality is constructed with a historical and political context.
> (Malone 1994:32)

As Malone (1994:32) points out, our personal history and the influence it has on every aspect of our lives cannot be denied. It is the lens through which we view our worlds. Our personal history is a "construction of our lived experiences, fragments of life contrasting, contradicting and rubbing against each other".

Reacting against Marxist notions of 'false consciousness', the teachers' words, the credibility of the personal articulation of experience, is not questioned: "the way things are is the way subjects say they are" (Cameron *et al.* 1992:9). The way in which individuals choose to articulate their experience is seen as vital: it is their 'version' of the world that is regarded as important. The position taken here is not radically relativist, but more a realist one, one that recognises that while social reality may be a human product, that reality faces humans like a coercive force (Berger & Luckman 1966, cited in Cameron *et al.* 1992:10). The perception is that there is a reality that exists outside and independent of the actor; it is the understanding and interpretation of that reality and the way in which one engages in that reality which is relative. Understanding of the reality cannot be gained without reference to the actor's own understanding of that reality.

While factual details regarding, for example, the history of the school, may be further substantiated through documentary evidence, I did not regard it as necessary or appropriate for me as the researcher to attempt to substantiate the teachers' stories of their own experiences. What the teachers chose to tell, and how they chose to tell it, is regarded as valid in itself and its 'reliability' is not questioned. Respecting the nature and importance of such memories and respecting the teachers who were sharing these with me, necessarily, in my view, precludes more 'scientific' notions of validity. To invite the teachers to share their experience was to trust their words. Questions concerning validity were raised not by the teachers' words, but rather by the way in which those words were being used. The rigour of

the research presented here will be determined not by testing the validity of the data but rather by the methodological application [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*].

In order to support the interpretative framing of the teachers' stories of their experience, a process of consultation referred to as 'consensual validation' was employed [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*]. The teachers were given editorial rights over the original transcripts and the constructions built from them. Without such a process, the constructions could be viewed as my own 'version of the world' with no necessary resonance for the teachers themselves. The lack of such resonance would raise grave concerns about the validity and authenticity of the research.

> The "truthfulness" of the data can no longer be understood as something extracted by an individual armed with a set of research procedures, but rather a mutual process between researcher and subject, that recognises the value of practical knowledge, theoretical inquiry, and systematic examinations . . . the researcher and subject come to a mutual understanding based on their own strongly articulated positions. (Gitlin 1990:446)

As Maton (1998:17, cited in Moore & Muller 1999:199) puts it, 'truth' is regarded as that defined by the 'knower' or 'voice', each voice having "its own privileged and specialised knowledge." While such an approach is rebuked as being "inherently unstable, because the anchor for the voice is an interior authenticity that can never be demonstrated, only claimed" (Moore & Muller 1999:200), it is the contention of this thesis that interior authenticity, while problematic, should not only be accepted but celebrated. The approach here is not to doubt or demonstrate the authenticity of the data, but rather to demonstrate the validity of the way in which the data is presented and interpreted in this thesis. The data used in this thesis - the teachers' words - are regarded as personal truths, and it is the interpretive framing of these truths that needs to be justified.

The aim of the research is to yield not one absolute truth but rather 'truths' about life, to offer some penetrating insights into experience that will strike us as startlingly 'true', will strike us as accurate and compelling, if incomplete, renditions of commonly-lived experiences. O'Dea quotes Weitz's observation (1969:222) that "human life is too complex, too inexhaustibly

variegated ever to be reduced to a single pattern". Narrative researchers stand up for the uniqueness and significance of events as experienced (O'Dea 1994:164).

> Life, like the narrative writer's task, is a dialectical balancing act in which one strives for the various perfections, always falling short, yet sometimes achieving a liveable harmony of competing narrative threads and criteria.
>
> (Connelly & Clandinin 1990:8)

~~~~~~

This chapter has explored the construction of the text, discussing the theoretical and methodological implications. The following chapter identifies and explores the thread of *negotiation* which weaves its way, praxiologically, throughout the research.
~~~~~~

Chapter 5:

The Thread of Negotiation

> *The struggle to articulate clearly and succinctly the theoretical orientation of this study, together with the consistent dilemma of extricating theoretical and methodological issues, has resulted in the identification of a central thread that weaves its way throughout: the thread of negotiation. This thread is articulated epistemologically in the theoretical orientation and echoed practically in the methodological application. Negotiation necessarily implies a dialogical relationship: the intersubjectivity of person/s and context, action and meaning, knowledge and experience.* (Research Journal 04.00)

This chapter identifies the thread of *negotiation* which weaves itself throughout both the theoretical and methodological aspects of the research.

The *negotiation* of meaning

The epistemological assumptions of this study are located within a philosophy of constructivism, a "scientific framework . . . concerned with the way human beings come to know certain things . . . closely related to philosophy (epistemology) and the psychology of learning" (Bjorkqvist 1998). Piaget's structural theory of cognitive psychology (1968, 1971) viewing learners as individual "active scientists", and Vygotsky's (1984) social learning theory viewing learners as social beings constructing understandings from social interaction in social-cultural settings (Pollard 1990) constitute the theoretical foundation of constructivism.

Constructivism is a theory of cognition and learning which focuses on the construction of understanding and its mediation through social interaction (Jaworski 1998). The epistemological philosophy of constructivism is based on the premise that learners are actively involved in the construction of their knowledge: that knowledge is not passively received, but built up by the cognising subject (Glasersfeld 1984).

Radical constructivists, such as Glasersfeld, while focussing on the individual, recognise the adaptive function of cognition in organising the experiential world, like an evolving biological organism. Radical constructivism has, however, been criticised for its individualistic emphasis:

"It is a simplified account of learning and mind which omits the vital social and cultural dimensions" (Ernest 1993:172).

While recognising that learners construct their own meanings, social constructivists recognise that such understanding is *negotiated* through the interaction of the individual with the context in which they are situated - social, political, historical and cultural. Social constructivists locate the individual firmly in the social, likening the relationship to that between persons in conversation. Ernest (1993:170) reiterates the Vygotskyan postulate that individuals and the realm of the social are "indissolubly interconnected". In contrast to the focus on isolated individual knowledge construction, typical of radical constructivists, the emphasis of the social constructivist is placed on communication and the construction of shared meaning.

I concur with Jaworski (1998) that radical constructivism alone is incomplete, leaving too many questions about knowledge construction unanswered. The perception of knowledge in this study is that it develops within the individual in interaction with the social discourse. Knowledge grows dynamically in an atmosphere of communication, where meanings are negotiated, i.e. articulated and challenged. Emphasis is placed on a dialogical theory of learning in a "social context of meaning . . . mediated by language and the associated socially *negotiated* understandings" (Ernest 1993:172). The focus is on interaction and the "*negotiation* of meaning" (Bjorkqvist 1998).

The *negotiation* of individual and context

The theoretical orientation of this study may be defined as socio-cultural in that social, cultural and historical influences on the life experience of the individual are regarded as fundamental. As Wertsch (1991:16) points out, "a term such as socio-historical-cultural would be more accurate, but is obviously much too cumbersome". While socio-cultural does not overtly identify the historical, this dimension is regarded as fundamental to both a social and a cultural perspective. The three aspects are in fact, regarded as so integrally linked as to be inseparable.

Recognising the fundamental connection between people and the context in which they are situated, socio-culturalism "is a theory that relates the person-acting-in-a-setting to the overarching influence of the culture" (Stoker 1993:193). As Stoker points out, socio-cultural theorists emphasise the dialectical process of meaning building; the intersubjectivity or *negotiation* of persons acting in a socio-cultural situation.

The theoretical position taken here is not one that attempts to legitimate itself through the rejection of positivism (an accusation cast against post-modernists by Moore & Muller 1999), but is rather one which takes as its point of departure a fundamentally different epistemological premise. The epistemological standpoint taken here is one which celebrates both the individual and contextual nature of knowledge, questioning the notion of objectivity. Such a position may be described as "a form of perspectivism":

> A form of perspectivism, which sees knowledge and truth claims as being relative to a culture, form of life or standpoint and, therefore, ultimately representing a particular perspective and social interest rather than independent, universalistic criteria. (Moore & Muller 1999:190)

I support Eisner (1986) in his quarrel with the view that a scientifically acceptable research method is 'objective' or value free. All methods and all forms of representation are partial, and because they are partial, they limit as well as illuminate what we are able to experience through them. As Cameron *et al.* (1992:5) point out, researchers are "socially located persons". "We inevitably bring our biographies and our subjectivities to every stage of the research process", as do the participants we work with. The contention here is that knowledge is socially and culturally contextualised and is therefore inherently embued with assumptions derived from its social and cultural context.

The challenge is to employ practices which both reflect the socio-cultural nature of the context, highlight the inherent assumptions and demonstrate a rationale and rigor which justifies and validates the approach.

The *negotiation* of power

In line with Foucauldian notions, power is regarded as a force and an effect which exists and circulates in a web of social interaction (Cameron *et al.* 1992). Power relations are not regarded as monolithic, but rather as extremely complex social relations, of which "individuals are the vehicles" (Foucault 1980:98).

'Empowerment', a much used term in contemporary educational research, is, as Cameron *et al.* (1992:20) point out, "blithely" talked about "as if it were easy to see where power lies and to alter its distribution". While such a notion of power typified my thinking when I began this study, I now regard this as too simplistic. People cannot be simply divided into groups of those with and those without: one group who have the power to empower the unempowered. It is a much more complex relationship. People may be regarded as "intricate mosaics of differing power potentials in different social relations" (op cit. 1992:21).

While questions concerning the definition and location of power remain unresolved and the notion of empowerment must be regarded as problematic, the research presented here may nevertheless be aligned with Cameron *et al.*'s notion of 'empowering' research; research not only carried out *on*, but also *for* and very importantly *with*. Such research implies the use of open, interactive and dialogic research methods, as opposed to the more distancing or objectifying strategies typical of more traditional positivistic approaches to research. The "centrality of interaction" is what defines the research as 'empowering' (Cameron *et al.* 1992).

This approach to the research was aimed at facilitating response to the concerns of the teachers as well as to my own. Such intertwining was designed to generate new insights that a more 'closed' approach would not have allowed for (Cameron *et al.* 1992). The teachers involved in this study were not only an integral part of the research process themselves but were also given insights and access to the analytical aspects of the research. While the teachers did not actually analyse their own transcripts, they had editorial access to all that was written and their comments on the constructions informed the research process and, more specifically, the analysis of the data, in fundamental ways.

Research done *with* as well as *on*, must not only seek active co-operation, requiring disclosure of the researcher's goals, assumptions and procedures, but must take into account the agendas of the other research participants as well as the researcher's (Cameron *et al.* 1992). The study presented here endeavoured to do exactly this, adapting to changes in circumstance and understanding. It was the negotiative nature of the research relationship that guided the evolution of the research.

The first phase of the study took the form of a teacher development project [Chapter 7: *A Journey of a Project*] carried out in response to a request for support in the teaching of mathematics, plus my own identification of the lack of collegial support and collaboration among the teachers with whom I worked. The project intertwined the agendas of the teachers struggling with the teaching of mathematics, and my agenda as a mathematics educator supporting the teaching of mathematics in the classroom and the collaborative professional development of teachers. The design of the project was such that its evolution was shaped by a characteristically interactive process which began with a situational analysis and continued through ongoing evaluative feedback.

The second phase of the study, exploring the teachers' previous experience in order to gain greater understanding of their situation, was also based on an interactive methodology [Chapter 8: *A Journey of a School*]. Informal conversations with each of the teachers provided the data base, from which interpretive frameworks were developed and constructions were made. These were then fed back to the teachers and discussed with them, their responses forming subsequent layers of data and further informing the shape of the interpretive frames. The consistent employment of such interactive processes, albeit in differing forms throughout the research, characterises the study as what Cameron *et al.* (1992) refer to as 'empowering'.

Power is therefore seen in "more complex and contextual terms", as pertaining not just to the relations between the participants in the community in which they are situated, but also to the relations between the research participants in the context of the research process itself. A *negotiation* of understandings and perception is required. For such *negotiation* to take place "dialogue, explicitness and honesty are required" (Cameron et al 1992:21-22).

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Negotiation is thus identified as a strong thread running throughout the research at all levels. The design, implementation, evaluation and development of the initial teacher development project on which this research is based, the roles the participants, including myself, played, and the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, were all negotiated [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*]. The theoretical and methodological understandings framing the research could also be said to have been 'negotiated' in interaction with colleagues, friends and supervisors, both formally and informally. And finally, the form in which the research is presented here may also be described as the result of *negotiation*. The whole experience of the research has been interactive and negotiative: a complex dynamic. As the process evolved, so initial assumptions and preconceptions were challenged and original plans and ideas adapted to fit newly negotiated understandings. The interdiscursive and dialogical nature of the research is explored further in the next chapter: *The notion of voice*.

Chapter 6:

The Notion of Voice

This chapter focuses on the notion of voice, a notion based on the Bakhtinian construct of dialogicality and mutual construction, the epistemological foundations of the research presented in this thesis.

> Voices always exist in a social milieu; there is no such thing as a voice that exists in total isolation from other voices. (Wertsch 1991:51)

While the notion of voice has traditionally focussed on facilitating expression of teachers' perspectives, from both epistemological and political standpoints (Butt & Raymond 1987, Feiman-Nemser & Floden 1986), the approach taken here is one more in line with a Bakhtinian perspective. For Mikhail Bakhtin, voice was not just utterance, but involved "the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1981). An utterance is produced by a voice and is thus made from a certain 'point of view' or perspective; it is therefore expressive of such things as the speaker's conceptual horizon, intention and world view.

> An utterance reflects not only the voice producing it, but also the voices to which it is addressed. In the formulation of an utterance a voice responds in some way to previous utterances and anticipates the responses of other, succeeding ones; when it is understood, an utterance comes into contact with the "counter word" of those who hear it. (Wertsch 1991:53)

The utterance is therefore shaped not only by the one who is doing the speaking, but also by those who are being addressed and who are hearing: "utterances are inherently associated with at least two voices". It is upon this Bakhtinian notion of 'dialogicality'(1981) that the approach of this thesis is based.

The text may be described as a "dialogic encounter with the voices of others" (Bakhtin, cited in Wertsch 1991). My voice and the voices of the teachers are acknowledged in the text, but as Burns & Hood (1995) point out, the voices speak interdiscursively, the voices of others implied within them. They are giving voice to others who have 'contributed silently'; friends and colleagues who have influenced us and share our lives.

> Individuals assume, participate in, and in a sense are made up of, the various voices available to them. (Freeman 1996:747)

Voice, therefore, is regarded as social not individual: it is 'socially constructed'. I do not claim to be 'giving' the teachers a voice on an epistemological, sociopolitical or methodological level. Within a socially constructed view of voice, voices do not belong to individuals and therefore cannot be sought out in that way. Rather, it is acknowledged that "voices exist in and as a social medium" and it is recognised that what is heard is "a function of who they are as individuals within the social community" (Freeman 1996:748). The teachers' words are not regarded merely as individual expressions, but rather as "statements of connection" to and within the wider social systems in which the individual participates.

An epistemology of language

Language is viewed as a vehicle for exploring and framing the teachers' world, but it is recognised that the construction of that world is dependent on the relationship between the co-constructors. It is acknowledged that what was said and what was heard was unique to the context or situation: "Voice is created on and for the occasion" (Freeman 1996:748).

> Each voice is a mutual social construction that depends as much on being heard as it does on what is said. (Freeman 1996:757)

Compromising Freeman's more radical stance, language is here regarded as both a vehicle by which individuals communicate, *and* the "fabric of relationships that links people" (Freeman 1996:749). These linguistic concepts are in fact regarded as mutually inclusive, language lying at "the borderline between oneself and others" (Bakhtin 1981:294). The communication will depend on the people communicating and the relationship between them.

> Activities, tasks, functions and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons.
> (Lave & Wenger 1991 cited by Freeman 1996:750)

As Freeman (op cit.) points out, the words must be understood "within the social fabric of the research process that produces them": the people in the linguistic relationship and the

relationship between those people, their relative situations and the experiences they bring to the situation. Who one is not only shapes what one says and what one hears, but who one is talking to. What is said is being said in relation to the person being spoken to and how it is heard or interpreted will depend on who that person is and their experience.

Language is used "to shape the conceptual architecture", to categorise and frame the linguistic accounts of the teachers' experiences and as a way 'into' understanding the teachers' experience. It is recognised, however, that such a "representational view of language data" is limited in that it "only provides part of the story". As Freeman argues, it is necessary to integrate this with a "presentational view of language data" if we are to fully understand "the social context that language embodies" and "the role that the research process plays in shaping the data as it is gathered and analysed" (Freeman 1996:732).

Recognising the limitations of a purely representational approach the voices are foregrounded by specific attention to the context and methodology of the research [*ORIENTATION*], and the theoretical orientation of the research [*VOICES OF EXPERIENCE*], which provide a metaphorical backdrop to the voices and their interpretation. The approach is validated by the procedural teacher/researcher participation, highlighting the importance of the validatory data feedback cycle: the process of consensual validation. The veracity of the teachers' words is unchallenged, but rather it is the interpretation that is challenged and the process that is examined.

Voice is used as a means to represent or create the teachers' story. The underlying assumption, Freeman (1996) points out, is that field notes, interviews, journals or co-constructed and coanalysed narratives can represent teachers' worlds. The implication is not that language is universal and transparent medium for representation, but rather that the way the teachers' words are framed here presents just one interpretation, though very importantly one which the teachers have played a fundamental part in constructing and one which they recognise and acknowledge.

> It is never the thing, but the version of the thing.
> (Stevens 1982, cited in Freeman 1996:743)

ISSUE: Linguistic limitations and boundaries.

Language plays an indisputably vital role. However, viewed as a "conceptual tool" fundamental to articulation and representation, language "has its own boundaries, its own constraints and its own possibilities" (Eisner 1986:16). While language helps us formulate and convey our experience, its use may also restrict our experience. Eisner refers specifically to the restrictions imposed by labelling and categorising objects and events.

> Assigning a name to something constructs the illusion that what has been named is genuinely distinguishable from all else. In treating these distinctions, we can all too easily lose sight of the seamlessness of that which is signified by our words and abstractions. (Gough 1991:37)

Eisner also refers to the typically restrictive elocution of research that has dominated educational inquiry, "a language that implies that it is possible for the organism to grasp the environment as it *really* is . . . that we discover the world rather than construe it . . . that how things are is nothing for which we have any responsibility" (1986:18). The motive for this, Eisner believes, is found in "our search for objectivity, that God's eye view of the world that sees comprehensively and without the encumbrances of feelings, motives, interests or a personal biography". As Eisner points out, "the result is the creation of a language of research that only researchers can understand . . . . Legitimacy is conferred upon those who belong to the same church" (1986:18).

Gitlin (1990) points out that the use of codes specific to the academic research culture limits accessibility to the research text. The intention here is that the research will be of benefit to the participants themselves, to people who are in similar situations and people who are interested in or who would benefit from an understanding of the situation. The accessibility of the text is therefore vital. The text intentionally departs from traditional form and style. It is contrived not only to represent the context it claims to interpret, and to be more accessible to that context, but also to echo the interdiscursive nature of its construction.

The politics of voice

Rather than presenting myself, the researcher, as a "disembodied, 'objective' knower" (Lather & Smithies 1997), I have attempted to situate my own story among the voices of the teachers, presenting what Lewis (1959, cited in Atkinson 1990:19) refers to as a 'blend' of voices. I do not claim to 'give voice' to the teachers, but rather, I attempt to frame the teachers' voices in presenting an account of the research and an illustration of their situation. It represents an effort to include and emphasise the teachers' voices, blended with my own "voice of interpretation" (Grumet 1990), as offering a way of thinking.

The intention is "to not drown the poem of the other with the sound of my own voice" (Lather & Smithies 1997). The domination of my voice as the researcher over that of the researched (Biott 1993) is recognised. However, in an ethnography of this nature, such dominance is inevitable. Drowning, however, is not, and this has been striven against. Drowning is prevented in the text by interspersing, and at times saturating, the text with the teachers' words, and also through the process of "mutual construction" (Connelly & Clandinin 1986). As in Nias' (1989) study, constructions were fed back to the teachers for their comment and 'confirmation', and the feedback itself woven into the final process of construction. Compatibility among the individual narratives, and the way in which these narratives have been fragmented and collectively framed, is verified through this process of 'consensual validation' [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*].

Complete conversation transcripts have been fragmented and the fragments framed. The breaking up of the conversations, extracting words from their original context, codifying and reframing the teachers' words, may have led to misinterpretation. Consensual validation has thus been vital during the process of construction, to ensure that the teachers' words are not misinterpreted or misused. To claim to have produced a polyphonal text, and to authenticate that text, the cyclical feedback of the text to the teachers was a methodological imperative.

The "shifting of voices", from the voice of the author to the voices of the actors and back again, forms complex layers within the text, which exist in "relationships of echo and anaphora, dialogue and development" (Atkinson 1990:91), combining to produce a "collaborative account". Atkinson points out that the different voices do not have 'identical'

or 'equivalent' functions, but are rather "complementary", "the full force of the passage derived from the switching of perspective between the two voices . . .":

> The juxtaposition of the voices here creates the possibility for a complex interpretative scheme . . the two voices combine and conjoin to produce a more complex picture than a univocal account may convey.
>
> (Atkinson 1990:94)

The interweaving of voice in the text not only provides the reader with "concrete - sometimes vivid - if fragmentary, vicarious experience of the social world" under scrutiny, but also allows for the representation of multiple perspectives and the construction of what Atkinson (1990:82) refers to as a "polyphonal and collaborative" text, constructed between the author, the actors in the setting and the reader.

A discourse of voice

A discourse of voice is fundamental to this thesis. An attempt is being made at reaching an understanding of the teachers' context through the framing of their experiences as voiced. While the critique of the dominant discourse of voice as weak (Moore & Muller 1999) is recognised in that it can "only produce accounts in which positions and relations are re-presented as characters and the drama of their relationships", it is my contention that the approach taken here goes beyond this. The use of voice in the text is used to produce a type of account, dramatising to an extent the context being studied, providing depth and richness. But it is the dialectical tension of the teachers' voices with my own voice and the interactive process of interpretation that strengthens the theoretical approach taken here.

The discourse of this thesis is not intended to "replace theory" as condemned by Moore & Muller (op cit.); the intention is rather to theorise the discourse. And the discourse here does not claim to empower teachers by letting their voices be heard, while disregarding the part played by my own voice. Rather, it is based, and built, on a recognised dialectic of voices, in which my role appears as that of a listener trying to hear, an interpreter trying to understand, and a writer trying to represent.

The voice dialectic can be identified in both the process and the presentation of the research. The research process is characterised by a constant dialectic between the teachers' voices and my own. The cyclical process of eliciting the teachers' voices through conversation, framing their words with my own voice, eliciting responses to these frameworks and then reframing or framing further, illustrates the procedural voice dialectic. The dialectic is also echoed in the presentation, brought alive with the teachers' words.

The dynamic relationship between the teachers' voices and my own is not only inescapable, but fundamentally built on in the research process. I do not attempt to 'stablise' my voice or displace my own reflexivity. I have consciously struggled to avoid the trap of "erasing the text that writes the world of which it speaks" (Moore & Muller 1999). My voice is recognised and acknowledged as the 'architectural' voice shaping the text, the architecture itself based on a foundational process of consensual validation.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

This section has explored the construction of the text and its metalogic echoes of the dialogical notion of voice and epistemological foundation of *negotiation*. The following section outlines the research, exemplifying the theoretical landscape presented here.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

JOURNEYS OF EXPERIENCE

This section of the thesis presents a narrative interpretation of the teachers' experience. Journey is used in this section to metaphorically frame the interpretation - to emphasise the dynamism of the context.

The experience is not viewed as linear, but rather multi-layered - not one journey, but many journeys - journeys that aren't sequential, but rather simultaneous and interlinked - a thick tapestry of experiences woven together. Each journey, individual or collective, is part of a much larger, extremely complex journey.

This section focuses on two integrally related journeys - two planes of experience. A *Journey of a Project* [Chapter 7] and A *Journey of a School* [Chapter 8]. These journeys are not to be regarded as separate but as integrally related, as *a journey within a journey*. The journey of a project is located within 'the bigger picture' - it is a part of the greater journey of the school.

A Journey of a Project presents a narrative account of the experience of the teacher development project - a story of an intervention aimed at developing a collaborative approach to teacher professional development [Phase 1]. A Journey of a School presents an interpretation of the wider context in which the MSP was situated, based on the analysis of conversations with the teachers [Phase 2]. The focus is on the interpersonal aspects of the teachers' experience, a range of interpersonal dimensions identified and juxtaposed as 'tensions' describing and illustrating the dynamism and flux of 'a case in transition'.

Chapter 7:

A Journey of a Project

This chapter outlines the initial phase of the research - the MSP [Mentor Schools Project - Mutual Support Project] - a teacher development project aimed at developing a collaborative approach to teacher professional development, based on peer interaction and support in primary mathematics education. This journey is described in three sections: Towards the Project, The Project and Reflection on the Project. The first section describes the circumstances and thinking which led to the conception and development of the project. The second section describes the project and its implementation, and the final section looks back and reflects on the journey of the project. The focus is on the interpersonal aspects of the experience.

TOWARDS THE PROJECT

The project outlined here focused on mathematics education and was developed to help encourage and facilitate collaborative professional support amongst the teachers.

> *Professionals supporting and helping to develop each other, sharing expertise and experience and working together in partnership.* (MSP Initial teacher handout 1996)

The term 'partnership' here refers to a *mutual* relationship where each partner is regarded as having something to offer and something to gain. The concept challenges the traditional ideology of valuable knowledge being the perogative of the most 'experienced' in terms of professional longevity. Experience is viewed as something everyone has, and everyone can share, its virtue or validity not necessarily measurable in terms of time.

The first steps of the journey of the project were heavily influenced by my own personal and professional experience. In order to situate myself in the context of the project and illustrate those early steps, I have provided a brief personal reflection on aspects of my professional experience I consider particularly relevant to this thesis. This not only provides a personal backdrop, but may also serve to explain why certain preconceptions have been brought to bear or assumptions made. This reflection includes specific focus on work with the Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project (RUMEP), which led to the genesis of the MSP Project.

My career in education includes eight years of teaching throughout secondary and primary grades, focussing on the subject of mathematics. Although not all of this time was spent in England (the country of my childhood and schooling), that spent elsewhere was mainly situated within the English educational system. Consequently, until moving to South Africa, my direct experience of systems of education was limited to that of England.

Career moves, both in the geographical and the professional sense, have coincided with major curriculum reforms. At the beginning of my teaching career, in 1986, I was involved with major developments in secondary assessment reflecting the move towards continuous assessment; the replacement of Ordinary Level (O) and General Certificates of Education (GCE) with the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). Three years later, I was involved with the implementation of the major educational reform in England, the National Curriculum. It was in 1995 that I came to South Africa, a time of great reformation politically and socially, but particularly educationally. I found myself, yet again, at a site of radical curricular reform.

Involvement in such educational reforms has not been limited to my own classroom, but has extended to those of others. As well as the responsibility for teaching my students, responsibility for the subject area of mathematics and managerial responsibility for Planning & Organisation, my career has also involved roles as Mentor teacher within the school and Advisory teacher within the school district. These roles have all contributed to my personal knowledge of teacher education, and more specifically to my understanding of notions of mentorship and peer support.

Throughout my career I have been involved in mentorship, both on an individual level and on an institutional level. The school in which I worked in London, Harbinger Primary School (1989-94), was regarded as a 'Mentor School'. Mentoring was facilitated throughout the phases of educational service: pre-service student teachers were supported during their teaching practice, student visits were hosted and talks were given both inside and outside the school. Meanwhile, at the stage of 'initial' service, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) were supported by Mentor teachers, throughout their 'probationary' year.

At the in-service stage, an internal system of appraisal was developed at Harbinger, based on constructive interactions between specific members of staff. Despite the negative connotations of the notion of appraisal and initial resistance to such a process, my experience of the system proved to be a very positive one. For me, its success was due to the supportive approach of the appraiser whom I regarded as a mentor, 'a trusted advisor'. The process was a dynamic one in which the 'appraisee' and 'appraiser' engaged in a communal process of joint appraisal.

Another aspect of the school's programme of in-service training involved peer teachers supporting each other through the mutual exchange of ideas and experience. This occurred both within the school and with the staff of other schools. At a formal level, staff of different schools formed a cluster group and shared expertise through organised meetings and workshops, while at a more informal level, staff within the school attended a weekly teachers' forum, where teachers got together to discuss problems and share ideas.

Classroom doors in Harbinger were open, not always literally, but certainly metaphorically. Classroom visits were encouraged and facilitated, experiences were discussed, difficulties were recognised and supported and successes were shared. When I came to South Africa to work with Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project [RUMEP] in 1995, I found a very different situation.

Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project [RUMEP] is an independently funded Non Governmental Organisation [NGO] based at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The Project began in July 1993 with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning mathematics in primary schools, specifically 'disadvantaged' schools, those that were marginalised by the previous education system.

RUMEP began as an "in-service teacher development programme" which sought to assist teachers "engaged in the process of implementing change in the critical dimension of transforming their own teaching styles" (Levy 1994). The project worked on a modular system of in-service workshops, reflecting a belief that this was an effective way to influence

and change existing classroom practice. Follow-up visits to schools provided on-site help and teacher support in the application and extension of ideas introduced at the workshops.

As Materials Developer, my major responsibility was the development of resources for the teaching and learning of mathematics in the classroom. This process involved 'development' at two levels: the collaborative development of the resources with the teachers and the development of the teachers themselves as professionals. Much of this development was, and still is, carried out with teachers from farm schools in the rural areas. I worked with Ms Thandi Mboyiya, co-ordinator of the Farm School Project [FSP], a subsidiary RUMEP project with specific focus on such rural schools.

An integrated model of workshops and school visits was developed in response to a needs assessment and in collaboration with the farm school teachers themselves. This model consisted of centralised workshops at the beginning of each school term, covering both mathematical concepts and pedagogical issues, followed up by RUMEP staff supporting teachers in the classrooms. The research and development of materials was viewed as an important and integral part of the support provided and the development of the teachers.

Of particular relevance to my research and a major factor motivating it, were the aspects of the Farm School Project that the teachers identified on the evaluation forms as being the most helpful, together with the suggestions they made to make the project more helpful. Teachers wanted and appreciated the opportunity to share their own ideas, discuss problems and successes:

> ***In what ways was the workshop helpful to you as a teacher?***
>
> *Working together to solve problems.* (February 1995)
>
> *Sharing ideas with other teachers.* (March 1995)
> *There were very good ideas shared and problems which I had was solved*
> *Useful ideas were uttered and I learned a lot by just listening and exploring.*
>
> *Educating chance to collect experience.* (October 1995)
> *I learnt a lot by sharing ideas with other teachers.*
> *Gained new ideas from the workshop and from other teachers at the workshop.*
> *The ideas we share with my fellow teachers were uplifting my little experience.*

How might the workshops be improved?

The teachers must give more input in the discussions. (March 1995)
Allow or encourage more discussion from the floor.
By encouraging teachers to share their ideas. To ask if they have any problems.

It can be improved discussions. Ideas from others. (April 1995)

By sharing ideas. (August 1995)

It should be improved by more ideas from the teachers. (October 1995)
Getting together and sharing ideas, copying methods from one another.
The teachers must all give ideas and share some problems.

Any other comments?

There should be a maths day where schools should represent what they are doing with the group of learners. (February 1995)

Clearly then, the teachers recognised and appreciated the contribution their peers could make to their own learning, and vice versa.

Another recurring request in the evaluations was for demonstration lessons:

How might the workshops be improved?

If possible it would be more interesting to have children even if its for one lesson, just to show us practical it is in a classroom situation.
To include learner demonstration lessons. (February 1995)

They can show us a practical lesson where the use of materials are illustrated with the children (March 1995)

Use children instead of teachers.
Demonstrate with a class of children.
Practical demonstration.
To involve the children when giving a workshop eg give the lesson to the children.
By giving practical demonstrations with children as if in a classroom situation.
Practical demonstration of lessons with actual learners.
Demonstration in the classroom.

It will be appreciated if in one of the workshops learners will be present so that they can be part of the workshop to really see that its working. (August 1995)

We want to see the kids involved in the workshop. (October 1995)

It was strongly felt, however, that for such demonstration lessons to be carried out by RUMEP staff was not only unrealistic - an unknown (to the children) teacher doing a one-off lesson with an unknown class - but could also be seen to be encouraging a 'recipe' style approach to lessons, which could be implemented irrespective of the needs of the children being taught. Such activity could also result in a feeling of disempowerment, with teachers perceiving themselves as 'failures' if others are seen succeed where they felt they could not; alternatively it could provoke feelings of disgruntlement, with teachers resenting the intrusion of 'experts' who are not in the classroom all day every day, and do not have to work in the conditions they are having to put up with daily.

The solution became clear. Opportunities were made for teachers to observe their peers in everyday 'real-life' classroom situations. Such an approach had been suggested by teachers:

> *Different schools could give a sort of demonstration in different subjects so as to share ideas.* (February 1995)
>
> *Encouraging visits to other schools to uplift your own standard and compare what you are doing.* (August 1995)

When asked if they would be interested in visiting other classrooms to see teachers in action and to discuss how they manage their classroom, the teachers were unanimous: "Yes" plus the occasional "with pleasure!".

As a consequence of the teachers' feedback, the design of the Farm School Project evolved to incorporate teacher fora for the discussion and sharing of ideas and problems and regular inter- school visits. These proved very successful and resulted in a project which involved the teachers as active rather than passive participants. Our role became more one of facilitating the sharing of the teachers' experience and expertise, and making our contributions alongside theirs. This evolutionary development of the Farm School Project was of fundamental significance to the design of the MSP project.

Demand for professional support exceeded capacity: RUMEP could not do it all! It was recognised that in order for their work to be sustainable and far-reaching it was necessary to

develop teachers who would, in turn, be able to go out and develop their colleagues. Hence, the development of 'key' or leader teachers, described as "enthusiastic teachers with the skills and ability to organise and manage in-service workshops for fellow teachers". At the same time certain teachers in the Farm School Project were becoming more confident and prominent than others, working together with the RUMEP staff in supporting the development of their colleagues.

RUMEP's work was evolving in such a way that it was increasingly involving the teachers in the support of their peers. It became apparent that there was an elemental thread weaving its way through the Project's work of what could be described as 'mentorship'. RUMEP could be regarded as *mentoring* teachers who, in 'cascade' fashion, went on to *mentor* others. RUMEP could also be described as a 'mentoring institution', in as much as it is seen as an 'expert' who supports teachers by sharing its knowledge and expertise. This began at the level of in-service in the form of workshops and classroom support, but has developed into the field of pre-service, through workshops with teacher training institutions and the development of teacher education courses.

An area that RUMEP had attempted to address was that of the schools in inner Grahamstown. A series of workshops had been conducted in a local school in 1995 for all interested teachers, but there was not the capacity for follow-up visits. Reports indicated that although the teachers enjoyed the workshops and appreciated the materials handed out, they felt unable to put the ideas into practice in their own classrooms, and the materials often went straight into a cupboard where they remained. Local teachers in contact with RUMEP staff expressed an urgent need for further support for them and their colleagues in the teaching of mathematics.

It was with the needs of these teachers in mind and the lessons learned from work with the Farm School Project, together with my own experience of mentorship, that the concept of the Mentor Schools Project was conceived.

~~~~~~
~~~~~~

This section has briefly outlined the circumstances leading to the conception of the Mentor Schools Project, in terms of my own personal situation and that of the teachers I was working with. The following section looks at the MSP teacher development project: the *rationale*, its *conception, design* and *implementation.*

THE PROJECT

> *One of my greatest impressions of the teaching profession in South Africa has been the sense of isolation and lack of confidence. This is obviously more profound in the rural areas, but is not unnoticeable elsewhere. Classroom doors were firmly 'closed', teachers reluctant to be seen in the act! There seems to be little if any interaction between teachers. The teacher is left alone to struggle under very difficult circumstances: lack of training/qualifications, large classes, few, if any resources, little confidence and little if any support.*
>
> *Yet there are some wonderful things happening behind many of those doors - ideas which if shared would help a lot of teachers. There are teachers struggling behind closed doors feeling they are the only ones and daren't let anyone know! It is important I believe for teachers to realise that to teach well is one of the most difficult jobs to do. That we all have strengths and weaknesses which by working together we can share and strengthen.*
>
> *The main aim of the MSP is therefore to help facilitate professional interaction - mutual support of teachers by teachers - sharing the much underestimated expertise that is lurking behind closed doors. There is such a demand for teacher support, yet it is assumed that because of the limited number of 'outside experts' there is not the capacity to cope with the demand. What is being overlooked here is the capacity that is there already working between classroom walls and how that can be developed and utilised. What is needed, I believe, is a system which is internally supported not one completely reliant on external support.*
>
> (Research Journal 01.97)

The Mentor Schools Project [MSP]

Rationale

The Mentor Schools Project could be described as an 'enquiry-based' approach to in-service education. The term 'enquiry' is used here in a similar sense to that of Jaworski (1996), to refer to the questioning, reflection and evaluation carried out by the teachers themselves. The areas of interest or concern are identified by the teachers and are addressed using a range of strategies, such as 'focus group' style workshops, reflection on data collected through questionnaires, interviews, informal participant observation, journal keeping and dialogue. Much of this 'evidence' is collected both at an individual level and at a group level, involving the teachers themselves in an "ongoing process of professional growth and reflection . . . in an attempt to influence the way in which they regard the teaching and learning of mathematics" (Breen 1993:209-10).

The project was founded on the notion of participation. Participation is interpreted in the present study, as involvement with colleagues and regarded as a fundamental component of learning. As Gitlin & Smyth (1989) point out teachers should be encouraged to enter into "educative relationships" with one another.

Teachers, it has been argued, have been stifled by "a culture which views teachers as uncritical receivers and implementers" (Walker 1991:7). Teachers need to actively participate, rather than merely use and implement. The model was intended to be emancipatory, freeing teachers from the legacies of traditional constrictions:

> *Teachers in the past have been confined eg to syllabuses. They were under constant surveillance of their classroom - inspectors which wanted to look at books and how they covered the aspects and who was actually there to make sure they do exactly that. To confine them to what has been prescribed to them and nothing else so there's no room for new ideas or innovations to do your own thing.* (Adam C1)

The intention was to develop an internal, that is, teacher-directed model of professional development, based on collegial mentorship, in contrast to external models, which involve imposition from outside authorities. Such a rationale does not negate the contribution of outside expertise, but rather views it as one component within an internally focussed model.

The project was based on the recognition that teachers have much experience and expertise that is not shared. As Gray (1995:8) points out, "teachers generally do have much to offer each other" that is "frequently much more useful than that suggested by an outsider". However, he warns that the average teacher has not had the time or opportunity to study or gain experience beyond the immediate situation and warns against the danger of getting "trapped in a vicious cycle" (Gray 1995). The concern that the result might be cultural perpetuation rather than growth is certainly a real one. However, it is not the contention of this thesis that processes of professional development rely solely on strategies of inter-collegial support, but that the experience of professional development is enhanced and sustained by such strategies. Such an approach "carries with it the inherent potential of empowering teachers in a substantial way and provides the means for them to take charge of their own ongoing professional development" (Gray 1995:8). At the heart of such an approach is a view of learners as "active agents shaping their own working lives" (Walker 1991:186).

Conception

The conception of the Mentor Schools Project [MSP] in 1996 coincided with my colleague Rose Spannenberg's career move from Project Coordinator of RUMEP to Principal of St Ann's Primary School.[8] Staff of St Ann's had attended RUMEP workshops and individual staff members had worked with me on Materials Development. Familiar with RUMEP's work and aware of their own needs, the staff requested further support in the area of mathematics. It seemed an ideal opportunity to work with Rose and the staff of St Ann's on the development of this model of teacher development.

The aim of the project was to "build St Ann's into a school which, with increased knowledge and confidence, would open up their doors, not only to their colleagues in the same institution, but to others in other institutions too" (Research Journal 04.96); that is, to develop St Ann's into a school which could act as a mentor institution for others, a place where teachers could go to discuss ideas, problems and successes and see 'real' teaching in practice, with practising teachers dealing with classroom issues every day (as opposed to 'unreal' demonstration lessons carried out by outside 'experts').

The intention was that the 'demand' for support from teachers in Grahamstown would eventually be met through a combination of workshops and mentorship support from staff of St Ann's. An initial meeting was held in June 1996 in which the concept was presented to the teachers and their interest sought. The teachers were unanimous in their decision to be involved.

Design

The initial design of the project was based on the notion of mentorship, influenced both by the work being carried out at RUMEP and by my own experience of mentorship, as outlined above. The project was about "professionals supporting and helping to develop each other, sharing expertise and experience, and working together in partnership". It aimed to provide "an appropriate model of support for teachers in mathematics education" [Appendix 6: *MSP Initial Teacher Handout*].

8 Rose left St Ann's soon afterwards and returned to her role as Project Coordinator at RUMEP.

This project was designed to run on two levels: at a whole staff level in the form of interactive workshops and at an individual level in the form of in-class support. The design was structured in three stages planned over a three-year period:

Stage I [1997]

Development of Mentor School [MS]

2 mornings / week	*- in-class support [MS]*
1 afternoon / week	*- forum/workshop [MS]*

Stage 2 [1998]

Development of other schools [OS] with support of Mentor School [MS]

1 morning / week	*- in-class support [MS]*
1 afternoon / 2 weeks	*- interactive workshop/forum [MS & OS]*
1 morning / week	*- follow up [OS]*

Stage 3 [1999]

Follow up and documentation

1 morning / week	*- follow-up visits [MS & OS]*

MS - Mentor School *OS - Other Schools*

(Research Journal 06.02.97)

As outlined in the initial teacher handout, the first phase would involve developing St Ann's as a mentor school, while the second phase would "involve the staff of St Ann's in supporting the wider community" by opening up their classrooms to provide "examples in practice" [Appendix 6: MSP *Initial Teacher Handout*]. Finally, the third phase would focus on follow-up and support of the project.

It is important to point out that the initial plans outlined here were based on my experience and understanding of the situation. It was a suggested plan on which to base the project. Implementation of the project, however, resulted in radical adaptation of the original design. Discussions with the teachers and increased familiarity with the situation led to the evolution of a more collaboratively planned experience - a *negotiated* design.

Implementation

The implementation of the MSP commenced at the beginning of March 1997. After much communication between the Principal [Edwin], the 'head of mathematics' [Barry] and myself, an initial meeting was arranged with the teachers to look at the idea of the project and gain an indication of their willingness to be involved. It is important to note that by this point I had moved from RUMEP into the Education Department at Rhodes University, where I was now a doctoral student. I was hoping to facilitate the implementation of the MSP in this new capacity.

MSP: Meeting 1 - Planning - *Introduction & Inquiry* [04.03.97][9]

I began this meeting by explaining to the teachers my change of situation, from a project worker at RUMEP to a doctoral student in the Rhodes Education Department, and indicating that I would be keen to continue with the project if they were still interested. After presenting the suggested outline of the project, its purpose and proposed design, a focus group discussion raised such comments, questions and concerns as the teachers chose to articulate.

> *The staff were unanimous that they wanted to be involved in the MSP. However, there was much reticence to commit themselves on an individual level. Only one teacher, at this first meeting indicated that she wanted to work individually.*
> *It was also agreed that they wanted to have staff sessions on Tuesday afternoons which were already designated as meeting times. Once every month was felt to be the optimum frequency taking into account other demands and 1.45 for an hour was agreed on for times.*
> *The following Tuesday was set aside for the next meeting, when we would identify the needs.*
> (Research Journal 04.03.97)

At this initial meeting information about the teachers was gained through the use of a short questionnaire [Q1] which was handed out for the teachers to complete, indicating the grade they taught, the subjects they taught, and how many years of teaching experience they had. The teachers were also asked to indicate their desired level of involvement in the project (whether they wanted to be involved, and if so, at which levels they would be interested in involving themselves); and finally, they were asked to indicate what they hoped to gain from the project [Appendix 2: *Questionnaires*].

---

[9] Plans/brief outlines for each MSP meeting are provided in Appendix 7.

What became clear immediately was the difference between my expectations and those of the teachers. Firstly, I had made incorrect assumptions about levels of time and involvement the teachers would or could commit to the project. Secondly, while my original plan had involved working with the teachers on a one-to-one basis, the teachers were only keen to work at a group level. The information confirmed the unanimous commitment of the teachers to the project at a whole staff level. However, there was great reluctance to get involved at an individual level. The revised plan thus focussed on regular Staff Development meetings.

When asked for their expectations of the project, most of the teachers focussed on their own individual development, identifying the gleaning of new ideas, teaching methods and skills they could employ in the classroom, and the building up of their confidence:

> *To get new ideas of how to teach maths* (Heather Q1)
>
> *To gain more learning material and the ways in which you can use them. As an inexperienced teacher I still need more to learn.* (Una Q1)
>
> *To be equip with necessary armoury for new maths teaching* (Adam Q1)
>
> *To teach with confidence with right stuff to the learners and to make it more interesting.* (Bruce Q1)
>
> *To help with teaching methods in order to solve problems in the classroom especially maths.* (Olivia Q1)
>
> *With the large numbers we now have, I hope to gain ideas of working with such large numbers.* (Alison Q1)

Barry summed up his expectations succinctly in six words:

> *To be a better maths teacher.* (Barry Q1)

Other teachers referred to a more mutual exchange of ideas, methods, etc.:

> *To share and learn various teaching methods and ideas* (Ursula Q1)
>
> *Support - new ideas / methods of teaching maths. To be more confident and to later share my experience individually on a class level.* (Anna Q1)
>
> *To share ideas, to get more clarity about the new maths and to gain confidence.* (Hope Q1)
>
> *Working with others and sharing ideas with others to make teaching maths and learning maths more pleasurable .* (Olga Q1)

MSP: Meeting 2 - Planning - *Analysis & Way Forward* [11.03.97]

In order to inform the path the project would take, a SWOT analysis was carried out at the second project meeting. The intention of this analysis was to identify how the teachers perceived their situation: the Strengths and Weaknesses, identified Opportunities and perceived Threats. The idea was that this would help to identify focus areas for MSP staff development meetings. I asked the teachers to individually identify what they perceived to be the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Then in small focus groups they shared and discussed these perceptions, each group ending up with a set of strengths and weaknesses they agreed upon. These were then all collated onto a main board for further sorting. The next stage of the process was to identify the opportunities for, and threats to (i.e. what is preventing), building on the identified strengths and developing the identified weaknesses. These issues were brainstormed among the whole group. The outcomes of the analysis can be seen in Appendix 8.

This session was specifically designed to encourage the participation of all the staff, which was vital if a representative picture of how the school was perceived was to be drawn. The dynamic transitions from individual to small group to whole group, provided a continuous structure designed to aid the participation of all the staff, to build a sense of 'collegiality' and to develop both ease and confidence.

In addition to identifying possible foci for future staff development sessions, this meeting highlighted a particularly interesting point. Two of the groups identified the amount of experience in the school as a strength, while the other group identified the lack of sharing that experience as a weakness.

> *I found this particularly exciting as it reaffirmed in my mind the pertinence of the fundamental basis of the project, the sharing of professional experience and expertise.*
>
> (Research Journal 11.03.97)

It was therefore agreed at this meeting that we would go forward by organising Staff Development meetings focusing on the sharing of expertise in the identified areas of need. The focus and design of each meeting was decided at subsequent sessions. The teachers

decided on a particular area they wanted to focus on and I guided the design of the meeting. The format of the meetings was designed according to certain 'stimulants' or strategies to encourage peer interaction and support. In the following brief outline of the meetings the stimulants employed are indicated and research journal notes are used to reflect on the experience. Plans for each meeting from my research journal are provided in Appendix 8.

MSP: Meeting 3 - Staff Development - *Resources* [15.04.97]

Stimulant: Each teacher bringing along a *resource* and explaining how they use it in their classroom.

> *Resources, or rather lack of, had been identified as one of the major obstacles to teaching mathematics effectively. It had been decided that we would hold a meeting focusing on resources to share ideas and to see what could be used for what. Some teachers were aware of the RUMEP resources while others weren't, so we decided to hold the meeting in the resource centre so they could all see what was available.*
>
> *12 teachers came and we sat in a circle in the RUMEP resource centre. I began by thanking the teachers for coming. Then I went through the resources RUMEP had there, briefly describing what they were and how they may be used. As I did this one or two of the teachers chipped in with ways in which they had used similar materials or their own ideas of how such materials could be used. But this was mainly Alison who is probably the most confident teacher on the staff and is never shy about contributing.*
>
> *I also mentioned using the children themselves as resources and developing resources with the children eg making posters for the wall etc. I asked Olga to share what she had done with her class. She seemed very shy and nervous!*
>
> *I then handed over to the other teachers to share any ideas they had brought with them. They seemed very reluctant - shy, unconfident, unenthusiastic or not brought ideas - ?? One or two teachers however did share . . . . It was a shame that not more teachers chose to share as in my mind the aim of these sessions is to facilitate sharing of ideas and expertise amongst the teachers, not just from me to them.* (Research Journal 15.04.97)

Although resources had been identified as an area of strength in the school, the teachers explained that it was only the lower grades that had maths resources, and even these were not evenly distributed or necessarily made accessible to others. In response to this problem of resource distribution, it was decided that the teachers could hold a resource meeting at the school to look at what they had, and either centralise resources using a signing out system to keep track of the resources, or compile a list of what is where, to establish what was available and where it could be borrowed from.

While I feel much may have been achieved in this meeting with respect to highlighting the resource problem in the school and creating greater awareness of other available resources and how to use them, the level of interaction was somewhat disappointing. Most of the teachers appeared uncomfortable or reluctant to contribute to the session. Some had not brought resources along, while others had brought something but were hesitant to talk about it. This could be due to any one or more of a range of factors: the unfamiliarity of the situation, their own unfamiliarity with sharing ideas, discomfort with each other, discomfort with me, etc. What was also interesting was that despite sitting in a circular arrangement, in order to encourage interaction with everybody, the teachers who did share only seemed to address me. It was as if they were doing it for me rather than for each other, as if they were being 'tested' and I was going to judge them. I therefore decided to use a more necessarily interactive approach in the next session.

MSP: Meeting 4 - Staff Development - *Organisation & Management* [13.05.97]
Stimulant: Focus groups

It was recognised that many of the issues raised through the SWOT analysis [Appendix 8] could be considered within a focus on classroom organisation and management - class size, space and time, the ongoing issue of resources. In order to stimulate greater teacher interaction, this meeting was also organised in the style of a *focus group* workshop.

This meeting was held in one of the teacher's classrooms to facilitate the sharing of ideas through direct observation. Much of what this teacher had been doing in her classroom was relevant to the issues being discussed:

> *This meeting was purposely held in Olga's classroom so that the other teachers could see how she had changed it round and how simply reorganising the furniture in the room can make such a difference to the work space and how it can be used. They would also be privy to the lovely work on the wall the children had been producing and how the wall space had also been used to display resources eg strings of beads for counting in tens etc. The teachers could also see how Olga had organised her resources into boxes accessible to the kids when they wanted or needed to use them.* (Research Journal 13.05.97)

The structure of the session and the organisation of teachers into focus groups with specific roles necessitated a level of involvement which they responded to well. The teachers were divided into small groups of three, each taking on a role: facilitator, recorder and reporter. Each group was then given the task of discussing statements highlighting issues of classroom organisation and management. Comments were noted and finally fed back to the whole group.

> *The meeting generated much interesting discussion both at small and whole group level, people including myself chipping in and making suggestions or sharing what they have tried etc. However, there seemed to be a general feeling of its alright just sitting around talking about it - you try and do it in the classroom - teachers writing off their situations as 'impossible'. They wanted to see things in action.* (Research Journal 13.05.97)

We discussed our experiences of, and the benefits gained from, observing other teachers in action. Some of the teachers had observed other teachers during their training and had found it very helpful. The possibility of inter-class visits and the logistics of such visits were also discussed. However, while teachers were keen to visit other teachers' classrooms, I sensed a strong resistance to their own being visited.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

It was at this point that I decided to ask the teachers to evaluate the sessions we had had so far. I sent the teachers a very simple evaluation form to complete, which asked four open ended questions:

> *What do you find helpful about the sessions?*
> *What do you find unhelpful about the sessions?*
> *What would improve the sessions?*
> *Do you have any ideas how we can support each other more as teachers?*
> (MSP Evaluation 05.97)

I specifically discouraged the use of names in the hope of greater honesty. Twelve out of the total of sixteen teachers completed the forms. The form and collation of the responses can be found in Appendix 3 [*MSP Evaluation1*]. The following is a brief synopsis for the sake of the story of the journey.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The overall message from the teachers in this evaluation was that they found it helpful to discuss and share - to share feelings, ideas, problems/difficulties. Teachers pointed out the mutually helpful and supportive nature of the sessions, with one teacher referring specifically to the lack of criticism and selfishness. The practice and enhancement of communication skills was also noted. One teacher may have summed it up for the others:

> *You don't feel isolated anymore. You definitely can learn from and support one another.*
>
> (MSP Evaluation 1 05.97)

Many ideas to improve the sessions and support each other were proposed: more group discussion, the involvement of all the staff to take advantage of differing experience, more practical and creative ideas, demonstrations with learners in a "real-life classroom situation", more maths, regular "get togethers" to share problems, concerns and suggest solutions, "interact on a closer basis with each other", class group teachers working together, sharing ideas, methods, apparatus and worksheets, visiting each other's classrooms "not to evaluate or criticise but to work together and get creative ideas from one another".

What was identified as being *un*helpful was the timing of the sessions "immediately after school", the irrelevance of some of the discussion, and the lack of action! One of the teachers also pointed to the fact that they were "being used to better/further other people's qualifications". I found this latter comment the most disturbing:

> *I am very concerned about this. I feel I have taken care to be open and communicate the situation to the teachers. When my situation changed I informed the teachers and re-inquired as to whether they wanted to continue. I can only think that either this person had not been present at this session or that they had continued to participate under a cloud of resentment. This is something I must deal with at the next session.* (Research Journal 06.97)

I also had my own concerns. I was not feeling comfortable with my role as it was evolving. Despite my efforts to encourage greater participation by the teachers, I found I was playing a more dominant role than I had intended. The multiplicity of my own role in this initial stage of the research, as researcher, educator and participant, was proving problematic for me. The issue of roles was one I struggled with throughout the initial phase of the research [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*].

Due to school holidays, my own 'maternity leave' and other commitments on the part of the staff, there was a long break before I could feed back the information gained from the evaluation forms. The next meeting was due to take place on 07.10.97, but organising this meeting proved somewhat difficult. I became a little despondent:

> *It seems that while I have been on 'maternity leave' enthusiasm had dwindled and some teachers were not sure that they wanted to continue working with the project. This was obviously very disappointing to hear, but I realised that there was no point in letting it get me down. I sat and thought long and hard about it and decided not to give up but to be positive and go ahead as planned, make sure that this session sorted out what the teachers wanted and make a plan for that to happen. I therefore went not really knowing whether I would be returning to St Ann's again! If they didn't want to continue I would thank them for the work we have done together and go elsewhere! But for the purpose of my research it would be necessary to try to ascertain the teachers' reasons for not wishing to continue and I am very aware of how difficult that would be - to expect the teachers to be completely honest.*
>
> *The evaluations had been so positive and constructive, indicating a definite need and desire to share ideas etc . . . . However, I realise that the teachers had written these evaluations at the end of the previous sessions and the loss of momentum due to the break had probably helped to dampen enthusiasm.* (Research Journal 20.10.97)

Two important points were raised in my mind :

> *The meetings have been held in staff meeting times, which may have added a compulsory tone to involvement with the project. This is not, I believe, conducive to a positive and constructive atmosphere. It is important therefore that the teachers attend on a voluntary basis.*
>
> *The original concept of developing St Ann's as a mentor institution, could be causing feelings of anxiety and pressure of responsibility. The preconceived 'model' while sound in theory, has not proved to be so appropriate in reality. Rather than imposing 'a model' based on mentorship, we must work towards a notion of professional development based on mutual support, ie professionals coming together and sharing their ideas and experience:*
>
> ***Mentor Schools Project > Mutual Support Project.***
>
> (Research Journal 20.10.97)

The Mutual Support Project [MSP]

It was at this point in the project that a significant *shift* occurred in my thinking. I started to realise the implications of presenting the teachers with a prescribed model. Although certain aspects were negotiated with the teachers, e.g. the schedule and content of workshop sessions, the basic design, aim, structure and purpose had all come from me. Initially, the teachers had identified the need and expressed the desire to develop their mathematics teaching. With my concern to develop more far-reaching support, I had presented to them a 'model' of teacher professional development based on mentorship. Although offered as a suggested outline only, it was a plan that had been developed without initially consulting the teachers.

This initial project design had been based on my own personal experience of teaching and professional development, which, as revealed earlier in this chapter, differs greatly from that of the teachers I was working with, plus the limited experience I had of working with the teachers in their situation.[10]

This did not necessarily mean that the design was flawed or could not be implemented, but it did mean that the teachers had no real ownership of, or claim to, the process. I realised how important this was, and how much more constructive it would have been to involve the teachers right from the start of the process. Liaison with the principal alone, in the early stages, was not enough; all the participants, I now recognised, should have been involved from the very beginning at every stage of the process. It was with this new 'attitude' that I approached the next meeting.

MSP: Meeting 5 - Planning - *Reflection and Refocus* [20.10.97]

This meeting had many purposes:

- To feed back and discuss the information from the evaluation forms.

---

10 This highlighted for me the need to gain a greater understanding of the context and the experience of the teachers, and led to phase 2 of the research: *Inquiry & Interpretation* [Chapter 8: A *Journey of a School*].

- To discuss the movement of emphasis from a hierarchical/hegemonic design based on the concept of mentorship (Mentor Schools Project) to a more equitable one based on mutual support (Mutual Support Project).

- To discuss the future (if there was one!) of the project - to develop together the future structure and strategy:

  WHAT - content
  WHEN - schedule
  WHO - personnel

At this meeting, I handed out the collated evaluation responses, offered a brief synopsis and gave the teachers time to read and digest them. I then asked if there were any further comments. There was an ominous silence. It was at this point that I responded to the issue of being used, explaining the situation: how we had begun the project whilst I was working with RUMEP and how basing my study on the project provided an avenue for the continuation of the project once I had left. I explained that while I considered myself fortunate to be working with them towards the achievement of my doctorate, I hoped that they felt they were benefitting too. I pointed out that without my student bursary I would not have been able to continue with the project. One could view it that I was using the PhD in order to continue the project rather than the project in order to do my PhD. I felt an immediate lifting of the 'cloud' - the atmosphere seemed to relax. While this may have been mainly the release of my own tension, there did seem to be a general sense of relaxation and a new space in which to move forward constructively. To my great relief and excitement, the teachers expressed the desire to continue with the MSP Project, and together we planned the way forward.

Working in focus groups the teachers used the collated evaluation responses to discuss ideas and make suggestions for the future of the project. The following synopsis of the meeting outcomes was sent to all the teachers involved:

- *Many people suggested the use of 'demonstrations' and 'real-life' situations. What could be a better example than teachers working in their classrooms. It was agreed that such opportunities are very helpful, but extremely rare. It was suggested that this could be facilitated in one of two possible ways - sharing out the visiting teacher's class, as you do if a teacher is absent, or arranging for a member of staff who has a free lesson to 'class sit'. This is seen as something that teachers could do if they wished, but would have to be arranged between willing teachers!*

- *Regular 'get togethers' where teachers who wished to, could go and share feelings, problems and ideas were also a popular suggestion. We talked about how easy this sort of thing would be to organise - just arrange a time (eg first Monday in every month) and place (preferably a classroom or possibly different classrooms each time). One or maybe two persons would need to take responsibility for reminding people and making sure everyone knew where and when the next meeting was happening, but that is all that would be needed as the agenda would be open to whatever people wanted to talk about. A nice accompaniment would be tea and biscuits and you could always bring your own cushion to add a further dimension of luxury!!*

- *Practical/workshop types of sessions were also recommended. Having focused on the general classroom issues, such as resources and management, that were highlighted initially, we can now move onto issues more specific to mathematics teaching. It was agreed that we would plan a workshop session focusing on basic number work, in which we would share ideas on games and activities that we find successful in our classrooms. As you can see by the enclosed, we have set one up for Thursday November 13th. Three willing teachers offered to share their ideas, and I shall bring along a few, but there will be plenty of opportunity for anyone else to share some of their ideas too, so please feel free to bring them along. Please note these sessions are NOT compulsory, but it will be great to see as many of you as possible.*
(Research Journal 27.10.97)

Delivering these letters the next day I met with a few of the teachers individually to make sure they were feeling alright about their contributions in the next meeting. I was greeted, to my relief, by much enthusiasm.

> *I left St Ann's feeling very positive about the meeting. Probably due to Sandra's apparent enthusiasm, particularly when I was aware that she had been one of the less enthusiastic teachers. This made me realise that some people are possibly happier if they are involved to a greater level and often they may need to be asked or 'nominated' rather than put themselves forward. There is such a fine line between encouraging greater participation through a purely voluntary mode or through one which is more specific. In the beginning I just asked teachers to bring ideas along to share. This ended up in the same teachers sharing all the time and the same teachers not. In discussion sessions this is remedied by using small groups and feeding back, but so far in other sessions it has been a mixture of my asking eg Olga, people volunteering eg Linda and people being volunteered eg Barry. It has also been mentioned that hopefully each teacher will take a turn to contribute, but that does not stop teachers contributing more than once or other teachers contributing informally during the session'.*
> (Research Journal 04.11.97)

MSP: Meeting 6 - Staff Development - *Playing with numbers* [13.11.97]

Stimulant: Preplanned voluntary contributions.

The idea for this session had come from a local AMESA (Association of Mathematics Educators in South Africa) session, three of the staff and I had recently attended. The meeting had been led by a well known and respected teacher and principal of a local school

who had basically shared some of her own ideas and tips for teaching mathematics. It was a great and inspiring session, motivating us in turn to do something similar for the rest of the staff.

A range of number activities were planned, aimed at involving the teachers more actively. "The activities were designed to share different and particularly fun ways of operating with numbers" (Research Journal 13.11.97). I led the first half of the meeting while the second half was led by two teachers who had *volunteered* at the previous session. Then at the end I led a final activity to round the session off.

Much discussion occurred throughout the meeting. The teachers appeared to be much more open and willing to share and cooperate with each other. This is not explained purely by the fact that volunteers were contributing. The teachers were more actively involved as a group in the activities and having fun! This was the first time that I got a sense of group feeling or any cohesiveness among the staff. The games we played 'forced' the teachers to work together as a team in an enjoyable way and it worked!

> *The whole workshop was very enjoyable. Despite evidence of lethargy and possible cynicism, the teachers joined in with much enthusiasm and laughter. Everyone agreed they had not only enjoyed themselves but also learnt some new ideas they could try out in class. The teachers were keen to continue with similar workshops next year.*
>
> *The workshop was finally ended by Barry thanking me on behalf of the teachers for all the work I have been doing with the teachers and wishing me a Happy Xmas etc. I left the workshop feeling very happy with how it had gone and also very relieved. I really felt that this workshop was either going to be the first of many or the last! But it seemed that we had succeeded in revamping the teachers' enthusiasm and they were keen to continue next year.*
>
> (Research Journal 13.11.97)

This was a very successful workshop, making a very positive end to the first year of the project, leaving both the teachers and myself eager to continue.

The start of the new year, however, brought a renewed apparent lull in enthusiasm. It proved difficult to find a time that was possible for the next meeting, teachers often having other commitments and unable to attend. Eventually, another workshop was planned for March.

MSP: Meeting 7 - Staff Development - *Subtraction* [05.03.98]

Stimulant: 'Guest' speaker

I began the session with a few activity ideas and then handed over to Barry, the 'head of maths' who contributed some interesting ideas on subtraction, challenging the teachers' thinking about it.

> *The workshop went fairly well overall, but unfortunately it was not as much fun as last time - we didn't find time to play any games together which I am sure made all the difference last time. I must remember to make time for this in future.*
>
> *The teachers worked out calculations enthusiastically many of them chatting 'naturally' to their neighbours. They needed to be encouraged to share their methods with the rest of us - this was very interesting as many different ways were explored.*
>
> *Two teachers had volunteered to share ideas - but one had made her apologies so only one teacher shared. He handed out photocopied notes and sat and talked his way through them. He explored some interesting ideas which extended the idea of different methods very nicely.*
>
> (Research Journal 05.03.98)

Barry's contribution to the session was more substantial than other contributions had been, possibly due to his confidence and expertise in the subject. I really felt that I was handing over the session rather than facilitating contributions as before. This was how I saw the way forward, handing over to the teachers and taking more of a back seat role. However, no one initially was keen to volunteer to contribute to the next session. Eventually, two teachers who had not yet presented were persuaded to contribute something together on division for the next meeting.

MSP: Meeting 8 - Staff Development - *Division* [23.04.98]

Stimulant: Teamwork

Despite starting the workshop 'by explaining that I was going to try and take more of a backseat role and not talk so much - to encourage them to share their ideas more' (Research Journal 23.04.98), it didn't quite work out like this!

> *I started off with an activity called Groupies which worked very well - the teachers enjoyed it and then after some hesitation offered ideas for its use - either they didn't see the link with division immediately or they were too hesitant to say. I then handed over to Onka and Hope who had brought along sweets and shared two very simple division word sums with us and how they would do it in the class. I invited comments from the other teachers which were*

> *both positive and constructive. We then talked about how you go on from there discussing different methods and the problem with children stuck on tally marks and how to deal with that. We also talked about short and long division and the questionable necessity of the traditional way of teaching the latter - my hypothesis being that if a child can do and understand short division they should be able to just extend the idea themselves to larger numbers. Barry not too convinced !! We looked at the rules of divisibility and recorded patterns on the 100 grid - all a bit too rushed - but aim was to look at the left over numbers - no one knew what sort of numbers they were - we did hangman to find the name of the numbers!* (Research Journal 23.04.98)

The team presentation was great but short, so I extended it by inviting comments and asking questions regarding the activity. I focused on facilitating their responses rather than making my own - though I did comment myself too! Much discussion was generated and there seemed to be a greater air of enthusiasm and confidence. I made the most of this - reiterating my intention to take a back seat role. With much encouragement from their colleagues the teachers who had not yet contributed were persuaded to take the next session. One teacher agreed to lead it and the other three to work together on activities to present, while I agreed to bring along an activity to contribute!

> *We then arranged the next meeting - Thursday June 4th - FRACTIONS - led by Barry, co-starring Heather and three colleagues - all very shy - but they are going to run the session!!! I am SO pleased!! I had really wanted to get to this point but hadn't expected it to happen so soon - it did take some persuasion both from me and the other teachers but they are doing it !!! EXCELLENT!* (Research Journal 23.04.98)

At the end of this session I handed out a questionnaire for the teachers to complete, designed to elicit information on the teachers' experience of teaching and teacher professional development.

MSP: Meeting 9 - Staff Development - *Fraction Finale* [15.08.98]

Unfortunately, clashing commitments and examinations had delayed this meeting. However, I felt it was well worth waiting for. It was a lot of fun and it achieved my own personal aim of standing by and seeing the teachers lead the session. I was really impressed. For me it represented a culmination point. As I had written to Barry, the 'head of maths', 'this meeting, with the teachers taking it themselves, will actually mark an important stage of the project, possibly its culmination' (Research Journal 15.08.98).

A good crowd of teachers including two new teachers. Bruce (who was leading the workshop) was obviously nervous. When he realised I was waiting for him to start he got up and did his stuff! Did jolly well too - sharing with the staff a fraction circle and a fraction wall. Una and Olivia followed one after the other each handing out circles, squares and scissors to all the teachers to do a piece of practical work with. All good stuff! Once the teachers had finished the others clapped and I then did the chocolate game - with fraction dice. It was great fun and the teachers got really involved and excited - much noise was made!!

I then handed out the fraction cards and games plus fraction booklets to the teachers.
I then explained why the session was a 'finale' - the end of the MSP - why it was an appropriate session to finish with and how I reflect on the MSP. I explained that I would really appreciate them completing a final evaluation which they could either do alone or in pairs and I would ply them with tea and cakes while they did it - bribery and corruption!! I also explained that although they think this is the last they are going to see of me they are mistaken!! I made it clear that I would be very happy to continue being involved with St Ann's and would be happy to come in and help - they must just call me! AND finally I explained about how and why I would like to chat to all of them about their experiences of education and that I would be coming round while they were writing their evaluations to find when would be a good time for them.

All but one of the teachers committed themselves to a date - some with obvious trepidation and others with enthusiasm! Onka[11] *was the only one who was not keen - Olga told me later that she just didn't know what she would say to me!! Maybe when she has heard how it goes with the other teachers she may fell happier about it. I shall write to all the teachers before I see them clarifying things and hopefully putting them at ease and also write to those who were not there to try and persuade them too!!*

While evaluations were being filled in - Barry took the opportunity of thanking me on behalf of the teachers and saying how much help the sessions had been.

I left the meeting feeling ok but a little anti-climatic. There hadn't been a proper 'end' to the session so people just drifted away. But I was pleased to have so many conversations organised.

When I got home I purposely avoided looking at the evaluations initially because I was worried about what they might say and didn't want to ruin my weekend. However, I caught a glimpse of one or two very positive comments and read on! I could not believe it!! They were all so positive - nothing negative at all and Abraham's comment at the end almost did me in:

> ***I think that one should extend one's sincere thanks to you, because much has been done to bring harmony and a good working relationship among maths teachers.***

I really had not expected such positive feedback!!

The project had been in progress over a period of two years and had, I felt, achieved its aim of encouraging the teachers to work together and take responsibility for their own professional development. It therefore seemed appropriate for this meeting to be the last of the MSP kind

11 Onka subsequently left the school to go to England so was no longer involved in the project.

(hence use of the term 'Finale') and to take time at this meeting to reflect with the teachers on their experience of MSP [Appendix 3]. I felt it was time for me to stand back and leave the organisation of further meetings to the teachers themselves to arrange as they felt appropriate. I made it clear, however, that I would be very happy to contribute in any way that they felt might be useful.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

The teachers' responses to the final MSP evaluation [Appendix 3: Evaluation 2] provided what I regarded to be an informative reflection on the project. The evaluations were completed anonymously so as to encourage greater honesty and openness. The MSP was seen as a useful forum for "sharing ideas and problems", "learning from each other", gaining "new ideas", "working together as a team and improving working relationships". One teacher pointed out that they "don't feel isolated as before", describing the experience as "coming out of the closet". While a few people felt there was room for improvement, the only suggestions made referred to the involvement of learners in the sessions, "to see that the ideas work with them and for other people to see how it works with learners".

Reflecting on the different strategies used to encourage the sharing of peer expertise (stimulants), the teachers found them all "very useful", commenting more specifically that the use of *focus groups* facilitated the involvement of everybody and "built confidence": "There is no need to feel afraid to ask questions". Meanwhile *individual volunteered contributions* were seen as useful in giving "a view on how the different teachers approach different topics". One main volunteer or *guest speaker* was regarded as something they wanted more of. Meanwhile, *teachers presenting together* was viewed as a "useful" way of "encouraging teamwork": "we were able to share ideas and assist each other". One teacher particularly enjoyed this strategy, describing it as "very funny". *Classroom visits* were only experienced by two of the teachers, one who found it "very helpful" and the other who described it as "one of the best experiences". Finally, one teacher felt *informal teacher forums* were "very uplifting".

Suggestions for further strategies to encourage peer support included: "get together MORE often", "demonstrations from guests", and having "regular 'buzz' groups eg *How I did this* etc".

Commenting on how they found the contributions of their colleagues, teachers felt they were "More than useful. Their ideas may be something you never thought of using", "Very useful because I think I am in a rut, there don't seem to be ideas coming from the 'top of my head'." Although two of the teachers pointed to the advantage of the "less experienced teachers" learning from "more experienced ones", one teacher pointed out "One is never too an 'expert' to learn".

The teachers expressed a range of reactions to the personal experience of contributing in such sessions, ranging from nervous to confident: "Nervous because all the attention is on you", "Confident, because I could share ideas"; "At first I felt very nervous thinking that the other teachers were going to criticise 'my way' of teaching, afterwards I felt really good, because of their support". Other teachers recognised the personal and professional importance of making such contributions: "It can only enhance one's knowledge and professionalism", "It is an ongoing process because you develop more professionally as a teacher".

In terms of how the project may have influenced them as a group of teachers, the teachers felt the influence was definitely "positive": "We find working together easier", "Feel more free to ask other people for ideas", "It encourages teamwork and sharing of ideas". "There is a feeling of comradery. It made the working relationship much easier / brought us closer together".

Regarding personal influence, teachers cited it as "Fruitful and a great experience", making them "feel more confident": "It made me a more confident math teacher/extended my knowledge". Other teachers pointed out that they learned to "understand each other far more better in a classroom situation", "there is a real feeling of knowing your colleague, about the way they teach".

The teachers' reflections on the project confirmed for me the constructive role the MSP played in helping to engender a collaborative approach to professional development. The celebration of working together, helping and supporting each other, sharing ideas and resources and building collegial confidence evidenced in the 'journey of the project' and

confirmed by the teachers evaluation responses, signals a general move from a more isolated professional environment towards greater interaction and collegiality. As one teacher described it:

Don't feel isolated as before - A 'coming out of the closet' experience.

The establishment of a Staff Development Committee by a group of the teachers in the school during the latter stages of the MSP further confirmed a general shift towards mutual professional support in the school. This further highlighted the need to explore the wider context and situate the project within it. This was important in order to gain a greater understanding of the teachers' experiences and the context in which they worked. This led to the second phase of the research - Inquiry & Interpretation [Chapter 3: *The Methodology*].

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

This chapter has presented a narrative sketch of the teachers' experience of a project [MSP] designed to encourage a more collaborative approach to teacher professional development among the staff at St Ann's. The following chapter - *A Journey of a School* - presents an interpretation of 'the bigger picture', situating the journey of the project within the larger context of the school. Interpersonal dimensions are identified and juxtaposed, in an interpretive framework of 'tensions' which characterise the journey.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Chapter 8:

A Journey of a School

> *If significant changes are to occur, attempts must be made to understand the experiences of teachers and the contexts in which they work . . . . It is important to understand the experiences and hear the voices.* (Constas 1997:715 & 684)

This chapter explores the wider context in which the experience of the project outlined in the previous chapter took place. Conversations with the teachers about their experience, reveal that they are undergoing a journey which is not dissimilar to that which the wider society itself is undergoing, one that resonates with the bigger picture. Analysis of the conversations reveals a range of dimensions which, when juxtaposed, describe tensions of a movement which not only echoes that described in 'A Journey of a Project', but also highlights a more complex journey - a journey from an environment of constrained co-operation, towards one of freer collaboration.

The following *tensions* (dimensions in dynamic flux) are employed in the text as interpretive frames for the narrative of a journey towards collaboration: *Authority-Autonomy, Isolation-Interaction, Division-Cohesion, Conservatism-Progressivism*. It is recognised that these frames are not discrete but are integrally linked. In some cases it will thus be appropriate to use the same conversation extracts to illustrate different aspects. The teachers words are therefore at times intentionally repeated.

There is deliberate emphasis on the actual words of the teachers, which though framed by myself, the researcher, are left in the main to speak for themselves. Although the overall picture produced may appear a superficial one, the intention is not to deny the fundamental complexities, but rather to offer a sketch of the journey; the teachers' words as the medium, framed by my interpretation, as the researcher and corroborated through a process of consensual validation.

TENSIONS

Analysis of the conversations with the teachers revealed a range of dimensions related to the interpersonal dynamics of a journey identified from a place where the inter-relational climate is based on co-operation towards a place with a climate more characteristic of collaboration. Juxtaposed, these dimensions reveal a range of significant tensions:

	Authority	*Autonomy*	
Co-operation*	*Isolation*	*Interaction*	**Collaboration***
	Division	*Cohesion*	
	Conservatism	*Progressivism.*	

The overall picture presented is one of a journey from a more constrained climate of cooperation towards a freer one of collaboration. The above dimensions are not necessarily polarities, and should rather be viewed as dominant characteristics of the situational dynamics. [*As defined in Chapter 2: *The Concept*]

Authority - Autonomy

Conversations with the teachers reveal a move away from a restrictive authoritarian system towards a freer one in which the teachers have more autonomy.

> *Authority was terrible, you know, and you had to do things to please the authority.*
> (Edwin C1)

'The authority' referred to here is both governmental 'authority' - the Department of Education - and school 'authority' - the Principal.

The Department of Education

> *Everything was from the top. It was given down and . . . if you accept it or not . . . this . . . this must be done.* (Edwin C1)

> *Teachers were supposed to slavishly follow that as set out by the department.* (Adam C1)

> *Teachers in the past . . . er . . . have been confined for instance to to syllabuses . . . er . . . they were under constant surveillance of classroom inspectors . . . inspection . . . which . . . er . . . wanted to see their books and wants to see how they covered the syllabus and who was actually was there to police and see that they do . . . to confine them to what had been*

> *prescribed to them and nothing else . . . ok . . . so there were no room . . . for new ideas or innovation to maybe do your own thing as long as its in relation to to education. I mean . . . there was no such thing. They were supposed to do what . . . if circulars come at the end of the year to schools, they was supposed to slavishly follow that as set out by the different department.* (Adam C1)

> *And it set rules and you must do it according to that syllabus. And then a inspector will come . . . He will come and because you are the Principal you want to show him that you've done the work. Everything's done rigidly. . . . And it was . . . this is my year mark . . . this is the children's book. I have 30 children - he will count if you have 30 books. You know, everything is marked . . . whether the children understand or not, it is marked - it's signed. . . And because of that teachers wanted to do their own thing. . . . They hadn't got time to . . . to share or think about anything.* (Edwin C1)

Una, one of the newer teachers, had vivid memories of visits by the inspectors when she was a learner at St Ann's:

> *I can remember . . . she* (the teacher) *give us the lesson and the inspector sits there. She give us the lesson and then you know and she asks questions after the lesson, you know, you have the lesson and you must answer questions about the lesson now, and if you say something you say "Ok, what did she say?" And then she just gave the answer like that* [Una mouthed the answer behind her hand] *so the inspector doesn't know . . . and she say the word . . . the answer. And then you must just watch the mouth and . . . you know that rigid type of . . . Those were the days. I remember those days.* (Una C1)

Heather remembered formal inspections being stopped about the same time she started at St Ann's:

> *They started this new thing that the inspectors doesn't come and inspect any more. I came here 1991 . . . '93 . . . '94 . . . about that time. They decided not to do the formal inspections anymore.* (Heather C1)

Una described how different things were now:

> *Shoa! The teachers were sick when the inspectors come and they were running around . . . They came a lot in . . . Nooo! We don't know about inspectors! I mean the . . . the advisors maybe came in but not to check books and check that. They just come and advise us and listen and come to our classes and just want to see how we work or whatever. To help more. That's the difference . . . between those days and now.* (Una C1)

> *It was more closed and now it's more open . . . for example, this corporal punishment - in everything it was like . . . if the inspectors say you must do it like that - the department - it should be done like that and now it's more like . . . you can give your own ideas - it's not necessarily the ideas that the department give you that you have to apply in class - you can use your own ideas or ideas from other people. . . . And in the olden days the teachers didn't have any say - I mean now they can give their views.* (Una C2)

Edwin, the principal, indicated how this was changing:

> *It was very difficult but, I mean, you can see now that it's just opening up, you know. Even the department officials organising now, you know, workshop - telling the teachers now to say what they want . . . what they want in the syllabus, what they want to . . . teach. It's all . . . you can . . . there's more input now.* (Edwin C1)

> *It's not that it has an impact, I mean in the department, I mean I can . . . if I feel . . . er . . . how can I say it . . . if I don't feel this thing is right . . . Or I don't feel I need . . . I don't need to do it . . . I don't want to do it that way . . . I can say no I don't feel I can do it this way, I want to do it this way or my way . . .*
> *In their days the department had . . . they had all the authority.*
> *You couldn't do your own thing.* (Una C1)

> *It's definitely happening. . . . It's still happening. I mean, as I say, it's more freer and more, you know, you feel more comfortable. . . .* (Alison C1)

The Principal

The teachers reflected on the role of the principal as follows:

> *So you had the Principal . . . the Principal will see that you do your work.* (Edwin C1)

> *She was very strict and you had to do this, you had to do that and you had to go to meetings - if you don't she - I don't know what you call - put ticks next to your name - she had that sort of . . . er . . . of whatsername towards the teachers. . . .* (Olga C1)

> *The other thing that could have influenced St Ann's as a primary school . . . er . . . could have been . . . the style of management at . . . er . . . at the school. Er . . . it is a Catholic school. Er . . . and as a Catholic school I think the Catholics themselves expect a Catholic reflection from that school . . . er . . . a reflection . . . er . . . which at times I think would have down-played other educational . . . er . . . prerequisites as long as the position of the church - as as long as the position of . . . of a Catholic School is are being maintained, I think people were satisfied. Because the rule of the . . . of of the way the school was - it was not acceptable in the past for a lay person as in turn from a church position should manage the school.*

> *They've always seen and it was one of I think . . . the agreed working relationships between the church and the department that at all times there will be a ordained Catholic within the school as a . . . as a Principal . . . and I think in most Catholic . . . it is only now that there is change - there were - it's either nuns that were Principals of the schools or brothers or priests. Ok? Those positions were . . . I mean . . . er . . . reserve for people from from the faith . . . er . . . and I think that could have im impact on the teachers at the school . . . er . . . er . . . Because . . . er . . . as a past learner of the school . . .*

> *I know church people can be very autocratic . . . They believe . . . er . . . their position is the only correct position because it's based on an ideal from above. Ok? They've got that strong belief . . . and everything else is out of line. And . . . I . . . I'd say that that also had an influence on on our teachers at St Ann's, especially the old teachers at St Ann's - the influence of of this church - the Catholic Church influence on on our school.* (Adam C1)

Another teacher who had been at St Ann's most of his life, also referred to "catholic dogma" making specific reference to the way in which the Principal was regarded:

> *Has it changed much over those years?*
> *Yeh. Especially now these last few years. With all this new approach and things like that. And . . . er . . . not having a . . . er . . . I mean a sister . . . a religious person in charge here. That changed where the laity is in charge now. Because I . . . I can say they were stringent and strict in their approach to everything.*
> *You've got this Catholic dogma dictating your life. Catholic school, you should behave to their norms, you know, and standards. . . . And they have set quite a high standard.*
> *Teachers . . . as a teacher you felt that, yeh I must go and do my work. I can't walk around . . .*
> *And . . . you feel like you can Now?* [Laugh]
> *Oh yeh, but you know, because I mean your . . . you know the approach to a person in charge. Isn't that, 'Ok, she or he is almighty. He is up there, you know?'*
> *We are not scared to approach to ask something.*
> *It is more a open . . . sort of a . . . a relationship* (Barry C1)

Edwin, the present Principal of St Ann's, explained how he regarded his role:

> *First of all . . . to have a management style that are very democratic. In other words, I would like to . . . to be part of the staff . . . And not to be seen . . . as an authority . . . up there . . . because that will create a lot of problems. . . .*
> *I would like to have the co-operation of the whole . . . staff. Sometimes it's difficult to get it but most of the time it is better to have the whole staff . . . And the principle of transparency with the staff. That they know exactly what is going on so that they can be co-responsible for everything that is going on at the school. And I like to give my staff freedom in the framework of the school - freedom that they can explore, you know . . . er . . . be innovative in doing anything whether it is raising funds for the school or whether it is something professionally that they want to do at the school, that will be good for the school, you know. That type of thing.*
> *So that is, that is my style - it's rather to get my teachers behind me . . . than to be seen as a person in the office and a lot of . . . of problems that they experience in the classroom I know exactly because I am also . . . teaching with them . . . and with the children . . . and . . . er . . . and that gap between the Principal and the teachers - try to narrow it that they . . . that we can be one - a team . . . effort. So I don't call me a Principal. I rather see me as a head teacher . . . And be part of the . . . the staff* (Edwin C1)

Management Committees

The lack of a functional management structure led to the establishment of management committees involving the whole staff. These were set up while I was working with the teachers on the MSP. Olga explained how they came about:

> *The school has been . . . there's a lot of things been lacking in the school, you know. We hardly have any meetings and sometimes there's a desperate need for meetings and we don't have meetings and . . . I mean, discipline is a problem at the school and there's nobody in charge of discipline, you know . . . cleanliness at school and so on. And then it was brought up in a meeting - by Adam actually - he mentioned that we need committees to help in the running of the school seeing that we realise that the principal or the management of the school can't do it all . . . and that's how that came about.* (Olga C1)

The setting up of school committees is not entirely without precedent at the school, but is 'new' in terms of being used as a management strategy:

> *It's not really a new thing . . . But in the past there was - the committees was more orientated to sports only and raising funds, you know, that type of thing . . . but now they have the new committees . . . covering the whole school cont . . . the whole context of the . . . school.*
> (Edwin C1)

Olga also pointed out that previously when they had had committees they had died out because people weren't 'dedicated and committed'. Now they were trying again to get everything off the ground.

This recently introduced committee system involved each member of staff taking responsibility as a member of a team for at least one area of school management, whether it be aesthetics, fund raising, discipline, school policy, vision and mission, or staff development.

> *We have six different committees which each . . . er . . . staff member . . . it's compulsory for them to belong to one of those committees.* (Una C2)

One of the committees that had been set up was responsible for formulating a vision and mission statement for the school. A draft had been drawn up by the committee, in conjunction with the staff:

> *We are working now on the school vision and mission statement showing where we are heading.* (Edwin C2)

> *We had to sit and draw up a Vision and Mission statement for the school. Then we took it . . . take it back to the staff and they must say are they satisfied with it or not. If not, they must tell us where they want changes and then we come back and draw up the second draft, take it back to the staff and . . . it's a lot of work.* (Ursula C2)

> *. . . we draw up a draft which . . . the second one . . . and we send the draft to the school governing body and also we had to sort out differences and to avoid conflict.*

> *They came back with a draft, neh? But they made changes - but the staff weren't satisfied with the changes that they made. . . . they didn't change everything - it's only a few changes maybe a word or two . . . I mean, the parents must have their input as well.* (Una C2)

The statement was in the process of being disseminated to the whole school community:

> *Because it is important that the teachers, the children and the parents . . . have the same . . . the same vision. Otherwise you are going to have conflict. To share the vision . . . so that we can all work towards that, you see.* (Edwin C2)

The Vision and Mission committee is just one of the management committees established. It is recognised that the establishment of these committees does not in itself necessarily entail collaboration, but could nevertheless be regarded as encouraging a more collaborative approach amongst the staff. Una explained how the management committees worked:

> *After the committees had been structured, neh - it was like maintenance and the discipline committee . . . . Now, if something occurs or happens at school and it's . . . it's something to do with discipline . . . then the disciplinary committee has to . . . look into the matter . . . And the maintenance, for example, now the workers wanted an increase. . . .*
> *So the financial committee . . . the finance committee and the maintenance committee had to . . . had to meet and discuss. . . do they need a increase, do they do the work properly . . . so they can get a big rise . . . So that is how . . . they are working.*
> *Yeh, and the fund raising committee as well . . . . are raising funds.*
> *And everyone must be on a committee . . . So everyone is involved.* (Una C2)

The establishment of the management committees may be viewed as epitomising a move towards greater teacher autonomy and collegial collaboration. One of the management committees formed was charged with the responsibility for staff development:

> *The purpose of the Staff Development Committee is on a professional basis, you know, to develop the staff and on a social basis they are doing that also. They also they arrange once a term when they interact socially . . . when they leave out all the academic and professional things. But it do help because things comes up like the discipline problem comes up, for instance. And the staff development can . . . they are now free to say "Ok this month we are going to tackle and workshop our problem of discipline with the school " . . . and everybody gives his input. So everybody's trying to help where there is a problem and the whole staff is developed now by that. It's not a committee that do things alone.* (Edwin C2)

Olga, the co-ordinator of the Staff Development Committee, explained how she became co-ordinator:

> *We had a meeting . . . and I was asked . . . I wasn't too sure what I was going to do but I said fine because . . . I also realised that . . . um . . . there was a lot of work that needed to be done . . . and I wanted something to be done . . . and I was probably a bit afraid that maybe the next person wouldn't see those so . . . so, I thought I'd take it on.* (Olga C2)

Olga felt that continuous professional development was an important aspect of a teacher's career:

> *I think it should be an integral part of the . . . of what they do.* (Olga C2)

The decision was made that the staff would meet once a month for staff development sessions. Staff development meetings were facilitated and presented as a team. A member of the Staff Development Committee, Ursula, was very enthusiastic about her own involvement, as well as that of others:

> *One of the sessions I was a presenter. I was a co-presenter. It was nice! . . . And I am not like that . . . One of the teachers just asked me to just . . . to just help. She was the . . . er . . . the presenter but she wanted to have co-presenters . . . like just to assist her and she just asked. We've got . . . we've got this committee and I am on this committee of this team building thing now - this staff development thing now . . . it wasn't a big . . . er . . . thing . . . because, you see, everyone does his bit. We're four or five in the group. So everyone does his bit.*
>
> (Ursula C2)

> *Its just opening up. . . you know. . . . I can just see and I can just feel. . . . You can see that the teachers are sharing out and they are, you know, just busy with . . . sharing ideas*
>
> (Edwin C2)

A transition can therefore be observed, away from a restricted system in which the teachers co-operated with what was imposed on them by "the authority", towards a more open, autonomous working environment in which the teachers are collaborating in the management of the school and the development of themselves as professionals.

A similar movement has been identified in the journey of the project, with the teachers moving from a place where they were cooperating with what they perceived as 'the authority' to one where they were collaborating autonomously in the mutual support of themselves as professionals.

Isolation - Interaction

The movement towards a freer, more autonomous environment is paralleled by greater staff interaction. The focus here is on professionally supportive interaction.

> *When you are a young teacher, a first year - you definitely need help. Not only to fit into that school - the specific school also - but to give you the support, you know, because you can become very frustrated.* (Edwin C1)

Many of the teachers spoke of their early experiences of teaching, highlighting the kind of support that they received from, and that they have subsequently offered to, their colleagues. While they all agreed that such support was necessary, the teachers' experiences of 'induction' at St Ann's had been diverse.

While some of the teachers recollected receiving support from the staff when they were newly qualified, this was not always the case. Both Adam and Bruce reported that they had no induction support [Q2]. Bruce had moved up from Cape Town for his first teaching job at St

Ann's and had found things very difficult. He was in his second year of teaching, which he was finding considerably easier than his first:

> *Comparing last year with this year, this year is a breeze.*
> ***Now why is that do you think? Why is this year so much easier?***
> *I have learned some things - on how to handle things . . .*
> ***What do you think you've learnt?***
> *Some things . . .* [Laugh] *I don't really know what . . . what things but I just learnt to do it*
> *And I got some advice from the other teachers.*
> ***Oh really - the other teachers helped you?***
> *Yeh. Some of them did, yeh.*
> ***Um . . . ok so . . . so you got quite a lot of support from the staff have you?***
> *Mmmmm*
> ***Or a bit?***
> *Only a bit*
> ***Did you have any sort of . . . um . . . induction . . . er . . . training in your first year?***
> ***Did you have any particular . . . any system of support from the school?***
> *Mmm. It was only like Ok there is your classroom get on with it!*
> ***So you did not have a particular teacher assigned to you . . . or anything like that?***
> *No. The only way I got help was if I asked.*
> ***Yeh - and that's hard to do sometimes . . . isn't it?***
> *Mmmm . . . You . . . you ask and then they just give you back and then you have to work with that.*
> *Maybe you wanted more help. And from there on you just work on your own.* (Bruce C1)
>
> *You seem to work on your own. There is no input from other teachers.* (Bruce Q2)

Interestingly, Una, who had started at St Ann's at the same time as Bruce, had had a very different experience. Other Grade 2 teachers had approached her and, through informal conversation, supported her in her teaching. Ursula had also had a more positive experience:

> *I'm not very long involved in the teaching . . . about four years. I have gained a lot of experience from the other teachers when I came here.*
> ***So you learned a lot from the other teachers.***
> *From the other teachers. When I start here - I've . . . I learn when I came here in the school. I learned in the school. I mean, the . . . the college also lear . . . er . . . teaches . . . taught me the basic methods of how to do, how to present your lessons and things, but when you come, when you start in school really . . . then you know - learn - what is teaching really. . . I've . . . I've learnt from them.*
> ***How did you learn from them?***
> *Er . . . well . . . we interact . . . When I started here . . . then the teacher was there for me. When I started here I was felt like a 'dumb elephant' when I started . . Because, for example, the registers. When you come to school I don't know about registers because we don't go . . . we didn't go in detail . . . with the register story now, at college etc. . . . How to . . . to . . . to . . . to mark your register - those kind of things. And the record book, those things the record book. And then the teaching methods. We do it - interact teaching. When I was starting the teacher was there - she was there for me. The standard 2 teacher or whatever.*

Because I ask somebody else how to do this or that - she explained me how to do it and she showed me and she shared her ideas with me. . . .
She was there at the beginning of the year. . . I was in my classroom then she was there. When I had a problem I went to ask her . . . and . . . without asking her she was sending me these things, resources you know. How do you say? She was . . . I was asking her . . . resources she send me or she send me something - look at that and if you want to use it you can use it and if you don't want to . . . The second year when I . . . then I a little bit I went on my own . . . a little bit. She was still sending me . . . things. I didn't refuse . . . But I had to learn how to go on my own . . . as the years go by (Ursula C1)

Both Barry and Edwin had received support as new teachers, specifically help with planning and administration from more experienced teachers, which they found "very useful" (Q2).

Olga had initially felt quite isolated as a new teacher:

At the very beginning . . . um . . . it almost seemed that people didn't really want to take the time to help but they were doing it because they have to, you know? Basically. So . . . I did feel a bit isolated, you know, because now . . . here I don't know what to do and yeh I need help and I can't get help, you know that sort of thing. (Olga C1)

However, she did receive help from one particular teacher which she found "extremely useful" (Q2):

Was that something that was organised - was she like your induction teacher, or whatever?
No, not al all. Actually, I was in her place - she was off sick and I was in her place. And then - I think it was for a term that I took her kids and I had to go to her house and ask her anything that I needed to know about the kids or whatever. And when she came back and she came to my class one day and she just gave me some charts. And she said I think you need this . And that made a big difference to me, you know? Not that I am asking people to give me things but . . . . the fact that she was willing, you know, to show me that . . .
So is there . . . is there no structured . . . um . . . support for first teachers . . first year teachers?
Um . . not that I know of. Not that I am aware of. No.
I think basically . . um . . what they say is 'Right you're a Grade 2 teacher so if you need any help go to the other grade 2 teachers' - something like that - but it's not really, you know, anything structured as such, where you know, you get together and you . . . you know.
(Olga C1)

Remembering her own experience as a new teacher inspired Olga to offer support to new teachers:

Last year we got new teachers - we got a new Grade 2 teacher. Then I . . . I remembered what it was like for me to be here for the first time. And I tried to help her as much as possible and . . . um . . . she used to come to my classroom a lot as well you know so that made me think ok fine, she's not . . . she's comfortable with me and I think that's the important thing . . . That they feel comfortable where they are . . . and the people that they are with.
(Olga C1)

Olivia, the newest teacher in the school, was in her first year at St Ann's. She identified staff workshops and discussions as being a useful part of her induction. She had also received help from individuals:

> ***Now has that been just informal, you know, through chatting and general . . . or . . . or was there . . . um . . . an induction structure? When you came here as a new teacher . . . was there a system of help set up for you . . . or has it just happened?***
> *No, it just happened.*
> ***And did people come to you or did you go to people, or what happened?***
> ***How did it happen?***
> *I go to them sometimes and sometimes they come to me with advice.*
> ***And it's just certain people or everyone?***
> *Yes. Certain people.*
> ***Yeh. Ok. And you find their support very helpful?***
> *Yes.* (Olivia C1)

Linda also received help as a new teacher, particularly with respect to classroom organisation, from her Grade 2 colleagues:

> *It helped a lot to learn from experienced teachers.* (Linda Q2)

Heather had experienced a very supportive start to her career, elsewhere:

> *I went to Alexandria. . . And there I taught for six years and there I got my experience. I got real good support from the teachers. . . . I got a lot of advice from them*
> ***Now, how did that happen? Was that just talking in the staffroom or was there meetings or was it planning sessions. What was it? How did it happen?***
> *Planning sessions. Especially when the inspectors were coming. And then we sit together and we working together and we are making our apparatus together . . . and working out our lessons and things like that.*
> ***And was that just teachers of the same grade together working? Or the whole staff?***
> *The whole staff . . . the whole staff. Because there's one grade 1, one grade 2, one grade 3 . . .*
> ***Ok. So you had a whole picture of what everybody was doing?***
> *Yes*
> ***That must have been really helpful.***
> *I really got my experience from them and they helped me a lot.* (Heather C1)

Now at St Ann's, Heather had helped to support new teachers coming into the school:

> *When Olivia came in . . . she came to standard 1. I told her anything she wants to know I'll give to her.*
> ***Oh, that's nice. So you just said that to her?***
> *Yes*
> ***It was not something that Edwin said, 'I'd like you to help Olivia'?***
> *No.*
> ***It came from you?***
> [Nod] (Heather C1)

Anna had also had a very positive experience as a new teacher. She had support from both Barry, who was then acting principal, and a Standard 2 colleague (Q2):

> *I've learnt a lot. You see . . . Mr A - he taught me and he is one of the people I think I have learned a lot from . . . as a teacher. And Mrs S . . . she also taught me . . . she gave lessons and she let me watch and . . . . And I learnt a lot from her.* (Anna C1)

This support was also not something the school had organised for her, but was something that she had organised herself. She went and asked for help when she needed it (Q2):

> *I asked them . . . I don't know how to do this and I . . . I know how to do it but I feel better . . . if somebody show me how. . . Then they did. . . Barry - I went to him and I say, 'How do you do this?' and he say ok and he showed me all the things.* (Anna C1)

But Anna pointed out that not all teachers were keen to work in this way:

> *Most of the teachers here . . . now some of them don't want to show you.*
> ***Why is that do you think?***
> *I think it's just because they . . . there's something about people coming into your classroom and watching you.* (Anna C1)

Anna identified these teachers as the older teachers in the school, and thought this attitude might be a reflection of the past, formed by memories of inspectors coming in to judge them.

As a more experienced member of the staff Anna pointed out that while she was very happy to support new teachers in the school, she had not approached them:

> *I haven't . . . um . . . the new ones that are here now. I haven't actually gone to them and said "Would you like me to help you?" or something. I want them to come to me and say ok . . . um . . . "I need some help . . . with this. Will you show me?"* (Anna C1)

There is therefore collegial support among individuals at the induction stage of the teachers' careers. There had not, however, been a structure or school policy at St Ann's which had specifically encouraged or supported the induction of new teachers. Any support for new teachers appeared to have been dependent on the individuals concerned. A certain tendency, however, is striking. It seems that the teachers who had grown up in the local community had had a more positive and supportive experience. It was the teachers who had come in from outside, as it were, who described feeling isolated during their initial experiences of teaching.

The teachers' experience of in-service professional development at St Ann's has, in the main, been individual attendance at workshops. Teachers "who are interested" have attended workshops offered by NGOs in the community:

> *I've went to a lot of workshops when I started here. A lot of . . . this TAP*[12]*. . . TAP was a good one for languages . . . I've learnt a lot in languages there, especially . . . And I went to a lot of . . . er . . . maths workshops also . . . we had RUMEP*[13] *workshops here in the . . . The hall . . . here . . . That was good as well. Give out the teaching things as well . . . the 100 grid and everything - the grids. . . . I have learned a lot at a lot of workshops . . . Since I started here* (1994) *it was very hectic with workshops very hectic.* (Ursula C1)

Such workshops have played a major role in the professional development of some of the staff at St Ann's. According to Olga, such workshops had been the only form of professional development support that had been happening. The staff had found these workshops "very useful" for a variety of reasons:

> *New methods, presenting the lessons, games* (Linda Q2)
>
> *Different approaches to teaching subjects* (Adam Q2)
>
> *I became more confident and received more experience* (Hope Q2)
>
> *I've become more confident in class. Developed skills eg how to help children.* (Anna Q2)

Workshops where teachers were specifically encouraged to share ideas and work together, such as in the MSP, were also specifically referred to:

> *You feel more free to approach a colleague for advice*
> *There's not so much tension when working together* (Una Q2)
>
> *Building good relationships with others* (Olivia Q2)
>
> *Interaction between teachers*
> *Better understanding of how different teachers do their work.* (Bruce Q2)
>
> *The teachers . . are young and really empowering themselves through workshops - sacrificing their afternoons .* (Edwin C1)
>
> *There's definitely that professionalism and . . . that sharing, you know . . . I . . . I think because of the workshops after school we are . . . you know, out of school we are attending workshops - we are - can I say - cos we are working together at the workshops . . . and it just rubs off at school also.* (Edwin C1)

12 TAP -Teacher Aid Project

13 RUMEP - Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project

Una spoke of how some teachers shared what they had learned at workshops:

> *. . . sometimes. For example, ok, a writing workshop they attended for senior primary, for example, they'll come back to me - "we got this and this and I think it's a nice idea". . . .*
>
> *We've done this and this and here are some ideas. . . For example, when you are like at a workshop - they'll say "Ok we're doing fractions now". When we are doing a topic someone will say "Oh I went to a workshop. I've got something like that in my classroom. I'll have a look at it." . . . Because, for example, I have something interesting about transport and I go to Olga and say you can make copies for you or I can make copies for you. And she'll come to me with something about animals . . .* (Una C1)

This, Una pointed out, was usually something which happened informally between individuals. The Grade 2 teachers did also choose to meet up more formally to plan and share ideas. However, this was very occasional - 'once a term maybe' - and sharing tended to occur more informally, through, general conversation:

> *You can tell when you chat to them . . . because we usually do that. . . . come to the staff room and say 'I have been on this course and it's all about this' and they chat and then my friend chats to . . . somebody else.* (Anna C1)
>
> *I feel free to go to a . . . to go to my colleagues and ask them for advice or can they help me with this . . . . If I need help then I will go . . . But usually the junior primary teachers . . . . They are on the same level.* (Una C1)
>
> *If I feel uncertain about something I go to Ollie or I'll go to Alison and ask them or leave it for today and ask them it tomorrow.* (Hope C1)

It was clear that the level of collegial support was directly related to the individuals concerned. Sharing of knowledge and ideas was very much up to the individual, whether he or she was asking for help or offering it. There had not been a structure or strategy which had specifically encouraged or supported such sharing in a more 'formal' way. There was not a general 'culture' of collegial support in the school: collegial support was erratic.

The Staff Development Committee was endeavouring to address this issue. Ursula, one of the Staff Development team, explained what they were doing:

> *As a . . . as a staff development we are busy with team building now. . . . We've got to work as a team . . . and we're gonna use this . . . these sessions that we're busy with now for team building. The staff development sessions we use . . . is based on the team building.*
> (Ursula C2)

The initial focus of the staff development committee had been team building. Olga explained why:

> *That is so important. Sharing and not keeping everything to yourself . . . Because we can always learn from each other . . . That is why I . . . I've decided that we need to work on team building first, you know . . . to get everybody involved as a team working together and then from there the different issues we need to . . . we can work on it together as a team.*
> (Olga C2)

Ursula saw this as particularly important considering the differences and difficulties between the staff members:

> *Team building is a good thing . . . because people has different visions, thoughts etc. . . everyone is different. Right? And if you say something that I will not . . . er . . . agree . . . I can disagree with you . . . or you don't want to do that with the staff and . . . You find some difficulties with some staff members . . . If you say right we do that and some . . . someone or some of them will disagree now . . . about the whole thing, you understand? They will disagree and . . . er . . . that is why it is good we are having this team building team here.*
> (Ursula C2)

Ursula continued by pointing out that despite the prevalence of negative attitudes towards previous meetings, response to the Staff Development sessions had been positive:

> *But it's good. It's a good thing because not always is it like that. If we've got a staff development session, then everyone, each and everyone is here and it's it is going lekker*[14].
> (Ursula C2)

Olivia felt things were progressing:

> *Things are moving forwards a little bit. . . . we are working more together now. . . . We are trying to build a . . . a team working together . . . so you can share ideas . . . and improve . . . better communication among the staff.* (Olivia C2)

Edwin referred to "the new professional development plan" that was being established, part of which was to focus on the sharing of workshop experiences:

> *Many of the teachers are attending TAP - Teacher Aid Project meetings and were feeding back to the others informally in the staff room. In fact, they have made a policy that the teachers will represent the school at such meetings that will benefit the school and feed back to the staff - plan is to formalise this in the new professional development plan.* (Edwin C2)

Making specific space available on the professional development agenda for such sharing was regarded as vital:

> *Definitely! That is so important. Sharing and not keeping everything to yourself. Because we . . . we can always learn from each other - that's what I always say.* (Olga C2)

14 *'Lekker' is a South African colloquialism used as a term of general approval.*

I found this personally very exciting as it was reflecting and reinforcing what had been happening previously in the Mutual Support Project. For me this signified a 'continuation', the 'afterlife' of the MSP. The school was now applying the strategy of collaborative sharing characteristic of the Mutual Support Project to a whole staff initiative:

> *I was so excited to find that not only were St Ann's developing a professional development programme but that Olga the teacher I work there closest with is the one who is coordinating it. For me this was further evidence that I am in the right place doing the right thing and that it is not just my agenda that I am inflicting onto the teachers!* (Research Journal 21.04.98)

Una felt that communication and relations among the staff had been improved through the work of the Staff Development Committee:

> ***. . . team building as well . . . um . . . How did that go? That was . . . that was the focus of the staff development group. How did you feel that helped? Or not?***
> *I think it helped very well - because after that, most of the staff members - they felt confident that they can go to the next teacher or they can go just to share ideas or ask for information or ask a question if they are not sure what to do or what this means . . .*
> ***Do you think that helped people who didn't feel happy to before ?***
> *Yeh. But I wouldn't say it worked a hundred percent. Because there are some people that still doesn't share ideas and . . . work effectively . . . with each other*
> *And I think it's a good idea working with people - it means you get more ideas . . .*
> ***Sure. Maybe some people just don't feel like you - maybe, they just think, you know, they just want to get on with things on their own.*** (Una C2)

Edwin explained how in the past "the competition to get merit and to get promotion" led teachers to do their own thing and keep their ideas to themselves. However, he presented a very different picture of the teachers now. When asked about the strengths of St Ann's, Edwin was in no doubt:

> *Teachers' commitment to professional development . . . There's definitely that professionalism and . . . that sharing, you know. I can just see and I can just feel . . . You can see that the teachers are sharing out and they are, you know, just busy with . . . sharing ideas. It's actually now that you see the . . . the talents that the teachers really have, you know. It's just opening up . . .* (Edwin C1)

Edwin also attributed this "opening up" to "the new approach", recognising similarities in the ways they were operating inside and outside of the classroom:

> *Now the teachers are working more as facilitators and the students are active not passive. New approach encourages sharing and professional development* (Edwin C1)

Olga pointed out how the teachers were coming together more now:

> *I would say that maybe this . . . has developed from that in that . . . um . . . the grade . . . the . . . the foundation phase teachers . . . you know, come together, and we . . . especially where the OBE is concerned, you know. . . And try to work out lessons and . . . you know.*
> *I think it's . . . it's good, you know. . . Because at least we . . . we're not isolating ourselves from each other, you know. . . and . . . um . . . that helps a lot because now, in for example, the grade twos, I know we are all doing the same work . . . and if I say I need more time on this section, they say ok fine, we will do revision or whatever, you know, so it's always working together . . . which I find much better than, you know . . . doing everything on your own.* (Olga C2)

While a general progressive movement from collegial isolation to interaction has been identified, Anna referred to her current sense of isolation, which she blames on departmental expectations and the lack of parental support:

> *They . . . they just want to . . . um . . . they expect things from us, you know.*
> *We have to achieve this . . . The children have to pass all the time.*
> *And we . . . with the type of child we receive now in . . . into our classes, we have to work hard.*
> *And we don't always . . . um . . . receive the sympath . . . no I don't want to say sympathy, empathy of the department, you see. They . . . they just want . . . we must give them this, we must solve this for them . . . we must do this. But they . . . they don't . . . support . . .*
> *For instance, we don't . . . we have nothing. We must improvise everything.*
> *And you feel isolated because you . . . you must just give, give, give all the time.*
> *And get nothing back. . . And the parents as well.*
> *Our parents . . . some of them come in . . . you must see the PTA meetings.*
> *Some of them come . . . say I have 38 children in my class . . . 8 of those parents might come to the PTA meetings . . .*
> *I think it's they're not interested. Because if I had a child . . . I would make time for the child to come. . . . And that makes me feel isolated.*
> *If you're teaching you're not . . . you don't want to . . . or or you . . . for your salary, you see.*
> *You have to work for your salary, but it's so much more fun and much more interesting if you . . . work with people who like to work with you.* (Anna C1)

To sum up, movement towards greater interaction among the teachers was generally recognised. Such movement was previously recognised in the journey of the project [Appendix 3: *Evaluation 1*]. As one teacher pointed out, "You don't feel so isolated anymore. You definitely can learn from and support one another". Current feelings of isolation, like Anna's, are articulated less in relation to colleagues, than in terms of expectations of the Education Department and the lack of parental support.

Division - Cohesion

Many of the teachers, including the principal, had described staff interaction as occurring informally in small groups among certain people, and only formally at a whole staff level [Q2]. That is, while some of the teachers collaborated at an individual level, there was a recognised lack of cohesion amongst the staff as a whole:

> *There's no bond between teachers . . . er . . . all of them just do their separate thing . . .*

> *There is no team spirit in the school. There might be like a cohesiveness between two or three or four people. But as a staff it's not there . . . and it it has an effect on the school. It has an effect on the overall running of the school. It has an effect on the overall educational progress of the school. Because we don't work as a team . . . There are no cohesiveness amongst us . . .* (Adam C1)

> *There is an underlying thing at the school . . . There are cliques of teachers at school . . . Some of the teachers don't like each other.* (Bruce C1)

> *You know, there's a bit of a . . . group story . . . people getting together in groups, you know . . . cliquing together. . . you know, that there definitely . . . I feel there is a problem here . . . you know, with communication . . . with everybody. That is why people group themselves. You know, they don't feel easy with everybody. Like at some schools you find the whole staff feeling easy together. . . Where I come from, we never had these groups together with that group. You know, we used to be as a whole staff used to be together. . . I don't know what . . . why it's like that. To me it was quite a . . . a different situation from the one I came from, you know. . .* (Alison C1)

The teachers attributed such staff division to personality, proprietorship and professional longevity:

> *Um . . . relationships here at this school are not . . . everybody's not laughing all the time, you know? There's a lot of clashing. People with clashing personalities. And . . . er . . . the . . . you get the ones that just sit and . . . um . . . see what's going on and say nothing about it . . . And the ones that like to fight, they fight all the time. So there's this division . . . You stay away from these, they stay away from them and so on . . . I think it's . . . I think it's the people . . . it's about people . . . er . . . wanting to say something all the time . . . And telling other people to sort of . . . mm . . . this is my school . . . I was here first . . . and you come in here and then you want to do something and you have all that enthusiasm . . . and you want to do something. . . . And then somebody tells you . . . you just came here now you want to rule the school or whatever. . . . .* (Anna C1)

> *I think it's . . . I think it's the people . . . it's about people . . . er . . . wanting to say something all the time. And telling other people to sort of . . . mm . . . this is my school . . . I was here first . . . and you come in here and then you want to do something and you have all that enthusiasm . . . and you want to do something. And then somebody tells you . . . you just came here now you want to rule the school or whatever.* (Anna C1)

There is sometimes a problem because the old teachers who thought they were correct and things must be done this way - because they have always been done this way and you come with your new training . . . and you are enthusiastic, the first year you know? (Edwin C1)

Some of the experienced teachers like to say, 'I am teaching for 20 years. You can't learn me anything'. I heard that a lot here. And they didn't want to give . . . give the younger teachers a chance. They are just coming now to the school and then they . . . they want to come and learn us things. A lot of teachers think it. The experienced teachers. But a lot of them have gone now. So, I don't think we will experience that now. (Heather C1)

While Heather was optimistic, Alison was more complacent. Alison had not grown up in the community. She had grown up, trained and taught for nine years in Cape Town before she moved to Grahamstown. She reflected on her experience at St Ann's:

Teachers here they just wants everything their way. . . . And everybody else will have their . . . there are certain ones that will always know. Everything you decide, you know. And that upsets . . . it makes such a lot of . . . strife between . . . and that's what's causing . . . they feel that . . . that you coming here now and somebody was saying - it is just coming to me now . . . . You coming here now and you're trying to put down rules - because they sometimes mention it, you know.

We've tried and we've tried and we've tried. We've had workshops with Carlson, you know? Things . . . you won't think about the things we've brought in - but it just didn't happen.

It's definitely recognised. . . . It's just not solved. . . . It's quite a story.
There's a lot of . . . . unpleasantness in . . . . everything we do.
We go out on staff parties and there is always a section that don't want to attend them, you know. And one wants to be happy in a job, you know. One doesn't want to be sad.

When I started here, there was quite a few . . . old ladies that had . . . that . . . er . . . that way of thinking, you know. . . And I was quite unhappy. . . I used to cry and say I don't want to go back to school.

But then as time went along they started going and going. Now there's one or two that upset everybody still here. . . . But in any case . . . it does affect your . . . your whole working atmosphere.
I wish they can just go . . . then it would be completely different . . .

It's not that you sometimes don't want to share . . . you know some people think you are keeping it to yourself . . . but you're scared. You know, you are afraid. . . . Like I was at the start. I had all these ideas and I was teaching all this . . . and the Sister comes in and was booming about my ideas and the way I am teaching. But I was too afraid to go to them . . . because they always had something to say behind my back. . . . You know what I mean. . . . It's not that I didn't want to share.

You came in, you saw the attitude of the people immediately. . . . I know what I am doing. But now, they break you down. And immediately you feel, no. . . Now, I show to them and then tomorrow they walk around and they say, "She wants to know . . . she wants to show that she is the best". You know? Now how can you show people that . . . and tomorrow they go around and they . . . you know . . . they influence everybody. (Alison C1)

Lack of staff cohesiveness and the consequent resistance to collaboration was also attributed to social divisions of gender and cultural identification. Barry linked division amongst the staff to gender 'differences'. He gave the example of break-time:

> *I think it's . . . I think male, because the males don't come to the staff room.*
> ***They all hang around outside the office!***
> [Both laugh]
> *Yeh, yeh. That's true, having a smoke.*
> ***Is that because they are smoking, is it?***
> *And I think . . . er . . . they don't want to share their sort of men talk . . . with the . . . the others.*
> ***Ok. That's interesting.***
> *And I like my smoke, you know, outside. I want to be . . . I don't want to come here* [indicating to the staff room] *and sit like them. . .* [referring to the women]. (Barry C1)

Barry pointed out, however, that the men did go to the staff room at break if there was a special meeting on:

> *Yesterday we had a birthday party here.*
> ***Oh, Edwin's birthday!***
> *So we had a surprise for him, with lovely things to eat. On that basis . . .*
> ***Everyone comes together.***
> *Yeh, we can.* (Barry C1)

I suggested that that might be a way of improving staff relations - to have lots more happy occasions and social things together. Barry, however, remained unconvinced:

> *But that doesn't work out, 'cos, I mean mostly . . . er . . . some people say 'Agh, it will be just a waste of time'.*
> ***Ahh. That's a shame.***
> *Now . . . and then all doesn't come . . . er . . . come to it. . . and you know the men like their drink and some people don't drink. Not all the men . . . Some people . . . er . . . doesn't like it, you know? And things like that. It's just a . . . a men's thing again.*
> ***Really? They see it as a men's thing.***
> *Yeh.*
> ***That's interesting. So the men always come.***
> *Ah no, no they come.*
> ***Oh right! But it is the women who are more reluctant to come.***
> *Yeh, yeh, yeh. But the younger ones, you know, they always come. The female teachers. But the . . . one at the . . . end of the year, everybody comes. The end of the year farewell function.*
> ***Now why . . . why do you think they attend that one and not the others?***
> *I think they . . . I . . . some . . . er . . . don't see it necessary to do it every term.*
> ***Ok. They're happy just to go once a . . . year, at the end of the year.*** (Barry C1)

> *I think that . . . um . . . a general problem at the school is that . . . um . . . which . . . we are . . . sort of trying to . . . um . . . get rid of as well - is that the males are always together and the females are always together, you know, there's not that . . . inter . . . you know, between males and females.*

Yeh, the only only person that I would go to, without any feeling of fear is Adam. That is the only male I would . . . that I am able to go to .
And why is that do you think?

Um . . . I don't know. [laugh] *I think it's got a lot to do with . . . um . . . also how I perceive . . . . from what I've . . . um . . . my perception of . . . you know . . . going to the males and you know, like perhaps asking for something or whatever it is . . . they always seem so . . . um . . . not really eager, you know, to . . . to do anything, you know. Whereas when I used to go, or when I go to Adam, it's . . . there's never . . . he never shows in any way that he doesn't want to do to this or he can't do it, you know? . . . And I think that's what makes me feel so comfortable with him. . . But with males . . . with the other males I can definitely sense that . . . um . . . as if they don't want to come too close, you know, I must . . . we must . . . they want to keep their distance rather.*

You can see that. Even . . . even at our . . . our parties that we have, you know . . . The males are usually . . . their side and the females are usually their side. And sometimes . . . um . . . maybe Onka or I will try to go to the males, but it seems so, you know, as if the females want to know what . . . what are we doing there?

This community . . . because I know Adam mentions it quite a lot . . . that it's been like this for . . . for a long time, you know . . . in the community where the females do this and that's it, and the males do this and that's it, you know. I mean, even when we have to . . . um . . . arrange for catering or whatever, you know, it's always the females that have to do it and I questioned it in a meeting once, why can't the males be part of it as well? . . . I mean, there are some males who are into . . . who would like to be a part of . . . maybe even making something, if not suggesting . . . what should be on the menu or whatever, you know and the males said that the females should know what to do. You know, that sort of thing. (Olga C2)

Staff divisions were also linked with cultural identification. Edwin explained that there was no strong sense of community identity or culture, and attributed this to socio-political factors:

Because we are always in the middle . . . I feel. In actual fact today also we are still in the middle. The whites have been out now in parliament the blacks are . . . and most of our people are just in the middle. And because of that sense of belonging you don't know to which group you belong. You know? That affects them. We don't come forward as . . . you know . . . as a coloured community. Because what is also happening from my experience is . . . er . . . our coloured people - some of them look more to the white side . . . with their complexion and their happenings and they would rather be seen as whites. Others are again more to the blacks and it's that . . . I don't know what's . . . . We either identify with the culture of the white person or with the black person. . . . The loyalty . . . where must you put your loyalty?
(Edwin C1)

It seems that the rule of the time of the ideology at the time, of racial divisions have had a had an impact on so-called 'coloured' people . . . er . . . to perceive them as as a own group, as a separate group, of a different group, a group that is is better off than say a 'black' group. I mean and it's still evident . . . that difference.
Yes. I mean I must admit . . . um . . . coming as an outsider to South Africa - it's always . . . you know seen as a 'black and white' situation and the . . .
And there's in between
. . . the so-called 'coloureds' don't seem to have a have a look in anywhere.

> *No - I think that that's . . . that's a problem with what is happening at the moment . . . er . . . I think that's that's the problem with this whole concept of . . . of . . . of a 'rainbow nation' which I don't really identify with, because I think the concept of a rainbow is to highlight differences . . . er . . . to bring out differences, to bring out . . . er . . . er . . . that we must actually accept that we are not one . . . and I think that is one thing that I think South Africa doesn't need at the moment . . . er . . . we need to say that this is one country . . . that socially, biologically there's no difference between us that we can't determine our differences - because that's what the concepts or this theory or ideology of a rainbow thing . . . er . . . brought up is that we must accept our differences amongst ourselves. And if we want say we want a genuine united country we can't concentrate and emphasise our differences - I mean it won't - it doesn't make sens . . . and it's it's actually contrary to what . . . many political organisa . . . including the dominant one at the moment - have said - that they believe in nation building. If you believe there is one nation then you should move away from putting emphasis on precisely that which says there are different nations . . . which is debatable.* (Adam C1)

As Bruce pointed out, such divisions were characteristic of the community both within the school and without:

> *It's in the community and it comes back to the school. And . . . if you try to work it out there . . . it has its effects on the attitudes of the teachers at school.* (Bruce C1)

Adam did point out, however, that he felt the situation was changing, and Edwin echoed this, claiming that improvement in communication had led to improved relations:

> *Growth of commitment - due to better communication - led to 'threshing things out' - there is no longer mistrust - they have had workshops for building relationships and trust, team building , listening skills and conflict resolution.* (Edwin C1)

Olivia was also positive about the situation:

> *Things are moving forwards a little bit. . . . We are working more together now. . . . We are trying to build a . . . a team working together . . . so you can share ideas . . . and improve . . . better communication among the staff.* (Olivia C2)

Alongside improved communication as a factor enhancing staff cohesion, the way in which the teachers were working together, sharing ideas and taking collective responsibility in both the MSP and the Management Committees, particularly the Staff Development Committee, may also be regarded as indicative of the movement towards a more cohesive and collaborative professional environment.

Conservatism - Progressivism

Much reference was made by the teachers to resistance among the teachers to change:

> *Since I've been here . . . some years . . . there's some . . . people who find it difficult to . . . to change . . . they must just . . . um . . . decide theirselves do they want to change . . . because as I said most of them are not keen, of us sorry not them, are not keen to change . . . easily. . . That is . . . that is what I . . . er . . . experience here.* (Ursula C1)

> *My experience of St Ann's is that people resist change . . . and that for me is . . . an indication of people want to retain things of the past . . . by hook or by crook. . . . they probably have that belief that it has suited us then, it will still suit us now. Even if conditions and times have changed . . . er . . . I think that culture was and maybe partially still there. That teachers are only working from eight in the morning until half past one or two in the afternoon and after that they consider their time as to be sacred. Er . . . that was . . . my feeling of St Anne's when I entered St Ann's - that people don't want to get involved in any things after school. But I think it's changing.* (Adam C1)

> *From what I've seen and I can only speak about . . . being in Grahamstown. People don't seem . . . really to be interested . . . It's . . . it's difficult . . . um . . . to get people to actually be interested . . . really interested, you know . . . in what they are doing and for them to see that if they go to a meeting or to a workshop they might just get a little bit more out of it than they already have.* (Olga C1)

Adam attributed the resistance to change to a general conservatism typical of the community:

> *The community where we come from is very conservative.*
> ***Can you explain what you mean by 'conservative'?***
> *Er . . . my experience of St Ann's is that people resist change. Er . . . and that for me is . . . er . . . an indication of people want to retain things of the past . . . by hook or by crook. Now . . . er . . . for me that's . . . that's a characteristic of very conservative persons . . . you know who wouldn't dare or try to make it better than a . . . they are in that group and they want . . . they they start . . . they probably have that belief that it has suited us then, it will still still suit us now. Even if conditions and times have changed . . . . That's why I say they are conservative.*
> ***And why do you think that is?***
> *Er . . . probably . . . maybe this is subjective . . . where the people come from. Maybe they're typical of what a . . . person would be like from a so-called 'coloured' community.*
> ***Which is what? Explain what you mean by . . . the stereotype then.***
> *Which is . . . er . . . I would say conservative in the sense that . . . er . . . one, they don't want to change . . . er . . . secondly they don't want to be involved in anything. If things can happen for them and and be beneficial for them that's OK as long as . . . er . . . they don't have to put something into it . . . to see that . . . er . . . that there is - to see somebody else want to to see everything . . . er . . . does happen, but it doesn't affect them. As long as they can see things from a distance happening . . . .* (Adam C1)

Similarly to Adam, Olga felt as if the teachers were saying:

> *'We are happy with the way things are so we don't want . . to change.* (Olga C1)

Olga construed the resistance as possibly a legacy of the 'old teachers':

> *I think maybe the influence of the older teachers. The teachers that were there before and still are there now. I think that it could be that as well. . . . The impression that I got is that . . . they just . . . they don't want to be a part of the change . . . of you know . . . what's happening what's going forward . . . basically.* (Olga C1)

While such sentiments may imply a sense of complacency, Olga offered another possible interpretation:

> *I think that the fact that maybe we're a bit . . scared to move on, to move forward.* (Olga C1)

Olga reiterated this notion of fear in our second conversation:

> *I think . . . also there's a fear - there's a definite fear at the school.*
> *Um . . . during this year - I'm speaking about this year specifically . . . we've had such a lot of problems where . . . we might try, you know, to move forward, but then there are people who don't want to be part of that move, you know?*
> *And because of that . . . the other people who are . . . in the beginning prepared to move forward are afraid to move because of what these people might do or say. Do you know what I am saying? . . . There is definitely that . . . situation at the school at the moment.*
>
> *This is just what I've observed. I am not saying now . . . this is myself. You know, I am just saying this is what I have observed in the school situation.*
> *You know, and I might be wrong too because I might be . . . misinterpreting what other people might see . . . but it seems to me that . . . also as if . . . um . . . people still seem to think that . . . um . . . this is too much, you know, we don't want to do too much. We want to get somewhere but we don't want to do too much, to get where we want to be, you know? So, maybe we should . . . either stand still and see what happens or even move back . . . you know. That's . . . that's the impression that I am getting.*
> *But . . . as far as going forward is concerned, you know, as you put it, I just don't see that we have actually really taken as many steps as we could to, you know . . .* (Olga C1)

As another teacher pointed out, St Ann's is not an isolated case:

> *Everywhere you find it, whether it's in your church denomination . . . whether it's in your school. People that . . like we say now Bengbu's out - this new guy is in . . . he's going to make changes. We can't tell him, you only came in here now, Bengbu was here all that time . . . . Why do you going to change Bengbu's . . .*
>
> *Changes are important. I mean, if you see a change - you improve . . . improve the condition of discipline or it improves conditions of . . . of the school or anything. Then you must abide with it. You can't say you changing things but you only came here now. I mean, that's the attitude. But I mean . . . how can you say that. If I am principal next, and I make changes. You have to abide with my changes. You can't say, you only came here now, that principal was here twenty years - he never said we must do this and that. . Is that not so. . . . Because new people come with new changes.* (Alison C2)

Other teachers were more positive about the notion of change, exhibiting a more progressive attitude. Linda recognised the need to move forward:

We have to move on . . . and try all the new ideas in our own situations. (Linda C2)

On reading Olga's impression that the teachers were "happy with the way things are" . . "don't want to change" and are maybe "a bit scared to move on", Anna disagreed:

Not at all! . . . I never want to go back to the past! (Anna C2)

Despite their apparent resistance to change, the teachers were busy developing themselves through personal study.

There are no unqualified teachers anymore-nine teachers are upgrading through correspondence. (Edwin C1)

The teachers had engaged in and were engaging in a range of further study:

In terms of your own professional development . . . um . . . er . . . we've talked about your . . . er . . . your . . . er . . . diploma at college, your certificate. You got a certificate at Dower? You also wrote down you went to Rhodes University.
Yeh, I did my third year . . . third year . . . at Rhodes University. . . Yeh, and . . . er . . . I had the opportunity to go to Leeds. Yeh, for three months. . . Shoo! It was an experience, that. (Barry C1)

Hope had completed the first half of a bed course and was planning to do the rest. Meanwhile, studying for Linda was a life-long occupation:

I've studied . . . I didn't stop after I become a teacher. . . I am still . . . er . . . er . . . studying.
So what have you . . . um . . . what have you done since?
I have complete my matric. And then . . . they told us . . . er . . . or me . . . the distance college . . . that since we didn't have matric we must do that . . . our course over. So I did that.
And then I do a diploma and after that I do remedial and then I'm busy now with my BEd.
I never stop studying [Laugh] (Linda C1)

Linda wasn't the only one:

I study all the time.
Do you? Are you doing any more studying now?
Yes
Are you? What are you doing?
I am doing psychology. (Olivia C1)

Heather had just completed her teacher's diploma, but was unconvincing when she claimed she was stopping there:

And are you going to do any more studying, or is that it now?
Noooo. I'm sick of it !!
[Both laugh]
That's enough! . . I just want to do a course in . . um . . English maybe and Xhosa.
Really? That's fantastic.
To improve my english and . . er. . and I'd like to learn a little bit of Xhosa.
But nothing that I must write exams.
No. I understand that. (Heather C1)

Edwin spoke 'on behalf' of the teachers when he referred to the motivation behind further study:

> *. . . Not because of the money, because there is none. . . . Because we want to empower ourselves with the new challenges that are facing us.* (Edwin C1)

While being realistic about the demands being made of them, the teachers appeared enthusiastic and keen to face the challenge of the new curriculum reform:

> *The new curriculum is also a very good thing . . . a very good thing but . . . it will be very very hard . . . to get there. It will . . . it's not an overnight thing . . . It will be very hard to go, but if you work to go there and start now as we start . . . I feel confident. I mean we . . . we also attend workshops and they help us with this Curriculum 2005.*
> *If you work and you want to come there you will be able . . . If you want to you will come there. The new approach I don't mind . . . I am confident, yeh, because we attend these workshops that help us. . . It's interesting. It's very interesting. . . .* (Una C1)

> *I am excited about this new OBE.* (Ursula C1)

> *The OBE . . . it's like . . . they say like it's an 'On Board Experience'. It's a new experience, it's challenging and I'd like to be part of it. I'd like to do it. But I . . . um . . . see what happens . . . . Just go day by . . . week by week . . . I am not the only one. There are thousands of others.* (Anna C1)

The advent of the new curriculum has resulted in an increase in workshops in order to support teacher development along the path of Outcomes Based Education. While the teachers lamented the extra time and effort, the need to learn was recognised:

> *OBE for me is a lot of work, and it takes a lot of time off your daily timetable.*
> *Time is a factor.*
> *But we must all learn how to, you know. . .* (Hope C1)

Governmental expectations were, however, considered unrealistic:

> *I mean now the way we were educated in college . . . to go out and teach - It took years . . . Because I mean you can't go for three days to the college and then come out a new teacher. Now, how will . . . how will the department expect us to have a 3/4 day workshop and know everything?* (Hope C1)

Out of awareness of the demands of implementing the new curriculum, came the recognition that teachers, irrespective of years of experience, gender or culture, needed to be supported and to give support to others:

> *If everybody can sit together and help each other it will help a lot. We just decided that . . . er . . . the grade 2s are starting with . . . OBE now and I don't delay and Onka said that we must when they come back and they work out their lessons we must sit together with them. The grade 1s are working together now. . . with the OBE.* (Heather C1)

Edwin pointed out that attendance at workshops on Outcomes Based Education and Curriculum 2005 had resulted in bringing teachers together in order to learn what to do. Linda also commented on the change in teacher commitment:

> *Like . . . er . . . the workshops . . . er . . . most of . . . say 90% attend the OBE and things like assessment workshops and . . . er . . . and like before some of them was . . . weren't interested and . . . er . . . like amural activities too . . . they are all of them are now involved. And they participate, for instance, in sport . . . for instance in netball they were so . . . I had to do most of the things and . . . er . . . but now I've got all of them working together. .*
> ***Wow that's great! Why do you think that's happened?***
> *I think they accept the . . . the new way of teaching now and . . . er . . . they want to be more involved with the children. and maybe . . . er . . . their priorities changed now.*
> ***So do you think that's OBE motivated?***
> *I think so, yes. For instance, in the past they would just think . . . er . . . an excuse not to go . . . not to attend . . . but not now.* (Linda C2)

The teachers were now getting together and planning and sharing ideas more:

> *I would say that maybe this . . . has developed from that in that . . . um . . . the grade . . . the . . . the foundation phase teachers . . . you know, come together, and we . . . especially where the OBE is concerned, you know. . . And try to work out lessons and . . . you know.*
> *I think it's . . . it's good, you know . . . Because at least we . . . we're not isolating ourselves from each other, you know. . . and . . . um . . . that helps a lot because now, in for example, the grade twos, I know we are all doing the same work . . . and if I say I need more time on this section, they say ok fine, we will do revision or whatever, you know, so it's always working together . . . which I find much better than, you know . . . doing everything on your own.* (Olga C2)

Anna agreed that teachers' commitment to professional development had improved and that teachers were sharing more. She attributed this to "the new way of teaching", adding that "that has really changed!"

> *I feel we are still on that journey. Although it's a . . . it's a long and a tough journey for us . . . especially with the OBE . . . we really have to fish and find ourselves . . . it is a tough journey for us.* (Hope C2)

This presents a positive picture. Despite the resistance to change outlined above, and awareness of the increased demands on teachers, implementation of recent curricular reform is greeted at least with acceptance, and at most with enthusiasm and willingness to accept the challenge. The present curricular reform, which *could* have proved fundamentally inhibiting to teachers, adding to their fear, frustration and disillusionment, appears to be a contributory factor towards greater staff cohesion and the journey towards collaboration. The teachers' response to the challenge is indicative of a progressive rather than a conservative attitude.

Similarly, the engagement of the teachers in the MSP - a project aimed specifically at developing them as professionals - is also regarded as indicative of an attitude of progressivism rather than conservativism. The teachers' involvement in the project was something they chose to do in order to "gain new ideas", "learn new methods", "to be a better maths teacher" [Appendix 2: *Questionnaire 1*]. The teachers recognised the need and expressed the desire to move forward, to adapt, to progress.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

This chapter has presented an interpretation of a journey of a school - a journey of which the MSP was part. Particular aspects/dimensions of the journey, related to the interpersonal dynamics of the situation, have been identified and juxtaposed as *tensions*, characterising *a case in transition*. The journey could be described as one which is taking the teachers from a relatively isolated place based on cooperation, constrained by authority, social division and conservatism, towards a more interactive, cohesive and progressive place based on collaboration, where teachers are freer as professionals to be more autonomous.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

On Reflection

Conversations with a group of teachers focusing on their personal experience, reveal a shift - a fundamental movement - an experiential journey. The teachers are people 'in transit'; they know where they are coming from, but are not sure where they are going. They are searching for identity, not just as individuals, but as parts of the collective - the institution, the community and the wider society. The people, the institution in which they work and the society of which they are part are all *in transition*.

> *I think St Ann's as a school . . . is reflective of the situation in South Africa . . . in the sense that . . . er . . . we say the country is in a transition . . . from a old order to a new order . . . er . . . er . . . I think it's true of St Ann's.* (Adam C1)

The journeys evoked in this section, like most, are not smooth. While there are moments of enthusiasm, enjoyment and even excitement, the path is fraught with difficulties, dilemmas and disillusionment. The journeys are viewed as progressive, moving towards a more positive collegial environment and characterised by the particular inter-personal tensions identified; *authority-autonomy, isolation-interaction, division-cohesion* and *conservatism-progressivism.* Imposition, isolation, social division and resistance to change are juxtaposed against autonomy, interaction and an openness to change, in the description of a journey towards a more collaborative professional environment: a journey from a more constrained environment of cooperation to an environment more conducive to mutual support and collaboration.

The picture presented has been painted with the teachers' words and framed by artistic interpretation (the artist, in this case, being the researcher). While the picture may be regarded as sketchy and the canvas possibly as weak, the strength of the picture described is that it is one which the teachers not only helped to paint but one with which they identify - their thoughts, feelings and responses to their experience resonating with those of their colleagues and with the picture of the journey presented here:

> *It is a true reflection.* (Edwin C2)

Reflecting on the interpretation of their journeys, the teachers were unanimous in their affirmation of the picture presented here:

> *As I said here* [referring to paper with notes on - questions in the letter and her answers] *I've . . . most of the things that the members . . . I mean the staff members said . . . was a true reflection of how they felt . . . and the experiences that they had.*
> ***Yes . . . and . . . and did that . . . the picture that . . . that was created . . . did that match your sort of picture of the school . . . and . . . and . . . um . . . or did you find it quite a different picture to how you see things?***
> *No, I find actually it's more or less . . . more or less the same.*
> ***Ok. So you weren't surprised by anything?***
> *No*
> *I think most of the things that was said in that chapter was true - I mean - as I said, in the olden days it was more about - it was more a racial type of thing . . . . And every . . . the coloureds and the blacks and the whites . . . were classified . . . they were categorised in schools and skin colour and there were inspectors who came to school inspecting is everyone doing their work according to the syllabi. And in the olden days the work was given to the childs like parrot type of teaching and the child didn't get much experience of its own and now with the new education system everything has changes - the child explores for himself, experience for himself and you find it's very interesting.*

I did find it interesting because every teacher has a different view and a different opinion about their experiences and their approaches. . . . And in a way it shows that the education system has changed. . . [looking at notes]*. . . um . . . I think it was a fair presentation because everyone has . . . gave his own reflection of how he feels about it, I mean, the education system, the new education system - the fears that some teachers have* (Una C2)

It's really good . . . er . . . I read it and I read it again and I find that it . . . It's a true reflection of our selves. . . . Only that part of the experienced teachers. I don't think those who left were as bad as . . . because some of them were willing . . . to new changes. . . . . Mm it's really good . . . it's . . . er . . . to me it 's real . . . it's something very honest. (Linda C2)

It's quite interesting. . . . It's interesting because I noticed that . . . it focused on changes.
So do you think that what is written there reflected the way things have changed?
Exactly!
Was there anything that you particularly noticed that - in the chapter - that you didn't agree with?
Not at all!
So you feel I've . . . I've . . . um . . . managed to capture a fairly realistic view of . . . of what's happening?
Yes
I just wanted to make sure that I hadn't misinterpreted anything or misrepresented anything.
No (Olivia C2)

Anna felt the chapter was "about most . . . a true reflection":

No, actually . . . actually, I don't have a problem with what you . . . with what is on here. . . About most . . . I think it's a true reflection . . . of what the staff feels. . . . (Anna C2)

Anna attributed her reticence to a difficulty in understanding what exactly I meant at one point in the chapter. However, after some explanation she agreed:

Some of these words . . boy! [Looks through the chapter] *. . I really . . this . . um . .* [reads from the chapter] *. . um . . "the thesis being proposed here is that such a transition can be viewed as a movement from a system based on constrained cooperation towards a system which, far more than cooperative, is based on freer collaboration". . . Can you explain?*
Ok, yes. I am glad you asked. You see . . um . . how I see it . . and this is where I want to see if . . if you know, it's a true reflection . . that . . . both generally in South Africa . . um . . and here in the school . . as like a microcosm . . like a . . a small example of what's happening in South Africa . . there was a system where people just cooperated. They did as they were told. . . Ok. It was constrained, you know. There wasn't very much freedom at all. . . The teachers did as they were told, the kids did as they were told, there was no questioning . . it was . . people cooperated, but not necessarily willingly . .
It was just what they had to do and they did it. And those that challenged it . . . um . . were you know . . were . . . knew about it! [Laugh] ***Um . . and the picture that was painted by you guys . . . . you know, in your words, in your descriptions, seemed to, as one of the teachers said, to reflect what was happening in the wider society . . . . in that people . . it was . . those constraints were sort of falling away a bit . . . . and people were becoming freer, more autonomous. They were having more say . . . . um .***

> ***. and things were becoming more collaborative . . . . . and inclusive of people. Um . . . . and people were actually working together because they chose to, not because they had to, or whatever. . . Now would you agree with that?***
>
> *Yes I agree with it.* (Anna C2)
>
> *I read through all this and what the people said seems to me quite relevant to what our school situation is.* (Alison C2)

Hope also recognised the journey depicted, pointing out that it is a journey on which they were still traveling:

> *I've looked through it and I feel fine with it . . . I mean it's the truth. . . . And I feel that is what is happening at the school. . . .*
> *I feel we are still on that journey. Although it's a . . . it's a long and a tough journey for us.* (Hope C2)

It appears, therefore, that the picture presented was an accurate portrayal of the way things *were* when the conversations took place. However, on reflection, some of the teachers pointed out how things have changed since.

While Adam also recognised the picture presented, he pointed out that the journey was not a linearly progressive one:

> *I think the whole chapter . . . er . . . reflects on our . . . experience at the school and the . . . way we think. . . er . . . and I think . . . it . . . maybe it . . . it . . . it actually nicely fits in with . . . er . . . the whole say theme of . . . of this chapter - a journey towards collaboration - bringing out our experience . . . er . . . our past experience . . . relating it . . . er . . . and see the relationship between the past experience and . . . er . . . our present experience and how adjustments are taking place from past to present and maybe back to past and into present again and . . yeh .* (Adam C2)

Adam explained further what he meant by "adjustments . . . from past to present and maybe back to past and into present again", pointing out that he felt the picture had changed:

> *The present . . . I mean we . . . at present, I think, if you had done this at the present moment you've probably came upon more . . . say . . . revelations because at the moment most of us are very despondent with the education system. . . . Ok, because it's . . . it's become . . . it's become . . . they started off saying it's democratic, transparent . . . . and it . . . it seems that the reverse is . . . is taking place. . . . You actually don't have any say. Decisions are taken for you and you have to accept.*
> *Ok. They say jump and you must ask how high or how low and just follow suit.*
>
> *It's closing down again. . . . It is . . . . er . . . I think people . . . where . . . we . . . we've become used to the notion of democracy . . . Ok, but I don't think all of us and even the powers . . . that be . . . didn't realise . . . er . . . the extent and depth of democracy . . . and*

the time that democracy actually takes . . . to implement things. Because it's a . . . it's a whole two way process. . . You need to go forward and go back again . . . er . . . go and ask and take it back again . . . er. . . confirm or reject again and . . . So it's a . . . it's a cycle of continuous consultation . . . and accept that people will reject it and want their inputs to be reflective in what's coming out in the new process . . . and it's . . at this stage it seems that . . . er . . . because people thought - I don't know if it's . . . was very deliberate . . . er . . . that they sell something to us that we will construe it as change, ok. That we are part of a process of change but the process of change, I mean, it . . . it can't be an overnight or quick fix . . . er . . . thing . . . it's a . . . it's a whole process . . . and because it's taking time people up . . . high up . . . maybe have realised that it's not going to suit our agenda - what we want and we need to maybe . . . er . . . swing the big stick again and just force things down the throat of people.

Er . . . it's very . . . it's . . . it's . . . I think it's quite reflective of . . . of our situation . . . it's quite reflective of the catch 22 situation that we're in . . . er . . . that we see movement . . . but we also see . . . er . . . regression. Because, although, we're in . . . what people say a . . . a period of transformation - it's not always true. . . Ok, because if we . . . reflect on our own situation at . . . at St Anne's it seems that we've actually . . . gone backwards.

Ok. The whole standard of our education at the school is . . . has actually dropped, ok. And it is, as I said, maybe it's to do with the whole question of transition which is also, it's . . . it's eminent in St Anne's. . . . And it's going to be more eminent now that . . . er. . . the question of . . . of management at the school is going to be addressed. But it's a question of outside management being imposed . . . imposed upon us at the school - we don't have a choice.

I mean we face . . . we are facing the . . . we are facing a situation where . . . next term there might be a new Deputy Principal at the school and two new . . . er . . . Head of Departments at our school. . . You see. Ok. So . . . those are things that we thought . . . were . . . those positions were to be filled with people within the system and the school will be allowed the opportunity to fill those positions - but the decision from the department is 'no'.

Er . . . they will tell us who to employ in those positions - that's why . . . that's why I said we are moving backwards. (Adam C2)

Anna echoed this regression in terms of departmental impositions:

You know . . . um . . . it's . . . it's . . . er . . . today . . . it's . . . it's not . . . it has fallen away a little, as you say . . . . But . . . um . . . you know, the other day they gave us a . . . the department sent us the applications for the redeployment . . . . There were four I think, four or five posts on there. . . . So they are just doing the same thing that people did those years - they are just . . . telling us, ok, you do this, you do that and we have to do it.
So in a way, what you are saying is, whereas that might . . . correct me if I am wrong . . . Whereas that's a true reflection of where you were at then . . . things have almost . . . gone back a bit?
Gone back a bit. . . . In some respects, yes. (Anna C2)

Such disillusionment was echoed by other teachers:

Teaching today is not enjoyable anymore. (Barry C2)

Barry attributed this in part to "the chaos created by the department":

> *I mean, the ratio . . . teacher ratio. They say you should have 1:35 . . . 34 even, in standard . . . in the primaries . . . And now we sit with 1:50, 1:45, you know? Or . . . er . . . textbooks, for instance. I haven't got a maths textbook. I've only got a few. And that's frustrating too, because you want to give the child more knowledge. Now I have to write the thing up, photostat it, or roll it off . . . . If they had a text book they could have taken it home. You see? That's the chaos created, because they didn't give us . . . the money they should have given us.*
> (Barry C2)

Anna expressed similar feelings of frustration:

> *They . . . they just want to . . . um . . . they expect things from us, you know. The children have to pass all the time. And we . . . with the type of child we receive now in . . . into our classes, we have to work hard . . . . And we don't always . . . um . . . receive the sympath . . . no I don't want to say sympathy, empathy of the department, you see.*
> *They . . . they just want . . . we must give them this, we must solve this for them . . . We must do this. But they . . . they don't . . . support. For instance, we don't . . . we have nothing. We must improvise everything . . . you must just give, give, give all the time. And get nothing back.*
> (Anna C2)

Alison and Hope also felt very disillusioned:

> *'Cos I was with my . . . with my maternity leave now . . . I've got three months, but I couldn't get it because there's no money. That's what they told me. There's no money to pay. . . . . I did get a maternity but I had 3 months - my holiday leave. . . . They can't give it to me because they haven't got money to pay. . . . Or they haven't got money to pay somebody . . . they can give it to me but then they pay me and the children sit alone for three months. Now, I mean I as a teacher think more of the child that's put into my care . . .*
> *. . . . there is so much going on in the department now. . . . Everything. They never find forms to fill in, they never find this has always gone - that's always gone . . . you know they are so . . . really . . .*
> (Alison C2)

> *There's nobody in Onka's class . . . . I am the only grade 1. . . and here I am facing a . . . a hectic situation . . . I feel it's a lot of pressure on me . . . I mean Onka has been gone the whole year and they still didn't make a plan. And you know what they did . . . they actually stopped Olga's salary instead of Onka's!! . . . We are dividing the children . . . those poor children is sitting . . . in different classrooms . . . I told Mr B . . . those poor children are not ready for Grade 3. Its unfair! . . . . I said to Mr B the other day , it's getting too much . . . because I mean last week we had three . . . er . . . junior primary teachers out of the school in one one day. And then everybody goes to their classes - I've got to stand there and face these children without teachers. . . . And I told him it's too much. . . . On Thursday I had 19 extra children in my class - one and a half classes. I mean a person can't work like that!*
> (Hope C2)

Teachers expressed feelings of insecurity, which they attributed to the "departmental chaos". Teachers didn't know what was happening and no longer felt secure in their jobs:

It's a new phase going on now. . . . It's not like those days. . . . I mean in the department, there's going a lot of . . . things on . . . that we are not sure about. Teaching for me is not that secure like it was in the old days the . . . if you were a teacher . . . you was . . . you feel . . . you felt secure. But these days you don't feel . . . I don't feel . . .
Why is that do you think?
Just . . . the department . . . the answer is there in the department, I think. There's a lot of things going on that you aren't sure about. You don't know what's going on there . . . you don't know . . . . Very unsure . . . one are . . . one is very unsure about the future, if you are a teacher. (Ursula C1)

Despite classes without teachers, and teachers with more than the recognised limit of children in their classes, three teachers were being redeployed from the school into similar positions in other schools.

And the . . . er . . . teachers with this redeployment and things like that. You know, you aren't sure about your position tomorrow. . . . Although I know they can't fire me . . . tomorrow or whatever . . . I've got . . . I mean I've got a job. . . . But security . . . .
(Barry C1)

Anna weighed up the situation:

I love teaching . . . . But at the moment I feel like I can leave the teaching profession . . . Because of how things are going . . . in teaching . . . the department . . . makes me cross. But . . . er . . . if you think about it again you . . . you think about the child . . . and . . . um . . . which is most important to you, working with children or . . . or rules that people . . . upstairs want you to follow. (Anna C1)

While Olga recognised the journey presented in the chapter, like Adam, she questioned whether things had progressed since:

What I noticed was the change from the time that the interviews took place to what's going on now, you know . . . . But I wouldn't say it's . . . that it was misrepresenting in anyway. It's what's been happening since then.
So you do recognise that journey that's described there?
Yes
You're saying that in fact the journey's gone further ?
Yes
Um . . . and . . . can you in your words describe how that journey's gone on?
You know, from there?
Um . . . I think . . . that . . . it's not so much of . . . to me . . . that the journey has gone on . . [Laugh] . . . but maybe it seems as if . . . um . . . I don't want to say . . . .
Let's say the situation . . . seems to have . . . paused a bit, you know?
Ok
And . . . um . . . I don't know if we are trying to . . . find our feet or trying to find out exactly where we want to go - if we . . . if we still want to go forward.
You know, I think that's what we are trying to find out - if we actually still want to go forward - is it . . . is it worth it, you know, to take the step. (Olga C2)

Olga's response to reading the chapter was one of despondency and scepticism:

> *Well, I think that . . . um . . . at the moment . . . I am . . . um . . . feeling a bit despondent . . . Nothing to do with this here . . . But . . . um . . . you know, reading it and looking at the situation at school . . . I was wondering, you know . . . . are we going forward, you know? . . . Where are we at the moment, you know!*
> *Thinking about what's been going on at school . . . subsequent to this . . . .*
> *As I say . . . as I say I'm a bit . . . how do you say worried . . . skeptical about whether we actually. . . still moving forward.* (Olga C2)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

In conclusion, while signs of progress towards a more collaborative working environment are already visible, it cannot be assumed that the direction of change will always be progressive. The journeys identified in this section are regarded as taking place within, and in parallel to, each other. The journey of the project is viewed as a part of the journey of the school within which it is situated, the experience of the project echoing the greater experience of the school. The situation is viewed as a case *in transition* - a situation "fragile and fraught with tension" (Adam C1). As the teachers point out, this journey is a "long and tough" one (Hope C2) and there is still "a hell of a lot of room for improvement" (Adam C2).

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Reflecting on **the journey of the research** itself, many of the teachers commented on how interesting they had found it to read the interpretation of their experience. One teacher, however, made specific reference to how "enlightening" she found it to read what the teachers had said:

> *Um . . . let me . . . let me put it this way - I wasn't really aware of what the other people, you know, thought of the school situation. I found it quite enlightening actually, you know, to see what . . . other people had to say . . . because . . . I think at our school as well we find it difficult to . . . to share, you know, with each other, you know . . . just speaking generally about the school, you know?*
> *It's usually only done if we're in a staff development session or, you know, in a meeting or something. . . . It's not done, you know, socially or, you know, just going to another person and saying I feel this, you know, have you noticed this, you know? . . . . Anything even positive, you know . . . it's never spoken out loud, you know.*
> *I was quite . . . I found it quite interesting - oh this is what they think! You know?*
> *Because, as I say, we don't really communicate, as you say, you know - for the one to know that this is what the other one is thinking. . . . It's just . . . quite good to see that.* (Olga C2)

Olga expressed a desire for more insight into her colleagues' thoughts and feelings:

> *Mm . . . I just wish, you know, that there was something, you know, that . . . that . . . could take place at the school . . . to . . . um . . . get this going more . . . you know . . . the feeling of knowing what other people think, you know, what other people feel, you know, because as I say it's . . . it's so closed at the moment, you know . . . And for . . . but as I say there is that fear, you know . . . um . . . people are afraid to speak freely, you know. But this for me was so positive and if people could just feel free to give a positive comment or statements, you know. . . . I think that would do good to the school as well, you know. . . .*
> *It was also interesting . . . um . . . to read about the school, you know, from an outside point of view, you know!* (Olga C2)

In this respect, it could be argued that the research itself has contributed to the teachers' journey towards collaboration. This is an important notion as it includes the research as an integral part of the teachers' experience and not as something separate that happened in a vacuum, not affecting or being affected by anything else.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

This section has presented narratives of two integrally related journeys - a journey within a journey - emphasising teacher professional development and inter-personal relations. The teachers' evaluations of the project and conversations with the teachers about their experience in the wider context of the school reveal a movement-in-progress from a working environment characterised by constrained cooperation towards one characterised by freer collaboration.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

REFLECTION

This concluding section attempts to do three things:

- reflect on the research carried out, highlighting the main elements
- outline the limitations of the study
- recommend action for the encouragement of collaborative approaches to teacher professional development

The journey of negotiation - the interdiscursive process of sharing and interpretive framing of the teachers' experiences characterising the research, has led to a greater understanding of the research context. It is with the awareness and insight gained from the research presented here that the recommendations in this final chapter are made.

Chapter 9:

A Reflection

REFLECTION

The research presented in this thesis is described as a case study, interpretive in orientation, based on ethnographic principles and located in the qualitative paradigm. The focus is on *teacher professional development,* defined here as 'a continuous process of professional growth and fulfilment, resulting in an improved quality of educational understanding and practice'. A range of dimensions are identified characterising a collaborative orientation to the conceptualisation of teacher professional development.

Specific attention is focused on the development of a collaborative approach to teacher professional development based on *mutual support,* an approach in which professionals come together irrespective of years of experience or status, and discuss problems and issues, share ideas and struggles and celebrate triumphs. It is an approach which positions the teacher centrally in both his/her own professional development and that of his/her colleagues. It is one which - rather than relying exclusively on external expertise - recognises the expertise within and draws upon both in an interactive way.

The research, set in St Ann's, a primary school, was carried out with a group of teachers involved in the teaching of mathematics. The study evolved in two phases, each characterised by cyclical processes of reflection and consensual validation. The initial phase of the research focused on the implementation and evaluation of a teacher development project aimed at developing an internal collaborative approach to professional development. While there was evidence of individual teachers supporting each other professionally, this had been fragmentary and erratic. Professional development had been an individual endeavour. The teacher development project changed this by introducing a 'collaborative' form of mutual support, which not only supported the teachers in developing their mathematical teaching, but also resulted in improving collegial relations.

The second phase of the research contextualised the study, drawing on the teachers' own accounts of their experience in an attempt to gain greater understanding of their situation. Analysis of conversations with the teachers identified a range of interpersonal dimensions which are juxtaposed in an interpretative framework of 'tensions' - dimensions in flux - which echo those endemic to a society in transition.

The analysis, though broad in scope, is continually enriched with 'snapshots' of the teachers' actual words, and has been methodologically authenticated through processes of consensual validation. It is grounded in the worlds and words of the teachers in the case study. It is a piece of work that attempts to both respect and represent the teachers involved. It attempts to listen and respond to the teachers' experiences and reflections on those experiences. The teachers' words are at the heart of this thesis.

The text, described as a 'narrative collage', a tapestry of voices interwoven by threads of *negotiation*, represents a collaborative accomplishment. The teachers' words have been interpretively framed and constructions of meaning have been validated in an interpersonal construction of social reality. The reader is invited to engage in an act of complicity, to collude with the text in the construction and *negotiation* of shared meaning, possibly finding resonance with his/her own situations.

The teachers' reflections on their experience reveal journeys which resonate with that of the society in which the school is located. The school was identified as 'a case in transition', situated between an environment characterised by constrained cooperation and an environment characterised by freer collaboration. The overall tension may be viewed metaphorically as a 'Tug o' War'. On one end of the rope there is a cultural legacy of authority, isolation, social division and conservation, while on the other end there is a pull towards greater autonomy and interaction, a will to adapt rather than conserve and to work together towards the mutual support of one's colleagues: a struggle between cooperating with what is and collaborating towards what could be.

Collaboration is regarded as vital in the *negotiation* of the struggles and tensions that characterise the teaching situation and, more specifically, teacher professional development. The thread of *negotiation* weaves its way throughout both the experience and the text. The research relationship, the construction of the text, the evolution of the teacher development project, the interpretation of the teachers' experiences were all negotiated. The theoretical and methodological layers of the research are also woven through by threads of *negotiation*.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The following main contentions may be drawn from the research:

- Teacher collaboration and mutual support are regarded as important components of professional development. They create a strong base which, together with input from external sources of expertise, will be conducive to effective professional development.

- In order for internal strategies of collaboration to occur and succeed, *internal* structures and relations need to be supportive of such an approach. Alternatively, the strategies themselves can help to encourage and facilitate the development of a more collaborative culture. It is therefore a contention of this thesis that inter-relational dynamics should be focused on alongside the development of mutually supportive strategies of professional development.

- The development of collaborative approaches to teacher professional development is inextricably related to the interpersonal tensions of the teachers' experience: *authority-autonomy, isolation-interaction, division-cohesion, conservatism-progressivism.*

- The experience of the teachers is regarded as echoing that of the wider context. The school is identified as a 'case in transition'. The transition is one in which the teachers are moving between a 'place' of constrained cooperation and a 'place' of freer collaboration.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

LIMITATIONS

- My initial naïvety regarding the research process and my role in the process may be argued to have limited the study. I had not anticipated the tension caused by expectations. The teachers' expectations of me as an outside expert coming to show them how, and my intention to act as the facilitator of a collaborative effort to construct experience and understanding, caused what Walker (1991) refers to as a dilemma of "directive versus democratic practice". My role, as I see it, became rather one of a "catalyst" (Breen 1993). I responded to a plea for support from a group of teachers in a local school and developed with them a program of support that was designed to encourage and facilitate the integral involvement and central positioning of the teachers in their own professional development.

- My initial lack of understanding of the context may also be viewed as a limitation. The phasal evolution of the research could be regarded as inappropriately sequenced. On reflection, it would seem more logical to have gained a greater understanding of the teachers' situation before working with them to help develop it. However, I am in no doubt that the relationship built up with the teachers over the initial two years was vital in facilitating the kind of personal interaction and revelation that is essential for such interpretive inquiry.

- The initial lack of negotiation with all the teachers involved in the research is recognised as a limitation of the research. Such negotiation would, I believe, not only have helped to avoid any misunderstandings but would also have helped to build a more collaborative relationship between myself and the teachers.

- The dominance of my voice in 'a journey of a project' is also regarded as a limitation. The centrality of the teachers' voices was only fully realised in the second phase of the research, largely because I chose an open-ended conversational approach rather than specific foci. This meant, however, that I did not elicit specific information about the project through our conversations,

which would have been very helpful, as it would have generated a more 'balanced' story of the project. While the process of consensual validation may be viewed as corroborating the account, it would have been more in keeping with a dialogic/interdiscursive research approach to have interspersed the account with the words of the teachers.

- The study was limited to the teachers at the school involved with mathematics teaching. Since it was a primary school, this included half of the staff. However, as Olga pointed out, it would have been interesting to have involved all of the teachers in the school. This would have provided a more representative picture of the whole school. However, the initial focus on mathematics education imposed a selection criterion limiting the research sample.

- Reliance on data which the teachers chose to share may also be regarded as a limitation. However, the vulnerability of dependence solely on information provided by the research participants was validated methodologically by the integral process of consensual validation. The natural selection process inherent in the revelation of such data is also regarded as a sign of relevance rather than a limitation. The data divulged is credited with a significance that makes its inclusion in the research particularly relevant.

- The initial teacher development project (MSP) could be interpreted as an example of "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves & Dawe 1989) grafted onto the school culture and thus perceived as a limitation. However, the teachers' involvement in the evolution of the project - their collusion in the contrivance - may be regarded as a countervailing justification for it.

- It is recognised that the analysis presented in this thesis raises issues such as those of personality, gender and socio-political identity, but does not explore them. To do so was beyond the scope of the thesis, although it may well be an interesting area for further research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this thesis is on the development of a collaborative approach to professional development based on mutual support. Arising from its findings are the following recommendations aimed at facilitating such development:

- Move from 'hierarchical practices' towards more democratic in-service mechanisms based on mutual collegial interaction.

- Acknowledge and facilitate discussion and sharing as important aspects of teacher professional development.

- Encourage environments in which colleagues listen and support each other and feel comfortable to disagree and challenge each other in a positive and constructive way.

- Acknowledge and encourage reflection as a vital component of teacher professional development, not only on an individual level but also collaboratively with colleagues.

- Encourage the sharing of, and reflection on, personal histories and experience, making connections between the past and the present which may help to inform the future.

- Develop collaborative strategies to encourage teacher professional interaction such as the setting up of fora or networks which facilitate the sharing of ideas and discussion of teachers' concerns, inter-class visitation, shared planning and feedback sessions.

- Encourage such collaborative strategies of mutual support as integral practices of professional experience throughout a teacher's career and between colleagues of both similar and diverse experience.

- Support teachers in assuming new roles in their own development. Involve teachers in the definition of the goals, the content and the implementation of professional development innovations.

- Acknowledge the centrality of the teacher - listen to the voices of experience and take them into account in determining the character, process and future of the profession.

- Involve all teachers and administrators in the institution in the ongoing process of professional development, encouraging a collaborative school-based approach which both recognises and facilitates the individuality of each person involved.

- Realise the importance and potential power of individuals supporting each other as a professional and an organisational concern. Infrastructures to encourage or support collaboration need to be set up, such as management teams, planning teams, teacher fora, etc.

In order to implement the recommendations listed above, the following suggestions are made regarding the general approach to teacher professional development as presented in this thesis:

- Move away from the notion of development as training and remediation towards a more constructive view of professional development as a continuous process facilitating growth and increasing understanding and awareness.

- Encourage and facilitate a culture that not only suggests ongoing professional development, but also requires and supports it.

- Recognise the complex interaction between individuals and their environment.

- Relate professional development to the specific needs of the teachers.

- Develop collaborative approaches to teacher development as part of a whole school development project, which involves addressing a wide range of institutional issues including management structures.

- Join together in a continuous process of creating spaces in which teachers' voices may be recognised, acknowledged and valued. In response to Miller's (1990) plea, we need to engage in a "continuous and relational process" of "creating spaces and finding voices".

A final note

It is recognised that the concept of professional development has to be placed in context. Teachers can only take on the roles suggested if they are adequately prepared and willing to take them on. As Feiter *et al.* (1995) point out, the process of professional development is inevitably based on the developmental state of an education system, including curriculum, training, content knowledge, skills, etc. The context presented here is one fraught with the dynamic tensions of a case in transition.

Teachers are busy upgrading themselves and attending workshops in order to meet the new demands of the curricular reform. The contention of this thesis is that alongside these forms of professional development we strongly support and encourage collaborative approaches to development based on mutual peer support. This will help ensure not only that the needs of the teachers more likely to be recognised, acknowledged and attempts made to address them, but also the context in which the teachers are working is rendered more comfortable and conducive to professional development.

We need to look towards a future of open professionalism in which teachers are regarded as key persons. Such an approach implies participant planning, collaborative efforts, and shared authority and responsibility for meaningful developments in education (Feiter, Vonk & Akker 1995).

> It is when teachers are together as persons, according to norms and principles they have freely chosen that interest becomes intensified and commitments are made. (Greene 1991: 13)

Finally, it is recognised that in order to encourage the development of a culture of collaboration, the attainment of such an ideal needs to be seen as part of systemic changes in management, policies and structure which reflect a social dynamic geared towards greater inclusivity and democratic practice (Van der Westhuizen *et al.* 1998). This is not something that happens spontaneously, but needs much time, patience, commitment and consistent effort by all involved. Such change will necessitate a coherent approach that is based on relationships of mutual respect and appreciation.

> None of us, no matter what our position, has the answers to the complex problems we face. The more people work together, the more we have the possibility of better understanding these complex problems and acting on them in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.
> (Lieberman 1986:6 cited in Miller 1990:158)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Into the same river no man can step twice.

This oft quoted Heraclitian phrase for me epitomises the intellectual experience of the research presented here. The context and our perceptions of it develop continuously. We are never static, but moving all the time (Bateson 1987). "The mysterious and polymorphic relation between context and content" (Bateson 1987:154) is recognised: the realm of physical reality is in constant flux and to describe it is therefore problematic. Actions and utterances are contextually situated, and it is recognised that a particular action or utterance must be regarded as part of the context and "not as the product or effect of what remains of the context after the piece which we want to explain has been cut out from it" (Bateson 1987:338). A consistent attempt has been made in this thesis to understand things in terms of the context, to give meaning (interpret) and define characteristics (dimensions and tensions) in a 'world of flux'.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

We are on a journey of mutual and simultaneous exploration . . . all we can expect from one another is new and interesting information. We cannot expect answers. Solutions, as quantum reality teaches, are a temporary event, specific to context, developed through the relationship of persons and circumstances.

(Margaret Wheatley 1992:151)

'Looking in my rear view mirror', I can see where I started and where I am now. I can track a journey which began with a clear destination in mind - the implementation and evaluation of a preconceived model of teacher professional development. The journey however has proved to be much more complex than anticipated. I began my journey with what I believed to be the answer and as I travel I seem to find more and more questions.

The direction of my journey has changed. Rather than charting the route to a known specific destination, which I intended to reach and evaluate, I have found myself negotiating a more unknown pathway towards a more mysterious destination which I may never reach but rather visit interesting places along the way and come to some conclusions about them!

The pathway so far has led to many places: places of frustration and excitement, places of tension and struggle and places of release, places of naivety and places of realisation.

(Research Journal 10.98)

REFERENCES

Adler, J. *(1996). Lave & Wenger's social practice theory and teaching and learning school mathematics.* Proceedings of the 20th Conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education, Valencia.

Aitken, J.L., & Mildon, D.A. *(1992).* Teacher education and the developing teacher: The role of personal knowledge. In M. Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change.* London: Falmer Press.

Atkinson, P., Delamont, S., & Hammersley, M. *(1988).* Qualitative research traditions: A British response to Jacob. *The Review of Educational Research, 58 (2), 231 - 50.*

Atkinson, P. *(1990). The ethnographic imagination: Textual constructions of reality.* London: Routledge.

Bagwandeen, D.R., & Louw, W.J. *(1993). The theory and practice of inservice education and training for teachers in South Africa.* Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik Publishers.

Bakhtin, M. *(1981). The dialogic imagination: Four essays.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barthes, R. *(1979).* From work to text. In J.V. Harari (Ed.), *Textual strategies: Perspectives in post structuralist criticism.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bateson, G. *(1987). Steps to an ecology of the mind.* New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.

Behr, A. L. *(1988). Education in South Africa: Origins, issues & trends 1652-1988.* Pretoria: Academica.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. *(1966). The social construction of reality.* London: Allen Lane.

Bey, T.M., & Holmes, T.C. (Eds.).*(1992). Mentoring: Contemporary principles and issues.* Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Education.

Biott, C. *(1993).* Voices of the researched in a report for policy-makers. In R.Burgess (Ed.), *Educational research and evaluation for policy and practice.* London: Falmer Press.

Bjorkqvist, O. *(1998).* Some questions for constructivists to answer. In O. Bjorkqvist (Ed.), *Mathematics teaching from a constructivist point of view.* Report from the Faculty of Education, Äbo Akedemi University. No 3.

Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. *(1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Breen, C.J. *(1993).* Transforming the culture of learning mathematics: Academics as catalysts or intruders? In C. Julie, D. Angelis, & Z. Davis (Eds.), *Curriculum reconstruction for societies in transition.* Proceedings of Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education 2. Cape Town: Masker Miller Longman for the NECC.

Breen, C.J. *(1999). Issues and challenges for mathematics and science teacher development.* In Proceedings of the 7th Southern African Association of Research in Mathematics & Science Education Conference, Harare, January 1999.

Britzman, D.P. *(1986).* Cultural myths in the making of a teacher: Biography and social structure in teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review,* 56 *(4), 442-456.*

Brodie, K. *(1994). Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education: Curriculum Reconstruction for Societies in Transition: Towards Action. Cape Town :* Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa [AMESA].

Burgess, R. (Ed.). *(1993). Educational research and evaluation for policy and practice.* London: Falmer Press.

Burke, J.P. *(1987). Teacher development.* New York: Falmer Press.

Burns, A., & Hood, S. (Eds.). *(1995). Teachers' voices: Exploring course design in a changing curriculum.* Macquarie University: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.

Bush, T., Coleman, M., Wall, D., & West-Burnham, J. *(1996).* Mentoring and continuing professional development. In D. McIntyre & H. Haggar (Eds.) *Mentors in schools: Developing the profession of teaching.* London: David Fulton Publishers.

Butt, R.L., & Raymond, D. *(1987).* Arguments for using qualitative approaches in understanding teacher thinking: The case for biography. *Journal of Curriculum Theorising, 7 (1), 62-93.*

Cameron, D., Frazer, E., Harvey, P., Rampton, M.B.H., & Richardson, K. *(1992). Researching language: Issues of power and method.* London: Routledge.

Cantrell, D. *(1993).* Alternative paradigms in environmental education research: The interpretive perspective. In R. Mrazek (Ed.), *Alternative paradigms in environmental education research* Ohio: NAEE.

Carmin, C. *(1988).* The term mentor: A review of the literature and a pragmatic suggestion. *International Journal of Mentoring, 2 (2), 9-13.*

Christiansen, M., Goulet, L., Kretz, C., & Maers, M. *(1997). Recreating relationships: Collaboration & educational reform.* Albany, NJ: State University of New York Press.

Christie, P. *(1991). The right to learn: The struggle for education in South Africa.* Johannesburg: Sached with Ravan Press.

Clark, C. M. *(1986)*. Ten years of conceptual development in research on teacher thinking. In M. Ben-Perez, R.Bromme & R. Halkes (Eds.), *Advances of research in teacher thinking.* Lisse: Swetz & Zeitlinger.

Cobb,P., Yackel, E. & Wood, T. (1988). Curriculum & teacher development: Psychological and anthropological perspectives. In E. Fennema, T.P. Carpenter & S. J. Lamon (Eds.), *Integrating research on teaching and learning mathematics.* Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.

Cogan, M. *(1973)*. *Clinical supervision.* Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. *(1986)*. On narrative method, personal philosophy and narrative unities in the story of teaching. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching,* 23 (4), 293-310.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. *(1990)*. Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher,* 19 (15), 2-24.

Constas, M.A. *(1997)*. Apartheid and the socio-political context of education in South Africa: A narrative account. *Teachers College Record,* 98 (4), 682-720.

Cooper, M. *(1991)*. Stretching the limits of our vision: Staff development and the transformation of schools. In A.Lieberman & L.Miller (Eds.), *Staff development for education in the 90s. New demands, new realities, new perspectives.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Copeland, W.D., & Jamgochian, R. *(1985)*. Colleague training and peer review. *Journal of Teacher Education,* 36 (2), 18-21.

COTEP. *(1997)*. *Norms and standards for teacher education training and development: Discussion Document.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Cross, M. *(1992). Resistance and transformation: Education, culture and reconstruction in South Africa.* Johannesburg: Skotaville.

Davies, B. *(1992).* Women's subjectivity & feminist stories. In C.Ellis & M. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity: Research as lived experience.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Day, C. *(1987).* Professional learning through collaborative in-service activity. In *Educating Teachers. Changing the nature of pedagogical knowledge.* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Descombe, M. *(1982).* The hidden pedagogy and its implications for teacher training. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 3 249-65.

Dreyer, J. *(1998).* The use of mentors as school based experts to assist student and beginner teachers. *South African Journal of Education,* 18 (2), 109-112.

Durrell, G. *(1963). Balthazar.* London: Faber & Faber.

Eisner, E.W. *(1986).* The primacy of experience and the politics of method. *Educational Researcher, 17 (5), 15-20.*

Elbaz, F. *(1991).* Research on teachers' knowledge: The evolution of a discourse. *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 23 (1), 1-19.

Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & McCormack Steinmetz, A. *(1991). Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles.* London: Falmer Press.

Ernest, P. *(1991). The philosophy of mathematics education.* London: Falmer Press.

Ernest, P. *(1993).* Constructivism and the problem of the social. In C. Julie, D. Angelis & Z. Davis (Eds.), *Curriculum reconstruction for societies in transition.* Proceedings of Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education 2. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Floden, R.E. (1986). The cultures of teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research in teaching.* London: Collier-Macmillan.

Feiter, de L, Vonk, M., & Akker, J van der (1995). *Towards a more affective science teacher development in Southern Africa.* Amsterdam: VU University Press.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews & other writings 1972-1977.* Sussex: Harvester Press.

Freeman, D. (1996). "To take them at their word": Language data in the study of teachers' knowledge. *Harvard Educational Review,* 66 (4), 732-761.

Fullan, M. (1983). *The meaning of educational change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (1985). Change processes and strategies at the local level. *The Elementary School Journal,* 85 (5), 391-420.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces. Probing the depth of educational reform.* London: Falmer Press.

Fullan, M., & Connelly, F.M. (1990). *Teacher education in Ontario: Current practice and options for the future.* London: Falmer Press.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1991). *What's worth fighting for in your school?* Buckingham, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *Teacher development and educational change.* London: Falmer Press.

Fullan, M., & Steigelbauer, S. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gitlin, A.D. *(1987)*. Common school structures and teacher behaviour. In J. Smyth (Ed.), *Educating teachers. Changing the nature of pedagogical knowledge.* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Gitlin, A.D. *(1990)*. Educative research, voice and school change. *Harvard Educational Review,* 60 (4), 443-407.

Gitlin, A.D., & Smyth, J. *(1989)*. *Teacher evaluation: Educative alternatives.* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Glasersfeld, E. *(1984)*. An introduction to radical constructivism. In P. Watzlawick (Ed.), *The invented reality.* New York: Norton.

Glazer, M. *(1980)*. The threat of the stranger. In *Hastings Carter Report, 25-331.* New York: Briarcliff.

Goldhammer, R. *(1969)*. *Clinical supervision: Special methods for the supervision of teachers.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Goodlad, J. *(1984)*. *A place called school: Prospects for the future.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Goodman, J. *(1992)*. Theoretical and practical considerations for school-based research in a post-positivist era. *Qualitative Studies in Education,* 5 (2), 112-133.

Goodson, I. *(1980)*. Life histories and the study of schooling. *Interchange,* 11 (4), 62-77.

Gough, N. *(1991)*. Narrative and nature: Unsustainable fictions in environmental education. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education,* 7 , 31-42.

Gray, W., & Gray, M. *(1985)*. Synthesis of research on mentoring beginning teachers. *Educational Leadership,* 43 (3), 37-43.

Gray, B. *(1995). Enhancing teacher involvement in the educational change and development process.* Paper prepared for the Regional Conference on Improving Science and Mathematics Teaching: Effectiveness of innovation in Southern Africa, Windhoek, Namibia December 1995.

Green, M. *(1991).* Teaching: The question of personal reality. In A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds.), *Staff development for education in the 90s. New demands, new realities, new perspectives.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Griffin, G.A. *(1991).* Interactive staff development: Using what we know. In A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds.), *Staff development for education in the 90s. New demands, new realities, new perspectives.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Griffiths, G. *(1984).* School focused INSET in Inner London Education Authority. *British Journal of In-service Education,* 10 (2), 16-22.

Grimmett, P.P., & Crehan, E.P. *(1992).* The nature of collegiality in teacher development: The case of clinical supervision. In M.Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change.* London: Falmer Press.

Grumet, M.R. *(1990).* 'Voice': The search for a feminist rhetoric for educational studies. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 20 (3), 277-282.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, M. *(1989). Fourth generation evaluation.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. *(1983). Ethnography: Principles and practice.* New York: Tavistock.

Hargreaves, A. *(1980).* A sociological critique of individualism. *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 28 (3), 187-98.

Hargreaves, A. (1989). Contrived collegiality and the culture of teaching. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Quebec City.

Hargreaves, A. (1992). Cultures of teaching: A force of change. In A. Hargreaves & M. Fullan (Eds.), *Understanding teacher development.* New York: Teacher College Press.

Hargreaves, A.(1994). Changing teachers, changing times. Teachers work and culture in the post modern age. London: Cassell.

Hargreaves, A., & Dawe, R. (1989). Coaching as unreflective practice: Contrived collegiality or collaborative culture? Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan,M. (Eds.), *(1992). Understanding teacher development.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Hartshorne, K. (1992). Crisis & challenge: Black education 1910-1990. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Hartshorne, K. (1999). The making of educational policy in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Henning, E. (1993). Ethnography as classroom research methodology. *South African Journal of Education,* 13 (3), 112-118.

Hesse, M. (1980). Revolution and reconstruction in the philosophy of science. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Hickcox, E.S., & Musella, D.F. (1992). Teacher performance appraisal and staff development. In M.Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change.* London: Falmer Press.

Jackson, P.W. (1971). Old dogs and new tricks: Observations on the continuing education of teachers. In L.J. Rubin (Ed.), *Improving in-service education. Proposals and procedures for change.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

Jaworski, B. (1994). *Investigating mathematics teaching: A constructivist enquiry.* London: Falmer Press.

Jaworski, B. (1996). *A study of teacher enquiry into the processes of mathematics teaching.* Proceedings of the 20th Conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education, Valencia.

Jaworski, B. (1998). Constructing mathematics, learning and teaching. In O. Bjorkqvist (Ed.), *Mathematics teaching from a constructivist point of view.* Report from the Faculty of Education, Äbo Akedemi University. No 3.

Joyce, B.R., & Showers, B. (1980). Improving in-service training: The messages from research. *Educational Leadership,* 37 (5), 379-85.

Joyce, B.R., Hersh, R.H., & McKibbin, M. (1983). *The structure of school improvement.* New York: Longman.

Kallaway, P., Kruss, G. Fataar, A. & Donn, G. (1998). *Education after apartheid: South African education in transition.* Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health and Illness,* 16 (1), 103-120.

Krall, F.R. (1988). From the inside out: Personal history as educational research. *Educational Theory,* 38, 467-479.

Kruger, D. (1988). *An introduction to phenomenological psychology.* Cape Town: Juta.

Kuiper, J., & Van Harmelen, U. (1996). Knowledge, form and content: South Africa's mismatch in curriculum development. Paper presented at the Kenton Conference, Roodeport.

Lather, P. (1986). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: Between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange,* 17 (4), 63-84.

Lather, P. (1991). Reconfiguring educational research. In *Feminist research in education: Within/against.* Geelong: Deakin University Press.

Lather, P., & Smithies, C. (1997). Troubling the angels. Women living with HIV/Aids. Colorado: Westview Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lemmer, E. (1992). Qualitative research methods in education. *South African Journal of Education,* 12 (3), 292-295.

Levy, S. (1994). Projects speak for themselves. Houghton: Sharon Levy.

Lewis, O. (1959). Five families: Mexican case studies in the culture of poverty. New York: Basic Books.

Lieberman, A. (1986). Collaborative work. *Educational Leadership,* 43 (5), 4-8.

Lieberman, A. (1989). Building a professional culture in schools. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lieberman, A. (Ed.). (1990). Schools as collaborative cultures: Creating the future now. New York: Falmer Press.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1990). The social realities of teaching. In A.Lieberman (Ed.), *Schools as collaborative cultures: Creating the future now.* New York: Falmer Press.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (Eds.).*(1991). Staff development for education in the 90s. New demands, new realities, new perspectives.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Little, J.W. (1986). Seductive images and organisational realities in professional development. *Teachers College Record,* 86 (1), 84-102.

Little, J.W. (1987). Teachers as colleagues. In V.R. Koehler (Ed.), *Educators handbook: A research perspective.* New York: Longman.

Little, J.W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record,* 91 (4), 509-36.

Lortie, D. (1975). Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Loucks-Morsely, S., & Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). Using knowledge of change to guide staff development. In A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds.), *Staff development for education in the 90s. New demands, new realities, new perspectives.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Maher, C., & Alston, A. (1993). Teacher development in mathematics in a constructivist framework. In C. Julie, D. Angelis, & Z. Davis (Eds.), *Curriculum reconstruction for societies in transition.* Proceedings of Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education 2. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman for the NECC.

Maja, B.I. (1997). Access to learning: The enabling conditions for successful learning environments. In N. Bak (Ed.), *Going for the gap: Reconstructing the educational realm* . Cape Town: Juta.

Malone, K. (1994). Celebrating our subjectivity: Research as lived experience. *South African Journal of Education, 14, 22-33.*

Maton, K. (1998). *Recovering pedagogic discourse: Basil Bernstein and the rise of taught academic subjects in higher education.* Paper presented at the Knowledge, Identity and Pedagogy Conference, University of Southampton, March 1998.

McIntyre, D., & Haggar, H. (1996). *Mentors in schools: Developing the profession of teaching.* London: David Fulton Publishers.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis. A sourcebook of new methods.* London: Sage Publications.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M.(1988). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. In D. M. Fetterman (Ed.), *Qualitative approaches to evaluation in education: The silent scientific revolution.* New York: Praeger.

Miller, J.L. (1990). *Creating spaces and finding voices: Teachers collaborating for empowerment.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Miller, D., & Kagwa, P.K. (1997). Partnerships: A buzzing concept in the reconstruction of education. In N. Bak (Ed.), *Going for the gap: Reconstructing the educational realm.* Cape Town: Juta.

Moore, R., & Muller, J. (1999). The discourse of 'voice' and the problem of knowledge and identities in the sociology of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 20 (2), 189-206.*

Nasson, B., & Samuels, J. (Eds.). *(1990). Education from poverty to liberty.* Cape Town: David Phillips.

Nias, J. (1989). Primary teachers talking: A study of teaching as work. London: Routledge.

Nias, J. (1993). Changing times, changing identities: Grieving for a lost self. In R.G. Burgess (Ed.), *Educational research and evaluation for policy and practice.* London: Falmer Press.

O'Dea, J. W. (1994). Pursuing truth in narrative research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 28 (2), 161-171.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Newbury Park: Sage.

Piaget, J. (1971). Structuralism. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Polkinghorne, D. (1983). Methodology for the human sciences: Systems of inquiry. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Pollard, A. (1990). Towards a sociology of learning in the primary school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 11 (3), 241-256.

Popkewitz, T. (1984). Paradigm and ideology in educational research: The social functions of the intellectual. London: Falmer Press.

Prawat, R.S. (1991). Conversations with self and settings: A framework for thinking about teacher empowerment. *American Educational Research Journal, 28, 737-57.*

Rakgokong, L. (1993). A constructivist approach to teacher education: Views and considerations. In C. Julie, D. Angelis, & Z. Davis (Eds.), *Curriculum reconstruction for societies in transition.* Proceedings of Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education 2. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman for the NECC.

Robinson, M. *(1994). Developing teachers as internal change agents. The role of INSET courses.* Paper presented at the Kenton 21 conference, Gordon's Bay.

Rosenholtz, S. *(1989). Teachers' workplace: The social organisation of schools.* New York: Longman.

Schäfer, M. *(1999). Designing and making a difference: An exploration of technology education for rural school teachers.* Unpublished Masters thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Sherman, R., & Webb, R. *(1988). Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods.* London: Falmer Press.

Smyth,J. (Ed.). *(1987). Educating teachers. Changing the nature of pedagogical knowledge.* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Smyth, J. *(1989). Problematising teaching through a 'critical' perspective on clinical supervision.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Sonn, B., & Miller, D. *(1995). Changing schools from within: A case study for whole school organisational development.* Paper presented at Kenton Conference, Grahamstown.

Spradley, J. *(1979). The ethnographic interview.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Stevens, W. *(1982). The collected poems of Wallace Stevens.* New York: Alfred A Knopf.

Stevenson, R. B. *(1997).* Educational practitioners' use of research: Expanding conventional understandings. In S. Jacobson, C. C. Emitovich, J. Helfrich, H. Petie & R. Stevenson (Eds.), *Transforming schools and schools of education.* Newbury Park: Corwin Press.

Stoker, J. (1993). Beyond constructivism: Towards a socio-cultural model of teaching and learning in mathematics. In C. Julie, D. Angelis, & Z. Davis (Eds.), *Curriculum reconstruction for societies in transition.* Proceedings of Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education 2. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Stoll, L. (1992). Teacher growth in the effective school. In M. Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change.* London: Falmer Press.

Stones, C.R. (1988). Research: Toward a phenomenological praxis. In D. Kruger (Ed.), *An introduction to phenomenological psychology.* Cape Town: Juta.

Tandon, R. (1988). Participatory research in the empowerment of people. *Convergence,* 14 (3), 20-27.

Van der Westhuizen, G., Dickinson, J., Davy, L., Raubenheimer, D., Mtshontshi, V., Chabane, C., Hlangu, K., Vilakazi, R., & Mazibuto, S. (1998). The lonely teacher: Reflections on changes in teacher education. Paper presented at Kenton Conference, Kei Mouth.

Volmink, J. (1995). A systemic approach to sustainable innovation in science education in South Africa. In *Improving science and mathematics teaching in Southern Africa. Effectiveness of interventions.* Regional Conference, Windhoek, Namibia December 1995.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1984). Concrete human psychology. *Soviet Psychology,* 27 (2), 53.

Wagner, L. (1985). The mentor teacher program: California's foray into differentiated staffing. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Walker, M. (1991). Facilitating enquiry-based in-service teacher education. In W. Flanagan (Ed.), *Teachers and their work: Case studies of in-service education in African primary schools.* Cape Town: PEP.

Walker, M. *(1993)*, Developing the theory and practice of action research: A South African case. *Educational Action Research*, 1 (1) 95-109.

Wertsch, J.V. *(1991)*. *Voices of the mind.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wheatley, M. *(1992)*. *Leadership and the new science.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Wideen, M.F. *(1992)*. School-based teacher development. In M. Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change.* London: Falmer Press.

Wolcott, H.F. *(1988)*. Ethnographic research in education. In R.M. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education.* Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.

Woods, P. *(1985)*. Conversations with teachers: Some aspects of life-history method. *British Educational Research Journal*, 11 (1), 13-26.

Woods, P. (1987). Life histories and teacher knowledge. In J.Smyth (Ed.), *Educating teachers: Changing the nature of pedagogical knowledge.* Barcombe: Falmer Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH OUTLINE

PHASE 1: Implementation & Evaluation - MSP

PLANNING - SWOT analysis

▼

IMPLEMENTATION - MSP meetings

▼

EVALUATION

▼

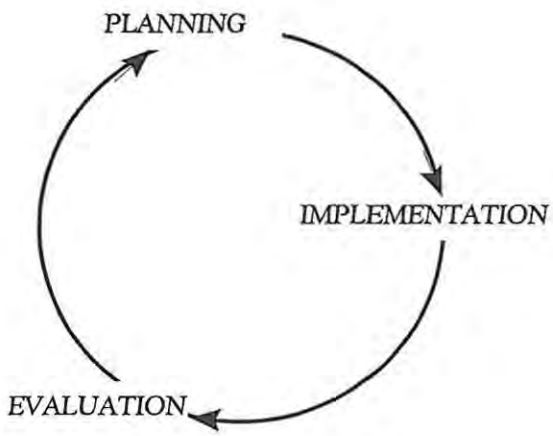
PLANNING

▼

IMPLEMENTATION - MSP meetings

▼

EVALUATION



PHASE 2: Inquiry & Interpretation - Conversations

INQUIRY - Conversation 1

▼

INTERPRETATION - Construction

▼

FEEDBACK

▼

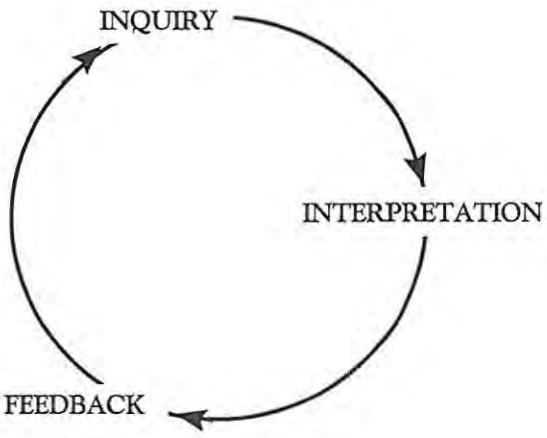
INQUIRY - Conversation 2

▼

INTERPRETATION - Construction

▼

FEEDBACK



APPENDIX 2

MSP Questionnaire 1

March 1997

Name: .....

Grade: ..... *Position:* .....

Subjects: .....

Experience: ..... *[yrs]* *St Ann's* .....

MSP:

Are you happy to be involved with the MSP? YES / NO

If not - what are your concerns? .....

.....

.....

If so - what are you hoping to gain from the project? .....

.....

.....

How would you like to be involved?

Whole school level ☐

Individual class level ☐

Both ☐

MSP Questionnaire 1

Responses

Name	*Grade / Position*	*Experience [St Ann's]*	*Subjects*
Alison	*G1 Class teacher*	*25 yrs [16]*	*All*
Hope	*G1 Class teacher*	*13 yrs [6]*	*All*
Una	*G2 Class teacher*	*2 yrs [2]*	*All*
Olga	*G2 Class teacher*	*7 yrs [7]*	*All*
Olivia	*G3 Class teacher*	*5 yrs [5]*	*All*
Linda	*G3 Class teacher*	*25 yrs [23]*	*All*
Anna	*G4 Class teacher*	*11 yrs [10]*	*All*
Ursula	*G4 Class teacher*	*4 yrs [4]*	*All*
Bruce	*G5 Class teacher*	*2 yrs [2]*	*Maths* *Geography*
Adam	*G6 Class teacher*	*6 yrs [5.5]*	*Science* *Maths*
Barry	*G6 Class teacher* *HoD*	*20 yrs [19]*	*Maths/Writing* *Health*
Edwin	*Principal*	*20 yrs [20]*	*History* *Guidance*

MSP

ALL the teachers were happy to be involved with the MSP.

ALL were happy to be involved at a whole school level.

One teacher was happy to be involved at an individual level.

No concerns were raised.

Expectations:

I hope to gain new ideas for working with such large numbers we now have.

To share ideas, to get more clarity about the new maths and to gain confidence.

To gain more learning material and the ways in which you can use them.

As an inexperienced teacher I still need more to learn.

Working with others and sharing ideas with others in order to make teaching maths and learning maths more pleasurable.

To help with teaching methods in order to solve problems in the classroom.

To gain more confidence in teaching maths. To learn more new methods

Support - new ideas/methods of teaching meths. To be more confident and to later share my experience individually on a class level.

To share and learn various teaching methods and ideas.

To teach with confidence with right stuff to the pupils and to make it more interesting.

Skills - to be equip with necessary armory for new maths teaching.

To be a better maths teacher.

MSP

Mutual Support Project

Questionnaire 2

April 1998

Dear All

I would really appreciate it if you would take the time to answer the following questions, as honestly as you can. If there is anything you don't understand or know the answer to, please say so. The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out more about you and the situation in which you are teaching. This will not only inform the work we are doing, but may raise some interesting issues to think about.

Thank you very much for your time and effort!

NAME: .....

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Initial

Where did you train to be a teacher? .....

What qualifications did you receive? .....

Do you feel your training equipped you fully to be a teacher? .....

If not, why not? .....

Do you feel the need to develop further professionally as a teacher?

Yes ☐ *No* ☐

If so, how ? .....

Induction

Did you receive any support when you first started teaching? *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

If so: *How was it organised?* .....

Who was involved? .....

What did it consist of? .....

How useful did you find it? .....

In-service

What professional development have you experienced at St Ann's?

.....

.....

What other professional development have you experienced?

.....

.....

How useful have you found these experiences ? .....

What have you found particularly helpful?.....

.....

What have you found particularly unhelpful? .....

.....

In what way have these experiences helped you develop as a teacher?

.....

.....

Is there a structured programme of professional development at St Ann's?

Yes ☐ *No* ☐

If so, how is it structured? .....

What does professional development at St Ann's involve ? .....

(eg workshops, discussions, lectures, courses, etc.)

.....

Who is responsible for organising professional development at St Ann's?

.....

Are all the staff involved in the organisation of professional development?

Yes ☐ *No* ☐

If so, how? .....

.....

Have you had any personal involvement in the organisation of professional development?

Yes ☐ *No* ☐

If so, what? .....

.....

Are there opportunities for individual teachers to pursue their own professional development?

Yes ☐ *No* ☐

If so, how? .....

Any other comments:

.....

.....

COLLEGIALITY

In what ways do you interact with your colleagues? [Please tick]

Social interaction:

Greeting colleagues	☐
Staff room chat - not related to work	☐
Visiting colleagues in their classroom for a chat - not related to work	☐
Talking in meetings - not related to work	☐
Meeting colleagues socially after school	☐
Other	☐

Professional interaction:

Staff room chat - related to work	☐
Visiting colleagues in their classroom for a chat - related to work	☐
Discussions in meetings - related to work	☐
Meeting colleagues after school to discuss work eg planning meetings	☐
Other	☐

How would you rate the general interaction levels of the staff of St Ann's? [Please tick]

Social interaction (not work related)

High	☐	*Positive*	☐
	☐		☐
Low	☐	*Negative*	☐

Professional interaction (work related)

High	☐	*Positive*	☐
	☐		☐
Low	☐	*Negative*	☐

How would you describe staff interaction in general at St Ann's? [Please tick]

Whole staff	☐	*Informal (occurring naturally)*	☐
Small groups	☐		
		Formal	☐
One to one	☐	*(organised eg meetings)*	

Thanks again! Your help is much appreciated.

MSP Questionnaire 2

Responses

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Initial

Where did you train to be a teacher?

Dower Training College, PE	[6]
Uitenhage Training College	[2]
Cape College, Fort Beaufort	[1]
Oudshoorn Southern Cape	[1]
Rhodes University	[1]

What qualifications did you receive?

DE	[3]
HDE	[2]
JPTC	[3]
JPTD	[2]
PTD	[1]

Do you feel your training equipped you fully to be a teacher?

Yes [7] *Not really* [1] *No* [2]

If not, why not?

I feel that a teacher should not stop training. By obtaining new methods

Teacher training do not strike a balance between theory and practice - not enough emphasis on the latter

It was far too idealistic

Do you feel the need to develop further professionally as a teacher?

Yes [9] *No* [2]

If so, how ?

Remedially. I've come across pupils every year who need the extra attention and I'm not fully

Part time

Workshops

Workshops; sharing ideas with others; lectures; further studies

Seeking for more information and knowledge

More further studies for more knowledge

By further studies as well as workshops. [2]

Ongoing training

Improve own qualifications and further in-service training

Induction

Did you receive any support when you first started teaching?

Yes [7] *No* [3]

If so - how was it organised?

Teachers approached me
Group discussions, exchange info
Very informally, but extremely useful
Workshops and discussions
Well organised - team work
Classroom oro [?]
Having a mentor
Work with experienced teachers

Who was involved?

Mrs McKenzie
The staff at the school
Grade 2 teachers
1 teacher
All staff members
Kindergarten teachers (G 2)
Senior teacher
Principal & teachers

What did it consist of?

Conversations concerning school work
Group discussions, exchange info
A lot of support; sharing ideas; visiting each other's classrooms
Discussions, sharing ideas
Workshops, group activities & discussions
Classroom organisation
Planning together etc
Help with planning and administration

How useful did you find it?

Very useful [3]
Very helpful, especially as a first-time teacher.
Very supportive and understanding
Very useful and helpful
It was very, very interesting & helpful
It helped a lot to learn from experienced teachers

In-service

What professional development have you experienced at St Ann's?

A lot of workshops
Maths workshops; team building; listening skills; discipline workshops; bible; etc
To cope with the teaching profession. To learn the needs of others
First involvement - Total Quality Management - various workshops organised by NGOs - TAP & RUMEP & Rose while Principal

What other professional development have you experienced?

Communication skills
Attending weekend science workshops in Port Elizabeth by Handspring Trust

How useful have you found these experiences ?

Very useful *Really good* *Very helpful*

What have you found particularly helpful?

Team building; listening skills; religious workshops
New methods presenting the lessons, games
Different approaches to teaching subject(s)

What have you found particularly *un*helpful?

In what way have these experiences helped you develop as a teacher?

I became more confident and received more experience
To listen. To be patient
Gaining confidence - through planning and application

Is there a structured programme of professional development at St Ann's?

Yes [8] *TAP* *No* [1]

If so, how is it structured?

There is a staff development committee, they see that professional development workshops are organised
Not structured as yet, but a Staff Development Committee has been formed with the aim of improving staff relationships and professional development
All the staff members are involved
Vision & Mission statement. Code of conduct & priorities
Having workshops etc
Still in its infancy - Staff Development Committee
Staff development committee

What does professional development at St Ann's involve ?
(eg workshops, discussions, lectures, courses, etc.)

Workshops and discussions [5]
TAP workshops. Other workshops
Workshops, discussions, courses
Workshops, courses
Workshops

Who is responsible for organising professional development at St Ann's?

The staff development committee [5]
TAP
Principal and the staff
A group of five teachers

Are all the staff involved in the organisation of professional development?

Yes [2] *No* [6]

If so, how?

Have a say which areas should be address as part of development
Make suggestions

Have you had any personal involvement in the organisation of professional development?

Yes [3] *No* [5]

If so, what?

Discussions and workshops
By giving workshops
Organising workshops

Are there opportunities for individual teachers to pursue their own professional development?

Yes [6] *No* [3]

If so, how?

Computer courses
Attending courses; further studies
Attending meetings, workshops etc
Attending workshops - entering courses offered by different organisations
By attending workshops etc

COLLEGIALITY

In what ways do you interact with your colleagues?

Social interaction:

Greeting colleagues	[10]
Staff room chat - not related to work	[7]
Visiting colleagues in their classroom for a chat - not related to work	[3]
Talking in meetings - not related to work	[1]
Meeting colleagues socially after school	[4]
Other:	
Staff parties	[1]

Professional interaction:

Staff room chat - related to work	[5]
Visiting colleagues in their classroom for a chat - related to work	[9]
Discussions in meetings - related to work	[8]
Meeting colleagues after school to discuss work eg planning meetings	[6]

How would you rate the general interaction levels of the staff of St Ann's?

Social interaction		*(not work related)*	
High	[2]	*Positive*	[6]
	[3]		[1]
Low	[2]	*Negative*	[1]
Professional interaction		*(work related)*	
High	[2]	*Positive*	[5]
	[4]		[2]
Low	[1]	*Negative*	[1]

How would you describe staff interaction in general at St Ann's?

Whole staff	[2]	*Informal (occurring naturally)*	[3]
Small groups	[6]	*Formal (organised eg meetings)*	[6]
One to one	[1]		

APPENDIX 3

MSP EVALUATION 1

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.
Thank you!

What do you find helpful about the sessions?

What do you find unhelpful about the sessions?

What would improve the sessions?

Do you have any ideas how we can support each other more as teachers both inside and outside the classroom?

MSP EVALUATION 1 - Responses

What do you find helpful about the sessions?

Group discussions. [2]
Sharing feelings.
Sharing ideas. [7]
Sharing problems/difficulties. [5]
Sharing resource ideas. [2]
Helping each other. [3]
No criticism or selfishness.
Practising and enhancing communication skills.
Gaining support from teachers willing to help.
Talking to people and hearing about their situations
- similarities & differences; the methods they use.

"You don't feel so isolated anymore. You definitely can learn from and support one another."

What do you find unhelpful about the sessions?

Sessions immediately after school.
Irrelevant discussions.
Being used to better/further other people's qualifications.
Not enough practical work. [2]
Easy to talk - not to do!

What would improve the sessions?

More group discussions.
All being actively involved - differing experience helpful. [2]
More practical ideas - creative activities. [2]
Demonstrations with learners -*"real-life classroom situation"*. [3]
Sessions showing how it works in practice - practical implementation of ideas! [2]
More maths!
Structured program.

Do you have any ideas how we can support each other more as teachers ?

Regular "get togethers" (eg ½ a month) to share problems and suggest solutions. [4]
"Interact on a closer basis with each other."
Class group teachers working together.
Sharing ideas. (Problem solving?) [6]
Sharing apparatus. [2]
Share and compare worksheets.
Expressing concerns eg management skills.
Practical ideas.
Workshop approach - practical experience.
Showing methods to others.
Teachers going to each other's classrooms - observing each other [3]
"Not to evaluate or criticise but to work together and get creative ideas from one another."
No selfishness or criticism.

MSP EVALUATION 2

In what ways have you found the MSP meetings useful?

How would you have improved the sessions?

Different strategies were used to encourage the sharing of peer expertise.
Please comment on the usefulness of these strategies:

Sharing resources and how they are used
Discussing issues in small groups and feeding back to main group
Individual volunteered contributions
One main volunteer - 'guest speaker'
Teamwork - colleagues presenting together
Classroom visits
Teacher forums - informal discussion groups

What other strategies would you suggest to help encourage peer support?

Please comment on how useful you find contributions from your colleagues.

How do you feel about contributing in professional development sessions?

How would your response have differed if the sessions had not focused on maths?

In what way do you think the sessions may have influenced you as a group of teachers?

How do you think the meetings have influenced you personally?

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for your involvement with the MSP.
Your time and effort is much appreciated. It is great working with you!

MSP EVALUATION 2 - Responses

In what ways have you found the MSP meetings useful?

Sharing of ideas with one another. Learning from each other.
New ideas from colleagues.
Don't feel isolated as before. Sharing ideas and problems.
A 'coming out of the closet' experience.
The workshops help in sharing ideas.
They have given me some very interesting ideas, exercise activities that I would not have thought about.
Sharing ideas and working together as a team and improved working relationships.

How would you have improved the sessions?

We feel the sessions were ok the way they were.
Get learners involved to see that the ideas work with them and for other people to see how it works with learners.
By involving the learners.
It is just fine the way it is.
By giving more input.

Different strategies were used to encourage the sharing of peer expertise.
Please comment on the usefulness of these strategies:

Sharing resources and how they are used

Useful.
Resources are easy to get and not expensive.
Very useful.
We make use of less expensive resources in classroom situations.

Discussing issues in small groups and feeding back to main group

Very useful
Everybody was involved.
All groups must be involved at the same time.
There is no need to feel afraid to ask questions.
Useful built confidence.

Individual volunteered contributions

Very useful.
Preparation was good.
Encourage teamwork.
Give you a view on how the different teachers approach different topics eg division.
Useful.

One main volunteer - 'guest speaker'

Useful
Involve more guest speakers
Very useful
We can involve more than one 'guest speaker', but we learnt new helpful methods.
Very interesting.

Teamwork - colleagues presenting together

Very useful
Good preparation and teamwork.
We are able to share ideas and assist each other.
Very funny.

Classroom visits

One of the best experiences.
They are very helpful.
N/A

Teacher forums - informal discussion groups

Very useful.
We find them very uplifting.
N/A
Useful.

What other strategies would you suggest to help encourage peer support?

Get together MORE often.
Demonstrations from guests.
Demonstration lessons from the 'guest speaker'.
Explaining goes a lot further. Sometimes I feel that however much I try, getting over the lesson seems to be impossible with some learners.
Making themselves available to have regular 'buzz' groups eg How I did this etc.

Please comment on how useful you find contributions from your colleagues.

More than useful. Their ideas may be something you never thought of using.
Less experienced teachers get new and helpful ideas from experienced teachers.
Very useful.
Less experienced teachers get more helpful ideas from more experienced ones.
Very useful because I think I am in a rut, there don't seem to be ideas coming from the 'top of my head'.
One is never too an 'expert' to learn. It makes planning so much easier.

How do you feel about contributing in professional development sessions?

Nervous because all the attention is on you.
Share ideas and enjoy criticism.
You feel confident, because I could share ideas.
It's a good thing - helps with self-confidence.
It is an ongoing process because you develop more professionally as a teacher.
At first I felt very nervous thinking that the other teachers were going to criticise 'my way' of teaching, afterwards I felt rally good, because of their support.
It can only enhance one's knowledge and professionalism.

How would your response have differed if the sessions had not focused on maths?

It wouldn't be different.
Yes.
We won't be eager to attend because Maths develops a child in his/her totality.
Open for new ideas.
I don't really know, but it would've been the same.

In what way do you think the sessions may have influenced you as a group of teachers?

Positively. We find working together easier.
Learn to share ideas. Feel more free to ask other people for ideas.
Positively.
It encourages teamwork and sharing of ideas.
Yes, there is a feeling "comradery", we have one aim and that is to teach the learners how to understand maths not only in the classroom but also in the "real world".

It made the working relationship much easier / brought closer together.

How do you think the meetings have influenced you personally?

Fruitful and a great experience.
Feel more confident and spontaneously.
Very positively; very helpful; very enjoyable (Once I began to relax more).
We learn to understand each other far more better in a classroom situation.
Yes, there is real feeling of knowing your colleague, about the way they teach.
It made me a more confident math teacher / extended my knowledge.

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

We would like to get more resources.
Actually it was very informative.
I think that one should extend one's sincere thanks to you, because much has been done to bring harmony and a good working relationship among maths teachers.

APPENDIX 4

Interview Outlines

CONVERSATION 1

PURPOSE:

To generate biographical information.
To confirm/consolidate questionnaire information.
To reflect on experience.

OUTLINE:

Thanks
Purpose
Biography
Personal
Life
Birth
Growing up
Family
Community
Description
Physical
Historical
Political
Economic
Social
Involvement
Professional
Education
Career
Questionnaire

Thanks

Anything else you think would be useful or would like to add?

CONVERSATION 2

PURPOSE:

To follow up previous conversations.
To feedback on construction.
To confirm/validate interpretation presented.

OUTLINE:

Thanks

Follow up - conversation 1

Comments on construction - feedback on chapter

Anything else you would like to add?

Thanks

Party invite

APPENDIX 5

DATA ANALYSIS

Layer 1:

Ambition

Approach

Community / Culture

Communication

Cooperation

Competition

Consensus

Collegiality

Discipline

Family

Gender

History

Home

Individualism

Interaction

Isolation

Language

Life History

Management

Mathematics

Methodology

Personal

Politics

Professional development

Pedagogy

Religion

Roles

Schooling

Security

Self esteem

Socio-economics

St Ann's

Teacher Culture

Teaching

Training

Layer 2:

METHODOLOGY:

- Approach
- Roles
- Issues: Language

CONTEXT:

Structural:

- Socio - economic
- History
- Management
- Politics
- Religion

Professional:

- Pedagogy
- Mathematics
- Roles
- Professionalism

Personal:

- Ambition
- Self esteem
- Security

Relational:

- Communication
- Competition
- Consensus
- Collegiality
- Cooperation
- Interaction
- Isolation

Cultural:

- Community
- School
- Teacher

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Initial training
- Induction
- In-service
- Personal study

LIFE HISTORY:

- Home
- Family
- Schooling
- Training
- Teaching

Layer 3:	
Authority	Autonomy
Constraint	Choice
Competition	Collaboration
Complacency	Challenge
Detachment	Involvement
Individual	Collective
Isolation	Interaction
Prescription	Innovation
Security	Insecurity

Layer 4:	
Authority	Autonomy
Isolation	Interaction
Division	Cohesion
Conservatism	Progressivism
COOPERATION	COLLABORATION

APPENDIX 6

Mentor Schools Project

INITIAL TEACHER HANDOUT

1996/7

The Mentor Schools Project has been developed to provide an appropriate and sustainable model of support for teachers in mathematics education, based on interactive workshops and in-class support.

With the cooperation of St Ann's school RUMEP will spend an initial period of time working exclusively with the staff and children of St Ann's, developing it as a mentor school: an 'experienced and trusted advisor'.

The next stage of the project will be to involve the staff of St Ann's in supporting the wider teaching community in Grahamstown. Interactive workshops will be opened up to all primary teachers in Grahamstown, St Ann's providing examples in practice!

In order to assess the success of such a project and to monitor its progress, it is necessary to carry out evaluations. These will be carried out throughout the project and will take a variety of forms e.g. questionnaires, interviews, observations, journals, etc.

This project is about professionals supporting and helping to develop each other, sharing expertise and experience, and working together in partnership.

APPENDIX 7

MSP MEETINGS

PLANS

Information from research journal

MSP: Meeting 1 - Planning 04.03.97

Introduction & Inquiry

PLAN

~ Thanks - for inviting me back!

~ Explain RUMEP > Education Department

~ MSP: What's it all about.

~ Focus group discussion:
Comments/Questions/Concerns?
Schedule?

~ Feedback

~ Questionnaire:
Personal info
Level of involvement
Expectations

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 2 - Planning 11.03.97

Analysis & Way Forward

PLAN

~ Thanks - for information

~ Collect in outstanding questionnaires

~ SWOT analysis:

S trengths
W eaknesses
O pportunities
T hreats

Individually - note strengths & weaknesses of school
Small groups - discuss & display on board
Whole group - brainstorm opportunities for and threats to building on strengths & weaknesses.

~ Arrange next meeting

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 3 - Staff Development 15.04.97

Resources

PLAN

Stimulant: Each teacher bringing along a *resource* and sharing how they use it in their classroom.

~ Thanks

~ RUMEP resources

~ Teachers' resources - 'show and tell'

~ My resources - dice

~ Handouts

~ Next meeting - organisation and management

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 4 - Staff Development 13.05.97

Organisation & Management

PLAN

Stimulant: Discussion statements

~ Introduction

~ Focus group discussion

~ Feedback

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 5 - Planning 20.10.97

Reflection & Refocus

PLAN

~ Evaluations
Thanks
Responses - feedback & discuss

~ Mentor Schools Project > Mutual Support Project
Emphasis moved from hierarchical one way mentor approach towards mutual dynamic peer support.

~ Program Structure
Workshop sessions:
WHAT - Areas of maths ?
WHO - Personnel?
WHEN - Dates?

~ Thanks
Donation - Book: *Developing Number Sense*

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 6 - Staff Development

13.11.97

Playing with Numbers

PLAN

Stimulant: Preplanned voluntary contributions.

~ Circle sequences: *[Me]*
- Counting round
- Odds & evens
- Other sequences
- Grid patterns
- Fizz/buzz

~ Individual numbers: *[Linda & Olga]*
- Division
- Name computation
- Dice computation
- 100 grid games

~ Finale:
- Chocolate game *[Me]*

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 7 - Staff Development

05.03.98

Subtraction

PLAN

Stimulant: 'Guest' speaker.

~ Subtraction in context
- Biscuit problem
  - writing mathematical sentences
  - + inverse of -
  - methods
- What if . . . . . ?
  - more difficult eg 64 - 47
- Themes
  - Food: price differences, weight etc
  - Sport: time differences etc

~ Opening up the question
- How many ways can you make x ?

~ Subtraction out of context - maths for maths sake
- Palindromes
- 100 grid - subtraction pairs
- Number line - Race to 0

~ Design and share your own subtraction activity/game:
- Playing cards
- Number cards
- Dominoes
- Dice

Materials: *What's the difference?* Booklet of subtraction activities.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 8 - Staff Development 23.04.98

Division

PLAN

Stimulant: Team work

~ Starter activity:

Body Groups (or Groupies!!)

~ Teacher activities:

~ Other activities:

Fizz Buzz

Sieve of Eratothsenes

~ Final activity:

Sharing chocolate bar

~ *Questionnaire*

~ Next meeting?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

MSP: Meeting 9 - Staff Development

20.04.98

Fraction Finale

PLAN

~ Games:

Fraction Pairs
20 Questions
Team Fractions

~ MSP Reflection

~ MSP Evaluations

~ Conversations

Schedule

~ REFRESHMENTS!

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

APPENDIX 8

MSP: Meeting 2 11.03.97

SWOT Analysis

FEEDBACK

S TRENGTHS:

In-service
Workshops
Resources
*Experience
Worksheets

MSP ?

W EAKNESSES:

Language
Communication
Class Size
Space
Time
Speed - Different working rates
Attitude - Learners
*Sharing - Experience not being shared

O PPORTUNITIES:

*MSP *Sharing others' experiences.

T HREATS:

Time Money Attitude

The following were identified as desired aspects of future staff development meetings:

Workshops	In-service	MSP
Class visits	RUMEP resources	