Co-Engaged Learning: *Xhosa* Women's Narratives on Traditional Foods

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Rachel Jolly

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Co-Supervisors: Professor Rob O'Donoghue

Lausanne Olvitt

ABSTRACT

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This interpretive case study examines Grahamstown East *Xhosa* women's narratives on the nutritional value of traditional foods. It reviews reflexive learning interactions apparent in the co-engaged narratives of food preparation practices.

The research design incorporates methods of reflective co-engagement through which a small team of women were approached as 'co-researchers' in order to work together on shared, local knowledge capital and nutrition concerns. It draws on findings generated using a combination of semi-structured interviews, cooking demonstrations, videography, photographs and field observations as methods of data collection. Data were member-checked and reviewed in a rural context before the emerging evidence was analyzed using Bassey's (1999) analytical statements.

Contextual factors influencing the study are high poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS prevalence where nutrition levels have been found to be low. The women making up the study have spent the majority of their lives in the peri-urban area of Grahamstown and in some cases, are more than one generation removed from rural living and its associated knowledge. The accompanying shift to modernization was found to influence the interplay between their narratives and practice.

Indigenous Knowledge is often characterized by being situated in practice with the knowledge-holders often not 'knowing that they know.' This study concludes that it is not possible to assume that knowledge can always be consciously expressed, especially when that knowledge is embedded in practice. Related to this, co-engagement and diversity among the group gave rise to greater disequilibrium as well as making the knowledge more explicit and hence, available for reflection. The study suggests that through the process of co-engagement and deliberation around indigenous ways of knowing, agency and cultural identity appears to be enabled and strengthened.

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Acknowledgements

If I had known what I was getting into when I had the bright idea of completing a Master's degree in a one-year program, in a country new to me, in a context about which I knew virtually nothing …I still would have done it! I'm simply thankful I had such a supportive network of friends and colleagues to help the process flow at least somewhat smoothly.

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List of Appendices

Chapter One: How it All Began

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the context of the research by first describing how my interest in the topic arose. I briefly outline the areas of Indigenous Knowledge, the interrelation of HIV/AIDS and nutrition and the concept of situated and social learning around which the education focus of the study developed. This leads into a description of the research aim and objectives, as well as a brief overview of the study to orient the reader.

1.2 How my interest in the study arose

This study examines narratives of intergenerational knowledge among *Xhosa* women on the topics of health and nutrition. Through the preparation of, and discussion about, a select number of traditional foods, a small group of *Xhosa* women and I jointly clarified the capital of knowledge that they engaged around nutrition and health. I documented the developing story and have reflected on the significance of their knowledge, practices, and our co-engagement as a learning process.

The participants in the study are more formally introduced in Chapter Four, but to better orient the reader to the way in which the study arose, I offer here a more detailed picture of my background and how my concern for nutrition and women learning together about the health challenges of daily life developed. Coming to South Africa at a time when Indigenous Knowledge is making the news and prevalent in current research, I noted parallels between South Africa and my home country of the United States. Many indigenous peoples of North America have been struggling to revive languages, cultural traditions, religious practices and ways of knowing after decades of repression by a government and a society which have more often than not, ignored or negated their interests. Though the contexts are very different, I could see that similar discourses around Indigenous Knowledge were occurring here. With the reshaping of the educational structures and a transformation of the curriculum in post-apartheid South Africa, attempts are being made to acknowledge and revalue Indigenous Knowledge within formal and informal educational settings. I also saw that sometimes this meant ‘re-remembering’ one’s own Indigenous Knowledge when and if practices have been lost or forgotten.

Living in Grahamstown, I was curious to explore the regional culture of the *amaXhosa* people, and was naturally drawn to their food practices. I was also intrigued by the way people share their stories and how knowledge is continually being reconstructed and adapted to fit current circumstances. I wanted to learn, too, about concepts of health and nutrition as they were reflected in day-to-day narratives, especially as I began to learn of the interrelation of HIV/AIDS and nutrition concerns.

Through volunteer work at a local school for street children, conversations with a PhD student doing her research on the relation of HIV/AIDS and household food insecurity, and my own explorations of nutrition concerns in and around Grahamstown East, I grew increasingly conscious of the enormity of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. Mature adults in general, and women specifically, are populations closely associated with the support of children. Since they are suffering disproportionately higher losses from the disease, this is resulting in a new category of the "AIDS-poor" (De Waal and Whiteside, 2003:1236), those aforementioned populations who become 'dependents' when the HIV expresses itself and they become sick. Seeing the inevitable uncertain future for the children under their care was my first real appreciation of the "long wave crisis" (Barnett and Whiteside, 2002) that AIDS represents.

I did not ask the women with whom I worked in this study about their HIV status, nor if/how they might have been affected by the disease within their personal lives. HIV/AIDS did not end up being directly relevant within this particular study, but because it plays such an influential role in the larger social context, I give it consideration within Chapter Two.

A concern for social and situated learning emerged as a natural outgrowth of working in the areas of indigenous food practices and mobilizing Indigenous Knowledge. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory and Lave and Wenger's (1991) work around social learning and communities of practice speak especially to situating social practices and the histories of participants in particular communities with new learning that occurs. This interest in the educative process directly affected the design of the study (see Chapter Three).

My academic background is in the interdisciplinary field of environmental studies and I have worked in the field of environmental education in informal education settings since obtaining my undergraduate degree. I have noticed that many of the activities I designed for my

students often relate to food, food choices and food production. I am personally also interested in the 'economy of the home,' self-sufficiency and the potential societal and personal changes that can arise through 'environmentally-friendly' lifestyle changes. Having come to South Africa for a one-year course of study on a Rotary scholarship, I looked for topics related to some of my interests. I was also eager to build on existing research within my department at Rhodes, feeling that in this way I might make a more meaningful contribution.

My undergraduate thesis in the United States looked at environmental ethics reflected in various world religions. In the background research for the study, I closely examined several American Indian mythologies and cosmologies. I was keenly aware of the tendency to romanticize these world-views and typify the American Indians as 'living in harmony' with the Earth. In the 1980's and early 1990's, the environmental movement in North America tended to hold up many Native American rituals, legends and images as characteristic of an ideal environmental ethic to which we should all aspire. That romanticizing has since come under sharp criticism for many reasons, not the least of which are related to the unfavorable political and social treatment of these various populations or the ignoring of their demands for various rights. However, today, many American Indian tribal members (as well as academic researchers of all backgrounds) are eager to create a space for their Indigenous Knowledge to be recognized and valued. This can (and should) come with the more accurate and detailed renderings of their past which show natural resource use that, at some points, was less than 'harmonious.' By looking more closely and critically at their diverse practices and specific contexts, we can still find rich lessons to be gained about conservation, ethics and ecological relationships. In this way, we are less likely to solely contrast western science with Indigenous Knowledge and more likely to draw on past knowledge practices and current knowledge capital in reflexive learning interactions when faced with environment, health and sustainability challenges in our community and personal lives. This became my educational knowledge interest and a collaborate research design was developed for the study.

The larger southern African context of my study is one of risk and vulnerability, in which HIV/AIDS, nutrition and poverty are primary concerns. Within this context, I have sought to be part of a process of engaging local indigenous ways of knowing as they relate to practices around food and health, as well as to examine the role of situated, co-engaged learning as an educative process.

1.3 Research Aims and Goals

The aim of this research is to understand how *Xhosa* women's narratives of the nutritional value and preparation of traditional foods interplay with their practices.

The research is guided by the following goals:

- To work with local women to explore traditional ways of making nutritious food.
- To represent (give voice to) stories of people, places and practices around traditional food production in the context of the Eastern Cape.
- To document the extent to which co-engaged processes of reflexive practice serve as learning processes.

My main research concern was not to extract or to appropriate and represent the local knowledge practices that are available and in use, but to work with the women in a co-engaged way to generate and probe knowledge related to the production of nutritious foods. My concern was thus to explore a developing 'dialogue' in and about local nutrition practice as an educational process.

A further interest of mine was using feminist methodology to give a broad focus to women's lives (Wane, 2000). I thus sought to be attuned to and explore any iterative processes between practice and narrative as it related to women's knowledge around the nutritional value of *Xhosa* foods prepared in traditional ways. While keeping these ideas in mind, another concern was to share insights that were given voice around traditional food production within the Eastern Cape context where the study was conducted and among the small group of women with whom I worked. As people contemplated the nutritional challenges they confront in their daily lives while sharing their food practices, I documented the co-engaged, reflexive practice as a learning process for all of those involved, including myself.

1.4 Overview of the Chapters

In Chapter Two, I address the context of the study and present a review of the literature which encompasses the key nutrition and education themes which the study reflected. Here, I set the broader context by examining the relationships between health, poverty and the environment in the Grahamstown area of the Eastern Cape and look at some of the socio-economic factors that underlie those relationships. The health focus on HIV/AIDS within this

study is primarily in relationship to nutrition. I then discuss the overall nutrition status of residents in Grahamstown especially in relation to the role of indigenous foods in the area. Next I consider the theme of Indigenous Knowledge and clarify what I mean by the term. Lastly, I explore the power of narrative and discuss social and situated learning, embedded within Cultural-Historical Activity Theory.

In Chapter Three, I describe and justify the study's research design, methods and methodology. I outline the interpretive, critical orientation which shaped the perspective with which I approached the research. I describe the research techniques which were used to generate the data and the inductive and situated analysis I drew on when analyzing the data. I describe issues of ethics and validity that relate to the study and lastly, I briefly discuss the process of data analysis within this developing process and for reflecting on the learning interactions as a whole.

In Chapter Four, I present the data which emerged in the study. I organize these data chronologically, to reflect the evolution of the narrative and learning from one-on-one interviews, to cooking sessions, to an urban/rural discussion in Hamburg, to final interviews with my co-researchers with whom the local knowledge practices were shared and discussed on our open-ended research journey together.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the key findings of the research process within the group and in relation to the literature review discussed in Chapter Two. I do this through analytical statements after Bassey (1999) as a method of connecting my main research objective to the emerging narrative evidence: to examine *Xhosa* women's narratives of the nutritional value in the preparation of traditional foods. In so doing, I also review the ways narrative developed as learning interactions in a co-engaged educative process.

Chapter Six presents a summary of the findings of the research process and discusses implications of the study for education (and, specifically, environmental education). I conclude with a critical review of the study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two: The Context of Our Learning

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I look into the relationships between poverty and health in the Grahamstown area while also reviewing the broader socio-economic context of South Africa and the Eastern Cape. These are crucial elements in coming to a better understanding of the narratives and practices surrounding the preparation and production of indigenous foods. In addition, in order to frame the context of the design of the study, I explore the power of narrative and social learning theory.

My specific interest is in exploring *Xhosa* women's narratives of their local knowledge around health and nutrition. I am interested in giving voice to the stories of the people, places and practices around traditional food production in Grahamstown. To best understand the context in which the women with whom I am working live, this chapter aims first to clarify and understand the relationships between the socio-cultural history of the town and then to explore those relationships' effects on current social, economic, environmental and health issues.

The chapter begins with a broad picture of Grahamstown, situating it geographically and historically in relation to the nation as a whole. I then offer a 'snapshot' of some of the current socio-economic factors that influence the lives of Grahamstown citizens, which include two of the main foci of the study: health (HIV/AIDS) and nutrition. I delve more deeply into the links between nutrition, food security and HIV/AIDS since these relationships define the need for this study. I then look more specifically at nutrition in the context of the Eastern Cape and Grahamstown. I next give an overview of Indigenous Knowledge and indigenous ways of knowing, with particular focus on the role of indigenous foods in Grahamstown.

Finally I explore the use of narrative in the context of social learning. This study is, in large part, a study of the educative process in the context of social and situated learning. I explore these concepts as well as introduce Activity Theory and its relation to dialogue as a means of better understanding the meaning-making interactions of our group.

2.2 National and Provincial Contexts

In the rapidly changing social, economic, political and natural landscape of South Africa today, large sectors of society are affected by high levels of risk and vulnerability (Lotz-Sisitka, 2004b). Close to 30% of pregnant South African women are living with HIV/AIDS (SADH, 2004), roughly 57% of South Africans are living below the poverty line (Schwabe, 2004) and the country's natural resources are being degraded at unprecedented rates (IFAD, 2002).

In the Eastern Cape, the country's poorest province, the statistics are cause for even more concern. Approximately 75% of households in the province live in poverty (Bot, Dove and Wilson, 2000) with an unemployment rate of 55% (ECDC, 2000). Malnutrition and food insecurity are critical problems associated with poverty, society has responded with an increase in social and educational interventions targeting specific communities.

2.3 Regional Context: Grahamstown

Grahamstown sits within the Eastern Cape Province, about 130km northeast of Port Elizabeth. Its history involves continual struggles for land, cattle and natural resources: between the Khoi-San and the *amaXhosa*, the *amaXhosa* and the Dutch, the Dutch and the British, the British and the *amaXhosa* (Holleman, 1997) and the *amaXhosa* and the Apartheid State. This legacy of struggle and the centuries of colonial and apartheid policies have left a population that is divided along racial, social and economic lines.

Grahamstown was once the center of trade, military activity and law for the Cape Colony (Holleman, 1997) and today is still the seat of the High Court of the Eastern Cape. Though Grahamstown is known as a center for education and hosts dozens of schools and a major South African Univeristy, it has no industry as such and experiences tremendously high rates of unemployment, most significantly within its black population.

Grahamstown Central and Grahamstown East (Rhini)

Less than a kilometer away from the centre of Grahamstown is what is known as Grahamstown East, or Rhini, which is where the majority of the black (and mostly *amaXhosa*) population (approximately 100,000 people) live. A number of 'neighborhoods' make up Grahamstown East; some were established as early as the 1850's out of 'rewards' or agreements with the British (Holleman, 1997). Due to a variety of legal restrictions as well as to voluntary and forced relocations of blacks through the apartheid regime, overcrowding, squatter camps and inadequate 'temporary housing' that eventually became permanent characterize the Grahamstown East landscape.

Rough estimates of the unemployment rate in Grahamstown are between 60-70% (V. Moller, personal communication, February 21, 2006). In Grahamstown East one can see the poverty that is reflected in the Eastern Cape statistics cited above. A study of households within Rhini (van Hees, 2000) found average incomes ranging between R201-R500 a month, putting many people well below the already insufficient 'poverty line' of R350. Additionally, the population of the area continues to rise as residents of rural areas move closer to the city to seek employment (*ibid.*:23-24). In addition, almost 40% of Makana, the district in which Grahamstown lies, residents are 19 years or below (Cacadu District Profile, 2003) and will be soon be regarded as potentially 'economically active' and seeking work.

The housing in the informal settlements and shack areas commonly lacks both electricity and proper hygiene. The Rhini survey found 73% of homes in these areas did not have electricity and almost 15% had no toilets of their own (van Hees, 2000:25). Almost a third of these homes did not have indoor plumbing at all, though most had piped water in their yards (*ibid.*)[1].

The lack of industry and the transformation of commercial agricultural farms into game farms do not provide much hope for residents looking for work. More than half of these unemployed are women and each woman in the community is, on average, responsible for 8-12 dependents (Umthathi, 2003). This combination of circumstances forms the backdrop for some of the Eastern Cape's (and Grahamstown's) most challenging social problems.

2.4 Inextricable Links: Poverty and Socio-Economic Factors

Not surprisingly, social, economic and environmental conditions are closely linked to people's health. This is increasingly acknowledged in international policy statements related to development. As part of the preparations for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, an initiative called WEHAB (defined below) was proposed by UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. It sought to provide a framework and call to action for an organized, international response to sustainable development in five key thematic areas: **W**ater, **E**nergy, **H**ealth, **A**griculture and **B**iodiversity. Explanatory papers for each topic are based within the current UN-declared Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) (WSSD, 2002); they sound a clear call for intergovernmental partnerships and for research and educational institutions to address the complex interwoven nature of the problems facing the world's most vulnerable people.

There is therefore a need to better understand the contextual factors that affect health and nutrition practices at the local level. How does the legacy of apartheid affect the system of education and thereby affect people's access to information and lifestyle choices? How does the prevalence of HIV/AIDS influence decisions and coping strategies around food and food security within households? What systems of knowledge are at play within the kitchens of our impoverished community members? Given this context, how do we come to share each other's knowledge and pass it on to others? The following section describes some of these specific socio-economic factors and how they relate to this study.

[1] I used American spellings (such as "behavior" and "color") as well as colloquialisms (yards rather than gardens) throughout the study.

2.4.1 Education

Though the current democratic government has committed itself constitutionally to 'education for all' since 1994, apartheid has left social and structural inequalities which are not easily resolved. Previously white schools are still significantly better resourced and are recognized to have higher quality teaching than their black counterparts. Geographical proximity, school fees and unstable home lives are all barriers to providing access to an equal standard of education for all of South Africa's children.

In 1996, the Eastern Cape had a 59% literacy rate and in 2001, almost 23% of Eastern Cape residents aged 20 years or older, had had no schooling (Health Systems Trust, 2006). In the previously cited Rhini household survey, 43% of people sixty years and older had not received any education, though that went down to 4% for respondents in the 25-44 age group (van Hees, 2000:24). Over 20% of Makana residents have received education no higher than the Grade Six level (Cacadu District Profile, 2003). Though most school-aged children (aged seven to 18) from Grahamstown East are now attending school, the inequalities cited remain a significant barrier to truly equal education.

In addition, poverty and HIV/AIDS still create an extremely vulnerable child population. For instance, the Amasango Career School in Grahamstown East serves street children, most of whom are black and all of whom are impacted by poverty. Jane Bradshaw, the founder and principal of Amasango, states that there are approximately 400,000 street children in South Africa, but only 5 schools dedicated to educating them (J.Bradshaw, personal communication, March 28, 2006). Many of her students are directly or indirectly impacted by HIV/AIDS and she estimates that up to one third do not get fed at home.

A recent study by UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID estimates that in South Africa in 2004, out of a total of 17 million children between zero and 17 years, the number of orphans due to AIDS is approximately 1.1 million (Adato *et al.*, 2005). Though there has been relatively little research done on these 'orphaned and vulnerable children' (OVC's) in South Africa specifically, studies in neighboring countries show that these children are likely to be less healthy, food secure and well-nourished than non-orphans (*ibid.).* One could also predict that such unstable and often traumatic childhood, combined with the impoverished conditions of the majority of these OVCs, might make them more at risk of becoming withdrawn, prone to depression or suffering from eating or sleeping disorders (Young, 2005).

2.4.2 Crime

Burglary, theft, assault and rape are some of the symptoms seen in a society deeply enmeshed in poverty (Keller, 2005). BBC reports that a crime is committed in South Africa every 17 seconds (Standley, 1999) and in Grahamstown the instances of robbery with aggravating circumstances increased by 69% from 2005 to 2006 (Ndyondya, 2006). South Africa reportedly has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world (Naylor, 2002). High violent crime rates lead to a vicious cycle of fear, insecurity and mistrust. Barbed wire fences, security gates and alarms in and around homes, businesses and farms are commonplace across this country and can be seen throughout Grahamstown.

2.4.3 HIV/AIDS in South Africa

South Africa has the largest number of HIV/AIDS-infected people in the world (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). With almost a quarter of the country's population currently infected, and new infections continually on the rise, South Africa is facing a pandemic (AIDS Foundation SA, 2006). The Eastern Cape reports an HIV/AIDS incidence rate between 7-10%, translating into over 650,000 people, and most researchers admit that actual numbers are likely much higher (Kelly, 2005).

In addition, educated professionals emigrating to other countries (the 'brain drain') has contributed to a severe shortage of health professionals, and those that remain are reluctant to work in rural and impoverished areas such as the Eastern Cape, where the need is greatest (Robertson, 2006). In the province, half the number of medical officials are available per 1000 people (0.3) compared to the national average (Umthathi, 2005:1). This statistic hints at the devastating economic and social repercussions of this disease. The majority of people infected with AIDS are in the 15-49 year age range and therefore would normally be a potentially vital part of the informal and formal economies. The loss of these potential workers (who are also parents) is taking a toll on the economic and social vitality of the country and skewing population demographics nationally (Kelly, 2005).

These features combine to make the context of southern Africa and the Eastern Cape so interesting, complex and challenging. Situating research within socio-historical context is critical as we seek to better understand potential place-based responses to larger issues. In the following sections, I seek to further explore the wider impact of the disease of HIV/AIDS on livelihoods and food security.

The fact that South Africa has yet to deal with the consequences of the HIV infection and resultant illness of its largest and most economically productive population sectors (aged 20-44 years) means that HIV/AIDS will have far-reaching ramifications (many of which are still unknown) that lie well beyond the health sector (Whiteside and Sunter, 2000).

2.4.4 HIV/AIDS: Not just a health issue anymore

The global HIV/AIDS pandemic has generated vast amounts of research and attention over the last two decades. Though early writings focused on the disease's epidemiology, prevention, and treatment, more recent analyses (Hammarskjöld, 2003; Loevinsohn and Gillespie, 2003) have focused on HIV/AIDS as a development issue. AIDS is now no longer seen in isolation, but is mainstreamed through a lens which factors in such issues as poverty and food security. Food and nutrition issues are inextricably intertwined with HIV/AIDS as food insecurity heightens susceptibility to HIV exposure and infection; the disease, in turn, heightens vulnerability to food insecurity (Loevinsohn and Gillespie, 2003). In addition, sexual violence, poverty, migrant labour, illiteracy, cultural stigmas against the disease and poor access to good hygiene and nutrition are all factors which complicate effective responses to fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS (Liebenberg and Pillay, 2000).

Likewise, HIV/AIDS has changed the discussion around nutrition and food security to one that incorporates well-being over time, access to food and a concern with risk and vulnerability (Devereux *et al.*, 2004; S. Kaschula, personal communication, April 29, 2006). Rather than simply looking at individuals, researchers are considering the household or community as the focal point of their studies. In addition, rather than just educating learners about the links between good nutrition and physical health, they point to the need to combine that education with the idea of food security on a household (or community) level, thus taking a "livelihoods approach" to addressing the disease (S. Kaschula, personal communication, April 29, 2006).

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (natural, human, social, physical and financial) and activities which are required for a means of living (Chambers and Conway, 1992; Devereux *et al.*, 2004). Food and livelihood insecurity often lead people into behaviors and strategies which increase their risk of infection, such as migration and prostitution. Improving livelihoods, especially among the most vulnerable groups in society, can provide a concrete

way to tackle one of the most fundamental issues behind the spread of HIV (Carney, 1998) Therefore, current development initiatives recognize that a holistic approach to hunger, poverty, HIV/AIDS, etc. is the most viable and sustainable option.

As HIV/AIDS awareness continues to be mainstreamed and incorporated into a diversity of education programs, an emphasis on food security, good nutrition and sustainable use of natural resources is necessary. Our understanding and our responses must continue to link resilience and resistance (Loevinsohn and Gillespie, 2003:34).

Much attention has been given to comments made by some of South Africa's top officials and leaders about the connection of HIV/AIDS to diet and nutrition. Both President Thabo Mbeki and Minister of Health, Mrs. Tshabalala-Msimang, have made comments to the effect that eating foods like the African potato, beetroot, garlic and lemons can help prevent HIV/AIDS (Wines, 2006; Timberg, 2006). The Minister has continued to emphasize broad public health goals and nutrition. While the foods she touts are recognized immune boosters and various medical treatments have been found to be less effective *without* adequate nutrition, there is broad medical consensus that HIV/AIDS is not effectively treated with a change in diet alone. In her elevated position in the public's eye, her continued emphasis on a handful of immune-boosting foodstuffs as the sole remedy to HIV, serves as a detrimental form of public education and provides a mixed message about the country's ability and willingness to fight the disease.

The national government has been widely criticized for not coming up with an adequate plan for treating the deadly virus with anti-retroviral medicines. The Public Service Accountability Monitor has chastised the Department of Health for underspending its budget in the midst of the AIDS epidemic (Madonko, 2006). Minister Tshabalala-Msimang's policies have been described as "immoral", "disastrous" and "pseudo-scientific" (Peta, 2006). "There is no such thing as an apolitical illness" (Tsampiras, 2006).

2.5 Nutrition in the Eastern Cape and in Grahamstown

As mentioned previously, HIV/AIDS and nutrition are closely related, as patients with the virus have a heightened need for a diet high in protein, nutrients and minerals (Loevinsohn

and Gillespie, 2003). But malnutrition is widespread in the Eastern Cape and vulnerable populations (impoverished children, elderly and the sick) are most at risk for not getting a well-balanced diet. Of the children under five years old who show abnormal growth rates (stunting), the highest rates are found in the Eastern Cape and Northern Provinces (Zere and McIntyre, 2003).

In an informal survey of local Grahamstown clinics conducted by Irene Walker in the early 1990's, 80% of clinic nurses said that the majority of illnesses incurred by community members could have been avoided by proper nutrition (Walker, 2006). One social change which Walker noted as negatively affecting nutrition levels was the introduction of electricity into the townships. With electricity, people who could afford to do so purchased refrigerators. They then had less of an incentive to give away food and share their leftovers with their neighbors or the homeless. Thus the most vulnerable citizens of the community suffered and death rates from starvation began to increase (*ibid.*).

Other indicators of the current status of nutrition and health in Grahamstown come from Ms. Hlombe Mfono, the sole dietician working at Settler's Hospital. Though she notes that severe malnutrition cases (such as kwashiorkor and marasmus) don't seem to be as prevalent here as in KZN, for example, she has noticed a severe lack of skills and knowledge about eating properly balanced diets and the health benefits of breastfeeding (Mfono, 2006). She notes that the high occurrence of 'children having children' results in babies who are left at higher risk in later life because of an inadequate nutritional foundation in their early years.

Most of Ms. Mfono's clients are HIV/AIDS patients whose need for high quality nutrition is paramount. She is aware that the biggest risk to them, aside from the disease itself, is their extreme poverty and inability to afford adequate quality and quantity of foodstuffs. She also noted that the high rate of alcoholism which is often associated with economically depressed areas also leads to neglect of children. Though there are no official statistics to measure the nutritional deficit consequences of childhood neglect because of alcohol use in Grahamstown, Ms. Mfono states, "It does lead to a big question mark about their nutritional health" (*ibid.*).

Sister Ann Genevieve works at the Assumption Nutrition Center in Joza township of Rhini. This independently funded center, associated with the Church of the Assumption, has been in operation since 1992. It serves breakfast and lunches to 96 school children five days a week,

January through December, including school holidays. Sister Ann Genevieve states that though they do not see many cases of severe malnutrition in the students who visit their Center, they are sure that most, if not all, of these students are undernourished (Lee, 2006).

Community Development Practitioner, Vatiswa Joni, does door-to-door visits in Extensions 6 and 7 in Grahamstown East, sometimes based on referrals from the nearby Siyazama Preschool. She notes that many of the resident children are getting diets heavily based on starches such as rice, potatoes, and mealie meal. Siyazama Principal, Lungelwa Mtwalo agrees, noting that she even notices a difference in her learners' stools on Mondays because of the 'junk food' they've been eating all weekend. She is certain that when her school is closed (because of week-ends or holidays), her students' diets suffer (Joni, Mtwalo and Titi, 2006).

Umthathi, a local non-governmental organization (NGO) which trains and educates school children and adults about gardening, nutrition and cooking, and business skills, operates in a 200km radius around Grahamstown. Its Cooking and Nutrition Trainer, Nomvuyisi Stofile, states that one of her biggest challenges is when participants cancel or don't show up for sessions because of illness (Stofile, 2006). She said among the most difficult experiences in her job arise when participants tell her they want to buy healthier food but can't afford to, or even worse, when they have passed away due to HIV/AIDS (*ibid.*). Umthathi's courses on balanced diets and good nutrition are all the more essential in the context of poverty and AIDS.

The shortage of doctors and nurses within the province leaves an urgent need for preventative healthcare programs and basic treatment services for people living with HIV/AIDS. The dietician at Grahamstown's Settlers Hospital, Ms. Hlombe Mfono, also expressed the need for community dieticians who are able to do home visits and consult about nutrition to residents of Rhini (Mfono, 2006).

Umthathi reports that up to 80% of black South Africans rely on traditional healthcare practitioners (THPs) and most of these practitioners have reported an increase in patient numbers in the last five years as a result of HIV/AIDS (Umthathi, 2005:1). THPs make use of wild, medicinal plants. In areas where poverty increases vulnerability of the household and options for responding to illness are severely limited, unsustainable methods of natural

resource extraction and cultivation are being used (Umthathi, 2005). In areas where rural livelihoods are especially dependent on these natural resources, 34 medicinal species in the Eastern Cape are currently under immediate threat (*ibid.*). Similar problems are being observed in the agriculture and forestry sectors (Hammarskjöld, 2003).

As health practitioners, government and social service agencies continue to investigate effective methods of combating HIV/AIDS and poor nutrition, it is becoming evident that understanding the larger cultural context is essential. Surveys continue to show that though the majority of South African citizens, especially teenagers, know how the disease is transmitted, they don't apply this information to themselves. "Without attention to the social, psychological and cultural factors surrounding the disease, we are throwing away money and lives" (Rosenberg, 2006). In the following section, I explore the concept of Indigenous Knowledge and indigenous ways of knowing as a field that has too long been neglected in socio-cultural research. As the link between nutrition and HIV/AIDS becomes clearer, it is critical to understand what systems of knowledge are at play within the kitchens of *Xhosa* households.

2.6 Indigenous Knowledge

Writings in the field of 'Indigenous Knowledge' and 'indigenous knowledge systems' are diverse and multi-faceted. I use the term Indigenous Knowledge as "the commonsense ideas and cultural knowledges of local peoples concerning the everyday realities of living" (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000:i). The term "Indigenous Knowledges" or "Indigenous Knowledge Systems" are preferred by many (Odora Hoppers, 2002; Shiva, 2000; Van Damme and Neluvhalani, 2004) and will be used interchangeably in this paper. These terms connote the dynamism of indigenous ways of knowing, which often originate in personal experience and histories (Van Damme and Neluvhalani, 2004). For some, however, it can do the opposite, calling up an image of some 'storehouse' of facts which are static and accessible at any time. "The idea that knowledge is a commodity people possess and that it is located in an indigenous knowledge system also denies an appreciation that much of our human cultural capital of knowing in, and of, the everyday, is not always expressed as explicit matters of fact" (O'Donoghue and Neluvhalani, 2002:122).

Van Damme and Neluvhalani (2004) look at definitions of Indigenous Knowledge in the 1990s as abstractions which failed to describe the contextual and constantly shifting nature of

meaning-making within the environment of the "knower." O'Donoghue, Moate, Wieme-van Baren and Goduka (2005:200) elaborate on this concept by saying that research related to indigenous ways of knowing will be enhanced if it is not only place-based, but also rooted in a mother tongue, intergenerational in scope, and appreciative of the fact that knowledge is held and verified in community. They go further to note that place and mother tongue language are critical, carrying "a sense of identity in a situated culture where common sense ways of knowing are rooted in previous generations" (*ibid.*).

In the last decade within post-apartheid South Africa, there has been a renewed interest in Indigenous Knowledge. The government is making efforts to recognize and affirm traditional ways of knowing. Examples include the development of a policy on Indigenous Knowledge to stimulate the use of local knowledge within South African enterprises and industries (Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor, 1998) as well as the incorporation of local knowledge within the National Curriculum Statement. Hountondji (2002) and O'Donoghue and Neluvhalani (2002) have written on the importance of re-elevating the status of Indigenous Knowledge and not solely contrasting it with western science. As Hountondgji writes:

> We cannot just say, 'Our traditional techniques are better,' or conversely, 'Our indigenous procedures are mythical and not so efficient.' We have to face reality and look deep into the facts in such a way that we may understand both the traditional and the modern, and make use of both for our survival today (2002:26).

Research is being conducted in the Eastern Cape on the use and cultivation of traditional foods and the integration of these practices into school curricula (Asafo-Adjei, 2003; O'Donoghue, Lotz-Sisitka, Asafo-Adjei, Kota and Hanisi, in press). Kota (2006:92) and Hanisi (2006:84-85) found that combining cultural and conceptual knowledge in schools revitalizes cultural heritage and pride. They emphasize the importance of teaching in a mother tongue and actively engaging parents as "custodians" of local knowledge (*ibid.*). Masuku (1999) has also argued for the need to provide space in schools for adults to interact with learners about Indigenous Knowledge learnt in the home. The importance of these works to this study is not so much their use in a school setting, so much as their emphasis on the interplay between practice and narrative. When researching indigenous ways of knowing, the knowledge lies often in the *practice* and is not necessarily verbalized or consciously known.

When ‘rediscovering’ Indigenous Knowledge, there is the ever-present risk of romanticizing the people who hold the knowledge as well as the knowledge itself. Much has been written about the erroneous ideas that indigenous peoples lived in complete harmony with nature where ecological systems were held in a magical balance. O’Donoghue and Janse van Rensburg (1999) suggest that this romanticizing arises when we encounter uncertainty and risk and long for a time of perceived past harmonies. “Developing narratives are thus entangled within the wishful ideals of struggle in hopeful and often stereotyping imposition” (*ibid.:* 95). Indigenous Knowledge Systems are not sacrosanct or immune to criticism. This is one reason why le Roux (1999:16) proposes the use of the term “indigenous knowledge processes” in which one pays close attention to the processes of meaning-making, which are relevant in certain situations and are ever-changing.

It is important to remember, too, that local knowledge is always situated in time and place so socio-cultural, historical and economic factors have continued to influence the bodies of knowledge (Kendall, 1999). For instance, if a high price is being fetched for certain animal pelts, indigenous taboos which prohibited the killing of certain animals or animals below a certain age, may be disregarded. We are then presented with the problem of what knowledge should be kept alive. Kendall reminds us that some may be tempted to only bring ‘environmentally friendly’ practices or beliefs to the fore, leading to a piecemeal approach, which is dangerous. However, both western scientists and First Nation elders might agree that ethnographic truth is partial and “the idea of common sense as cultural system seems appropriate” (*ibid.*:9). He writes that this allows a more flexible approach where, rather than ‘translating’ Indigenous Knowledge to outsiders, we are building on it and helping to ensure its survival, without glorifying it or advocating a return to an earlier lifestyle. Just as the biodiversity movement encourages us always to strive for maximum diversity, we would be foolish to keep local knowledge out of our environmental education processes if our work is to be relevant to people’s lives and futures (*ibid.*:11).

2.6.1 Role of Indigenous Foods in Grahamstown

There is substantial research on the nutritional quality and importance of many indigenous foods in Africa (Fox and Norwood Young, 1982; Jansen van Rensburg *et al.*, 2004; Shava, 2000). Some examples of local *Xhosa* foods found and eaten in this area are *amasi* (soured milk), *umngqusho* (samp and beans), *imifino* (wild leafy vegetables), *umphokoqo* (mealie

meal with *amasi*) and *amarhewu* (an energy drink made with fermented mealie meal). Though most use processed, shop-bought mealie meal now, rather than raising and grinding maize themselves, many of these recipes have been handed down through the generations when these foods were grown, processed and produced as the daily meals of rural families.

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University has recently published a monograph on wild leafy vegetables, or *imifino*, of the Eastern Cape. In the former Transkei area alone, over 30 different types of *imifino* have been found to be collected and eaten (Husselman and Sizane, 2006:2). The various kinds of *imifino* are rich in vitamins and minerals such as iron, Vitamins A and C and carotenoids (*ibid.*:4-5) and can be an excellent free or low-cost addition to a healthy diet.

Sister Nomsa Titi, a retired nurse who used to work for the Makana Municipality, noted that during her work in antenatal care, she worked with expectant mothers whose health status was low. Some of these women relied on *imifino* from their gardens as an important fortification food. When the weather was poor for crops, however, and the *imifino* didn't grow, these women simply did without leafy greens and their associated vitamins and minerals. Sister Titi concluded that the mothers would then lack adequate breast-milk to feed their babies properly (Joni, Mtwalo and Titi, 2006).

Sister Titi also noted that all of the seven clinics in Grahamstown have gardens and some of them are used for demonstration purposes where healthy foods are harvested and then cooked in the clinic kitchens to teach people how to prepare nutritionally well-balanced meals at home. Sister Titi is convinced that people have the knowledge of how to eat healthily, but they just don't have the money to do so (*ibid.*).

Lungelwa Mtwalo is helping to educate some of Extension 6's youngest learners as well as their parents at the Siyazama Preschool. They are growing *imifino* in their school garden and use it when available in their school menu. They also serve *umngqusho* and *umphokoqo* twice a week to the children. Mtwalo says parents are very aware of what their children are being served at school and the well-balanced diets the children get help educate parents as well (*ibid.*).

There are several barriers to encouraging and/or increasing the use of indigenous foods in the

area. Confronting some of the myths that surround indigenous foods like *imifino* might be first among them. Many think that *imifino* is only for the poor so if they have a bit of money, they will buy cabbage or other vegetables rather than eat the 'weeds' from their gardens. Some even purposefully pull it out of their gardens as part of weeding. Also, there are those that believe that if men eat *imifino* it will make them weak or even impotent. But some are challenging this myth today. As one 64 year old man interviewed about *imifino* said:

> But that (myth) is a silly thing because *imifino* is very healthy, especially the wild *imifino* because there are no chemicals on it. These plants grow naturally and contain many important minerals. *Imifino* is very helpful for people who are suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis and HIV/AIDS (Husselman and Sizane, 2006: 3).

A myth which Ms. Mfono encounters at Settler's Hospital with some of her clients is that if they are diagnosed with a disease with a Western (or English) name, such as diabetes, there needs to be a Western cure and they go out and especially try to buy 'Western foods' such as processed breads or tinned foods. Ms. Mfono actively tries to counteract this belief by strongly encouraging them to stick with African foods, while emphasizing how to keep diets well-balanced (Mfono, 2006).

A constraint to dealing directly with the health and nutrition of Grahamstown residents is intertwined with the legacy of apartheid. The physical, social and economic inequalities which the system left behind relate directly to the struggle Rhini residents have in meeting their overall health and nutritional needs. Many people still do not have access to good housing, water and sanitation nor easy transportation to, or money for, basic medical services.

Organizations such as Umthathi are critical in reaching some of Rhini's poorest residents with little or no formal education. The need for self-sufficiency and household-focused skills continues to grow. Participating in one of Umthathi's courses on cooking and nutrition introduced me to the educational opportunities that exist on the community-level regarding this area of nutrition education and thus furthered my interest in exploring individual women's narratives regarding preparation of traditional foods and their actual practices.

2.7 The Power of Narrative and Social Learning

In its design, this study uses narrative to collect stories around health, food and nutrition. De Young and Monroe (1996:171) have investigated the power of story as a "singularly effective replacement for direct experience." Engaging stories have been used for centuries in every culture on Earth as means of communicating, teaching cultural norms and mores and explaining the world around us (Stein, as cited in De Young and Monroe, 1996:174). Stories allow us to glimpse the world from the perspective of others and see how they make sense of their world (Cohen and Mallon, 2001:49). "The value of stories, then, lies in their potential for elucidating this subjective level and the relationship between individual action and wider social and cultural contexts" (*ibid.*).

Jim Cheney (1999) writes about the importance of narrative in denoting a *conversation*, rather than a monologue, with the world around us. His work with the indigenous peoples of North America highlights the importance of language as a "mode of interaction" with the world. This use of story is *inherently* situated in place and time and our relationships with others are embedded in them. He notes the need for embedding our theories within our stories to give them "residence." As Cheney writes, "…we must give *primacy* to story since stories provide a more nuanced, 'ecological' understanding of our place in the world" (1999:152).

In his book, *The Civilizing Process,* Elias explores language embedded in culture and civilization. Concepts, he says, are differentiated in language and make their way through time, being "tossed back and forth until they became efficient instruments for expressing what people had jointly experienced and wanted to communicate" (2000:8) As certain words and ideas were shaped by everyday speech, they met not just individual, but shared needs for expression. Children grow up being introduced to particular concepts through the use of certain words, not necessarily knowing how particular language came into being.

> One generation hands them on to another without being aware of the process as a whole, and the concepts live as long as this crystallization of past experiences and situations retains an existential value, a function in the actual being of society—that is, as long as succeeding generations can hear their own experiences in the meaning of the words. The terms gradually die when the functions and experiences in the actual life of society cease to be bound up with them. At times, too, they only sleep or sleep in certain respects, and acquire a new existential value from a new social situation. They are recalled then because something in the present state of society finds expression in the crystallization of the past embodied in the words (*ibid.*).

In narrative, knowledge is anything but static. Memory is often only formed into consciousness when put into practice. Huyssen (cited in Popkewitz, 2000:8) writes, "The past is not simply there in memory but it must be articulated to become memory. Memory is *recherché* rather than *recuperation*." This enforces the idea of Indigenous Knowledge as a social process of coming to know, constantly being revised through experience (O'Donoghue, as cited in le Roux, 1999). As O'Donoghue and Janse van Rensburg (1999:100) observe, "…what we take for indigenous knowledge is not necessarily some pre-existing ethnic wisdom re-discovered, but interactive contextual action-knowing that might arise as useful steering knowledge within local processes of engaged meaning-making."

Telling stories to each other has been shown to build community, to challenge dominant social structures and to empower communities at the economic and cultural margins (Williams, Labonte and O'Brien, 2003). The capacity of stories to build trust and connection between people can help strengthen otherwise fragmented communities, and new understandings of themselves, others, or ideas can emerge. Rappaport (1995), writing in a psychological therapy context, says that the new communal narratives that can arise out of group storytelling play an important role for individuals in making and sustaining changes within their lives.

> At a structural level of change, storytelling has the potential to uncover knowledge that has been subjugated to dominant ideas, particularly when groups at the economic or cultural margins engage in a shared process of storytelling (Pitt, as cited in Williams *et al.*, 2003:36).

2.7.1 Activity Theory

To develop further insights into the conversations and experiences our group has had during this study, I drew upon Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987). Activity Theory, also called Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), originated in Russia in the 1920s and '30s and traces its roots to theory and research by Lev S.Vygotsky, Alexei N. Leontiev and Alexander R. Luria. It argues for an alternative to behavioral and psychoanalytical psychology. CHAT focuses on *practice* as the shaper of consciousness and, rather than being something confined to our brains, comes out of activity with other people and things (tools, signs, artifacts, etc.) (Nardi, 2006). As with much of Vygotsky's work, language is a primary focus of CHAT. Our consciousness is located in our daily activities which are located in our social matrix

which is composed of people and artifacts (such as language). "Understanding the interpenetration of the individual, other people and artifacts in everyday activity is the challenge activity theory has set for itself" (*ibid.*).

Yrgö Engeström, a leading thinker in Activity Theory, asks research participants to review, comment on and "make sense of the researcher's initial data and provisional analysis" (Engeström, 1999:18). These comments then add another layer of data to the original, which can be used by the participants (or practitioners) for further learning. Put another way, the hermeneutic cycle, "the process by which we return to a text, or to the world, and derive a new interpretation" (Ross, 1997), played a large role in this study, as the data generated through the project was continually brought back to the participants for reflection and reinterpretation.

In using Activity Theory to better understand the learning process in schools, Gordon Wells comments on the limitations of the more typical classroom style of teaching known as the "recitation script." This entails a succession of verbal exchanges where a teacher asks questions about a text or topic (to which the teacher already knows the answer) and then evaluates the students' responses, occasionally adding comments of his/her own (2002:44). This, he argues, is the "antithesis of the way in which knowledge is co-constructed in settings in which knowing-in-action is consequential for the activity in progress" (*ibid.)*. Wells goes on to argue for an approach to education as an activity of "dialogic inquiry."

> My suggestion is that schooling should be seen as fundamentally a form of 'semiotic apprenticeship,' in which students engage in investigations of issues, problems and questions of personal as well as cultural concern, and, in addition to 'acting into the world' of material objects, represent the processes and results of their knowing-in-action in contributions to a multimodal dialogue that is principally aimed at increasing their individual and collective understanding of the issues and problems addressed (*ibid.*:45).

Not only is collaborative action a requirement to this kind of learning, but the 'object' that is being worked on (such as health or nutrition) has a dual status—it is material and symbolic. For example, material ingredients and cooking tools can be touched, handled, etc. while the abstract notions of nutrition and family care can be explored and engaged in communicative interaction. Though Wells' work is within a school context, his point relates to social learning and can be translated into informal learning contexts as well.

Wells goes on to distinguish dialogue from the tool-mediated action that is traditionally worked with in Activity Theory. Rather than an actual material object being created, dialogue relates more directly to the meaning that is created. Secondly, the issue or problem being discussed is the 'object' of the dialogue, not the co-participants themselves. Lastly, though often no material artifact is produced as an outcome of the dialogue, the participants' aim is to create a better understanding of the 'object' or topic being discussed.

One should not conclude that dialogue, then, has no impact on the material world. The meanings constructed from dialogue "can come to color and change our perception of the 'actual' world, as envisioning possibilities in it not presently recognized" (Wartofsky, as cited in Wells, 2002:50). Wells points out that material and symbolic, or semiotic actions shouldn't be thought of as "mutually exclusive alternative forms of joint activity," but rather as complementary; one could think of their relationship as "intertextual" (Wells, 2002:50*)*.

In the research design, my intent was to work with a group of women for an extended period of time, and narrate food preparation practice in relation to indigenous foods and to reflect on this knowledge around health and nutrition. A CHAT perspective has useful elements for bringing to light the way that culture and history are reflected in activity, as they relate to making meaning in an educative process. Lave and Wenger's work on situated learning, located within activity theory, is especially applicable in this context.

2.7.2 Social and Situated Learning

Lave and Wenger (1991) have written extensively on situated learning that emerges through co-participation, rather than in the minds of autonomous individuals. They focus on social engagements which are conducive to learning, where meaning-making arises through action contexts. William Hanks, in his introduction to their book, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, affirms that learning "is mediated by the differences of perspective among the coparticipants" (Lave and Wenger, 1991:15). Learning takes place when participants "are engaged in the contexts of their learning, and in the broader social world within which these contexts are produced" (*ibid.*:24), for instance, when HIV/AIDS is a shared concern.

Social interaction and locating learning in activity, context and culture are key ideas in Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of situated learning. Though this study was not situated in a "community of practice," as Lave and Wenger define it, the collective of participants (including myself) shared a common interest, engaged in joint activities and discussions, and developed a shared repertoire of resources such as experiences or stories (Wenger, n.d.). Learning through social participation was thus of interest, as was situated learning. In this study, I, an outsider, would be coming into a group of women who were confident in their knowledge practices around cooking, but perhaps somewhat unaware of what they knew if it had not been taken up in conversations which related to the concerns of the day. I was curious to see if there was potential for an emerging community of practice as, through the explanation of the practices to the group, knowledge on nutrition (and timely health issues) might became more explicit. I hoped to learn if, as Elias wrote, culture (or cultural practices) would be recalled "because something in the present state of society finds expression in the crystallization of the past embodied in the words" (Elias, 2000:8).

There is both the need to contextualize and make specific the knowledge around health, nutrition and indigenous knowledge practices that relate to this study as well as to the participants (the community) who are involved. As Lave and Wenger (1991) and others have argued, learning does not just exist within an individual, as it is often traditionally measured, but it is in the relationships among people.

> Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on relevance; without the points of contact, without the systems of relevancies, there is not learning, and there is little memory. *Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part* (McDermott, 1999:16, emphasis mine).

A key focus of this study is linking the person, place and practice to situate it concretely in space and time. The women with whom I worked all have a particular set of experiences which make them who they are and which set up the conditions in which we came together as a group working together on indigenous foods and nutrition (see Section 4.2). Through the co-engaged education process, the emerging narratives will thus be made available for reflection. As Boud, Cohen and Walker have written:

> …it is through entering into a dialogue with our experience that we can turn experiential knowledge, which may not be readily accessible to us, into propositional knowledge which can be shared and interrogated (1993:10).

It was therefore important in the design of the study, not to take the activities or understandings of the participants out of context as they were part of the broader systems of relations which brought about meaning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As members of our broader social constructs, we define and are defined by these relations. To some extent, we are creating our developing identities in our learning around and within these constructs (*ibid.:*53).

Paul Hart (as cited in Lotz-Sisitka, 2004a:23) observed that learning involves three things: social situatedness, meaning-making and the growth of identity, noting that intentionality was also important in the process. This suggests that a more interactive approach to learning, situated in social context and which combines thinking and action, might be an effective approach to participatory education. Participation and intersubjectivity – or the shared meaning which people create based on a joint focus of attention or shared assumptions which shape a common communication ground (*ibid.*:25) – combine to see knowledge as a social process of construction rather than an object to internalize. This is consistent with Lave and Wenger's concept of social learning discussed earlier.

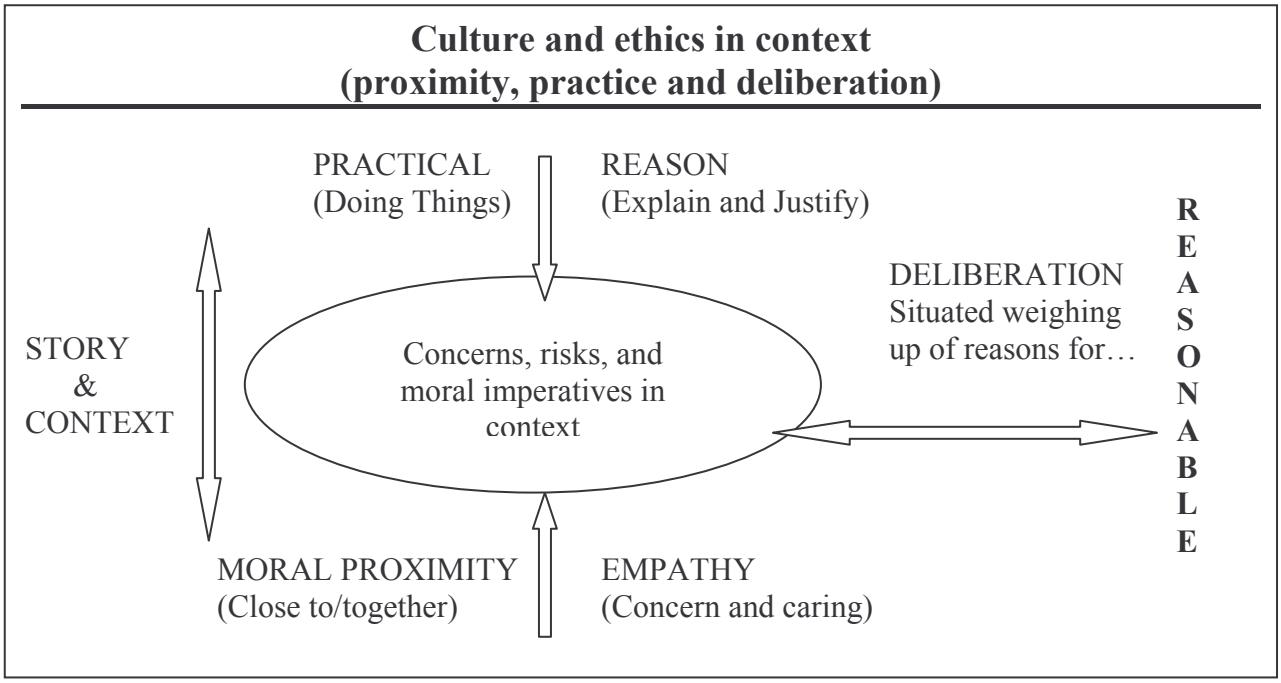

Figure 2.1: "Culture and Ethics in Context": A deliberative interplay of situating story, proximity and practice (O'Donoghue, 2006, MEd Class Notes)

O'Donoghue's model of "culture and ethics in context" (Figure 2.1) is useful in understanding the importance of grounding discussion around concerns and risks within

context, practical reason and empathy. In contrast to the behaviorist model of education where experiential awareness of nature and its associated problems was assumed to lead to changed behavior, more recent thinking around action research and participatory education has brought in more democratic, socially critical and constructivist perspectives such as the Danish action competence theory (Jensen and Schnack, 2002). The focus on awareness and action-taking is now being informed by a cultural context, with real-world issues and within democratic deliberation (O'Donoghue, 2006). Within a context of socio-ecological risk and vulnerability, Wals and Heymann (2004:2) suggest that the accompanying uncertainties, tensions and conflicts which arise around questions of sustainability are "*prerequisites*, rather than barriers," to reaching solutions and learning.

Engeströem, using CHAT, writes that expansive learning can take place in playful conversation, caring revitalization and engrossed appropriation (as cited in O'Donoghue, 2006). If our concerns are situated in a shared history and contexts of everyday practice are engaged in close, generative and reflexive meaning-making, learning is likely to take place. Participation, then, as O'Donoghue asserts, should be a deliberative interplay of situating story, proximity and practical reason where the resulting deliberation results in action which is considered reasonable (*ibid.*).

In my aim to understand how *Xhosa* women's narratives of the nutritional value and preparation of traditional foods interplay with their practices, I wished to explore the 'dialogue' of practice and narrative as an educational process. Hart, Jickling and Kool (1999:105) have written that environmental education has the ability to involve itself with the task of trying to help citizens, young and old, "explore their own questions." In so doing, they ask, can environmental educators also find "ways to integrate cultural and historical contexts with science and its philosophical underpinnings" (*ibid.*:112). In other words, are there ways of learning and knowing in which fact and value can 'co-arise'? They emphasize that environmental education should not ignore the important epistemological issues of what we know and how we come to know it. Examining the cultural contexts and personal experiences in which our knowledge is embedded is necessary if we are to find meaningful and long-term solutions to complex problems. Since, as Vygotsky (1978) found, we are all active participants in the construction of our knowledge and meaning-making it is important to invest in trying to understand that active process.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the context of the study, describing the interwoven relationships of poverty, health/HIV/AIDS and nutrition in the context of risk and vulnerability within Grahamstown. In doing this, I have reviewed a range of relevant literature and have defined the health/nutrition discourse as one of the two main foci of the co-engaged study around indigenous food preparation practices and the accompanying narratives. The study has been informed by Cultural Historical Activity Theory as well as Lave and Wenger's social learning theory (within this tradition) to set the foundation for the second focus of the study: education. This will include a review of the learning emerging through the storied actions and reflections in our work together as a group of women with a common interest in nutrition and health. In the following chapter, I will detail the methods and methodologies used in the design of this study and substantiate their appropriateness in terms of the study's contexts, orientation and theoretical vantage points as described in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Designing the Study: my own co-engagement

Our task is not to 'observe' at all—that again is a legacy of the vision of ethics as belief-centered—but rather to participate…Self-validating invitation is a process: it takes time. It is certainly not the same thing as 'just being nice.' Again, it is actual, practical etiquette.
(Cheney and Weston, 1999:128).

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will attempt to describe the research design decisions I made to achieve the aims and objectives outlined in Chapter One. First I give a summary of my orientation which influenced my perspective on the research, knowledge and learning informing this study. I then describe the specific methods used and the reasons I chose them. Lastly I detail how I analyzed the data and how I dealt with issues of ethics and validity.

3.2. Research Orientation

I am a white, American woman who has been influenced by various experiences living and traveling in parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. I come to the study with the assumption that there are multiple realities that are historically shaped within an interplay of culture, gender and place. Connole (1993), Mertens (2005) and Terre Blanche and Durheim (1999) all emphasize the importance of understanding what is going on in the situation of study from the point of view of the participants. Given this study's focus on the interplay between practice and narrative, I felt this was particularly important. I located the study within an interpretive, critical perspective. The interpretivist paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed and therefore, all attempts should be made to see the world from the point of view of the 'constructors.' The main task of the researcher is to *understand* what is going on in a specific context (Janse van Rensburg, 2001). Further, research cannot be seen independently from the values of the researcher, as the two are inextricably linked (Mertens, 2005:13). A critical perspective allows the researchers to have an explicit, interpretative knowledge interest which can extend to issues related to social emancipation.

Within a critical orientation, science and knowledge can never be value-neutral and a strong emphasis is placed on social action as an outcome of the research process (Connole, 1993). Further, a critical approach inherently questions the social, political and economic interests of those who hold the knowledge under scrutiny and their potential to oppress or emancipate the

owners of that knowledge (*ibid.*). Language is closely examined as it can often express distortions or hidden agendas, but also holds keys to meaning-making and understanding.

In the process of this research, I was influenced by the book *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS*, co-authored by Patti Lather and Chris Smithies (1997). In their book, which follows the lives of several HIV+ women as they come together in a support group, the authors attempt to blur the distinctions between researcher and researched, between 'we' and 'they'. Though neither of the authors were, to their knowledge, HIV+ at the time of writing, and were therefore not 'equal' participants in the support group, they were also not outsiders looking in as they participated quite actively in the sessions and purposefully established relationships with the women. Sandra Harding (1987:9) writes that the best feminist analysis not only chooses subjects that are pertinent to women's lives and experiences, but "it insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of research."

Fatnowa and Pickett (2002) have explored the question of why, though indigenous peoples are some of the most 'researched' in the world, the resulting body of work has done little to improve their lives. They point to a number of factors to explain this. The original aims of the researchers, the methods used to explore knowledge (extractive), and the ways in which the research is presented and co-opted have all contributed to an inherent tension between the researcher and the researched. "As a result, the accuracy of that knowledge and its interpretations are suspect, despite the fact that the researcher is qualified and 'expert,'" (*ibid.*:210).

I have chosen to undertake an interpretive study around the shared concerns (health and nutrition) of the researcher and female participants as co-researchers working with their indigenous knowledge capital related to nutritious foods. As Holmes (2000:37) has written, "Scholars tend to approach data collection with theoretical frameworks that lie outside the lives of people whose voices are being used as data." My intention was to avoid this potential failing by creating the opportunity for a collaborative process of 'meaning-making,' and jointly reflecting on the evidence. This would allow me to shed light on learning through co-engaged interactions about local practices and emerging concerns.

3.3 Research techniques

My work was with a small group of *Xhosa* women living in Rhini. I initially approached Good Shepherd Primary School in Grahamstown, at the suggestion of my supervisor. I explained my research intent to the teachers and they agreed to send out a letter to the parents on my behalf, looking for volunteers. Two women initially volunteered to participate, Linda January and Pamela Joseph. These women were chosen as they expressed familiarity with traditional *Xhosa* foods such as *imifino*, *amarhewu* or *umphokoqo*. Though neither of their given names are *Xhosa*, both of the women identify as *amaXhosa*.

The fact that I'm a foreigner, having only lived in the country for less than a year, was both an asset and a disadvantage as explored further in Section 6.4. One limitation in this study was my inability to speak *isiXhosa*. Compounding this is the fact that the study looks closely at language and its role in meaning making. I've attempted to address this with simultaneous translation by the strongest English speakers within the group as well as by doing my best to do 'background research' (through books and people) on the subject areas we're discussing. Enrolling in a four-day "Cooking and Nutrition" course offered by Umthathi, the local NGO mentioned in Chapter Two, with female participants from Rhini, also helped with my background knowledge of the context and content of the study.

Though it was not part of my original research design, in my initial interviews with Linda and Pamela, I found that the group would benefit from someone with experience in the fields of health and nutrition. I thus later asked a retired nurse, Sister Nomsa Titi, to participate as well. Lastly, a woman I initially asked to help with translation, a member of the Rhodes University Environmental Education Unit staff, Gladys Tyatya, demonstrated enthusiasm and interest for the topics we were discussing and became an integral group member. My intention was to work with these women as co-researchers, exploring their capital of experience and knowledge of indigenous health foods and how these might be used to address the health and nutrition challenges they face.

The term 'co-researchers' can be seen as problematic as it could be interpreted to romanticize their role in the process. My use of the term does not mean to imply that they are necessarily concerned with academic rigor, validity or ethical considerations in the same way in which scholastic work requires. Bourdieu cites a "scholastic fallacy" when interviewees are asked to

be "their own sociologists," interpreting meaning into their own actions and situation (cited in Muller, 2000:155). Rather, my use of the term is meant to connote the co-engaged and reflexive practice of shared learning.[2] It also refers to the 'blurred' lines of distinction between researcher and researched mentioned previously.

Back and Solomos (1993:185) warn against the risk of "insiderism" or becoming an advocate with your participants when these lines become too blurred. Muller (2000:161) states that group membership could entail the researcher coming to share the same habitus as those she is 'studying' and thus taking the same things for granted. Though I have made attempts to understand some of the influences that have shaped the life experiences (ontology) and situated knowledge constructions (epistemology) of the women with whom I worked, our cultural, social and economic backgrounds differ widely and I do not pretend to be 'one of them.' Rather, our working together allowed for a better understanding and knowledge of each other and our mutual concerns. Another risk outlined by Muller – of losing sight of the habitus[3] of the women with whom I worked—was decreased since our social, cultural and economic backgrounds (and thus our habitus) differed so widely. I still found it useful to keep Muller's cautions in mind throughout my study.

In exploring openly ideological research, Patti Lather (1986) explores Frierian "empowering" research, inspired by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1973). One of the concepts which characterize this body of research, she notes, is the effort to deconstruct the "cult of expertise" and democratize knowledge and power through the process of research. "The researcher's role as a privileged possessor of expert knowledge must be reconceptualized as that of a catalyst who works with local participants to understand and solve local problems" (1986:72). Though my study does not claim to fall under this category of research, I did attempt to create a space where participants could explore social problems in a reflexive discourse. O'Donoghue and Lotz-Sisitka (2006:12), reflecting on co-engaging research designs, write:

> Far from this being a break from or an abandonment of conventional research rigor for the prospect of greater educational impact/adoption, these processes appear to

[2] See Section 2.6 with reference to Elias's exploration of language embedded in culture and time.
[3] "Habitus" is used here to mean the individual's often unconscious internalization of the lifestyle, values and dispositions of a particular social group to which the individual belongs (Schudel, 2005).

> reflect an enhanced rigor for engaging the socio-cultural and ecological contingencies of developing context.

In recent cases of southern African environmental education research, traditionally extractive and analytical research designs are beginning to give way to "contextually embedded processes of empirical research-as-pedagogy" (O'Donoghue and Lotz-Sisitka, 2006:1). These authors (*ibid.*) suggest that re-searching in context with others in this way may bring in a new "genre" of educational research, and are needed in times where social transformation is actively being sought in the research process. In southern Africa's context of risk and vulnerability, research which uses the reflexive and generative emergence of human agency and social change holds much promise. Around issues of shared concern, a plurality of cultural and socio-historical world views can enrich the learning, rather than stand in contrast to it. The social process of knowledge construction and meaning-making can be applied to wide and diverse contexts, influencing not only the types of research that are conducted, but the way in which that research is carried out.

As stated in Chapter One, my main research concern was not to appropriate or 'extract' knowledge but to work with the women in a co-engaged way to generate and probe knowledge related to the production and use of nutritious foods. I thereby hoped to explore the developing 'dialogue' in and of local nutrition practices and to narrate the educational process.

My intent when working with the Rhini women was to explore our processes of learning while doing, in this case, while cooking. I purposefully asked several women to come together to cook, knowing that richer insights might emerge in a group. As Boud, Cohen and Walker write, "Reflection is not just an individual activity; engaging in the process with another person or with a group can change the meanings we draw from experience" (1993:10). When a group participates in a shared experience, each participant will have a slightly different interpretation of the event, depending on his/her unique background and history. Sharing each other's reflections on that event, noticing the differences and similarities that emerged, can help highlight how individual experience shapes perception.

I first met with Ms. January and Ms. Joseph individually, for a short semi-structured interview. I asked them about where they learned how to cook, which foods they knew how

to make and their concepts of 'healthy' or nutritious food. These interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed (Appendices 1 & 2). I used these as quasi-pilot interviews as I was later better able to refine and focus my questions during our cooking sessions to probe for themes as they began to emerge.

O'Donoghue *et al.* (2005:200) have found that ways of knowing are often rooted in mother tongue, held and verified in community with others, and often are understood better when shared verbally and in action with others. I therefore chose to make our subsequent meetings group gatherings in which we would cook together. I met with them in one of their home kitchens to prepare three of the Xhosa dishes on two separate occasions. The food preparation was narrated in *isiXhosa* and simultaneously translated in English and 'member-checked' by all present. These sessions were videotaped (Appendix 8) almost in their entirety (I occasionally stopped the tape when we were performing routine tasks such as chopping vegetables or when the talk turned to unrelated matters). I later transcribed these tapes verbatim (Appendix 3 & 4).

In transcribing the tapes, I relied on help from an *Xhosa* colleague to transcribe the *isiXhosa* spoken during our sessions. Due to poor sound quality, she was sometimes only to transcribe the 'gist' of what had been said. I do not believe this impairs the validity of the study, as the research was designed for verification and simultaneous member-checking at the time of the cooking sessions, and the use of *isiXhosa* was mostly intended to be a 'memory prompt' for indigenous practices and ways of knowing.

I also used participant observation and kept a research journal to record my thoughts and ideas regarding our interactions. Participant observation is well-suited to exploring what people do (activities) and what they say (narrative) *in situ* rather than second hand (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:305). I wanted to be able to see not only the context of the lives of the co-researchers, but to move beyond the perception-based data that would come up if I only used interviews. Journaling also allowed me to take notes of comments, behaviors or exchanges which I could later return to and analyze.

During the course of the study, through the work of a colleague in our Department, Sîan Davies, my supervisor and I met a group of artists in the rural village of Hamburg in the former Ciskei. These women work within the Keiskamma Art Project, a community initiative

centered around art and handcraft. We approached them to inquire about the creation of a collection of prints that would 'tell the story' of indigenous foods through pictures, rather than words. Later, seeing the educational potential of these prints, we decided to work with them further.

Linda January, Sister Nomsa Titi and Gladys Tyatya traveled with us from Grahamstown to the Keiskamma Art Studio in Hamburg. Pamela Joseph had an illness in the family and was unable to accompany us. We met with a small group of artists (seven women and one man) to informally discuss nutrition and health around Xhosa foods. We also brought several traditional food 'implements' (a grain mill, a grinding stone, iron pots and a winnowing basket) which we employed during the discussion. As will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five, we thus created a learning space for fruitful discussion and meaning-making. During the session, I documented the learning through photographs and participant observation, recorded in my research journal.

An unexpected opportunity arose to travel down to Knysna for an annual cultural and food festival called Gastronomica. The intention had been to bring some or all of the team of co-researchers as well as one woman, Noseti Makubalo, from Hamburg so that we could present, as a group, on some of our findings. However, due to family commitments and personal conflicts, only Noseti was able to join us for this activity.

The final aspect of my field research involved informal, individual, semi-structured interviews with each of the four women in the 'team.' These conversations were not taped (due to the theft of the Unit tape recorder), but careful notes were taken. Questions revolved around benefits they gained from participation in the study and whether they are doing, or plan to do anything differently with regards to cooking, health or nutrition in their homes and/or with their families.

3.4 Validity

> *The attempt to produce value-neutral social science is increasingly being abandoned as at best unrealizable, and at worst self-deceptive, and is being replaced by social sciences based on explicit ideologies.*
>
> Mary Hesse (as quoted in Lather, 1986:63).

In qualitiative data, measuring validity, or evaluating the trustworthiness of observations, interpretations and generalizations in a given work of research, can be ambiguous and challenging. "Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques … Rather validity is like integrity, character and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances" (Brinberg and McGrath as quoted in Maxwell, 1992:280). Though it is important to acknowledge the impossibility of producing 'value-free' research or attempting to locate one 'true' account of a phenomenon, it is equally important to develop clear criteria on which to evaluate the credibility of one's data, or on the relationship between the account and the reality outside the account (Maxwell, 1992:283). Lather (1986) emphasizes triangulation, face and catalytic validity, especially, when doing research that openly concerns social change.

3.4.1 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the consultation of multiple data sources, methods and theoretical schemes (Lather, 1986:67) to ensure the trustworthiness of data. I used my consultation with the Keiskamma artists as well as the literature to triangulate data I gathered from the women in Grahamstown East. I noticed when similar themes arose in answer to the same question by different people or in different situations (Grahamstown and Hamburg, for example). I wanted to increase my confidence that the data generated were not simply artifacts of one specific method of collection (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). I thus used the combination of photography, video, participant observation and field notes to increase reliability in my documentation.

3.4.2 Face Validity

Though face validity often refers to whether a study's content measures what it is supposed to measure "on its face," Lather (1986:69) advocates, as integral to ensuring data credibility, member-checking, bringing the data back to the participants (or in this case co-researchers) to ensure that it is consistent with *their* understanding of what they said or did. Face validity is not technically measured, but refers to whether a test or study 'looks valid' to the examiner or reader. Does it seem trustworthy? Member checking is one way of increasing face validity.

In the recording and documentation of conversations or interactions, it is highly probable that the recorder's perspective or bias can affect how the data are interpreted. Human error can

also affect data interpretation and validity. Lather stresses the need for a "ceaseless confrontation with the experiences of people in their daily lives" to avoid imposing a theoretical framework onto the participants. She goes on to say that the "'spectre of relativism' may be our inevitable companion" as we move away from positivist scientific research and towards openly value-based research. "Face validity" is a crucial element of ideological research that is rigorous and relevant (Lather, 1986:77-78). Aside from the simultaneous translations as a form of member-checking, the women and I met periodically to reflect upon and discuss the information gained up until that point in the study.

3.4.3 Catalytic validity

Lather also stresses the need for catalytic validity, which is "the degree to which the research process re-orients, focusses, and energizes participants in what Friere terms 'conscientization,' knowing reality in order to better transform it" (*ibid.*,1986:66). Respondents can grow through thoughtful assessment of their experiences. Ideally, respondents not only gain self-understanding through the research process, but self-determination as well. Although I did not set this up as an 'action research' study or with a specific emancipatory objective, I did hope for a process of 'conscientization' whereby the act of purposefully engaging with our shared concerns might give rise to a new awareness and sense of agency.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) remind us that the 'truth' is only temporary and perspectival, so the researcher needs now to be concerned with "performativity." They state: "The purpose behind research is not only, 'how can we be more accurate in our findings?' but also 'how can we produce findings that have an impact on the social ecology of knowledge?'"(1999:13-14).

3.4.4 Maxwell on validity

Maxwell (1992) outlines several different categories of validity that concern qualitiative researchers including: descriptive, interpretive and theoretical validity.

Descriptive validity, according to Maxwell (*ibid.*), relates to the factual accuracy of the researcher's account. This can be seen as one of the most primary aspects of validity because, if a reader suspects the falisification of data at this level, the rest of the findings will not be

taken seriously. In an attempt to ensure descriptive validity, I tape-recorded all interviews, video-taped all cooking sessions and kept a detailed research journal of observations made. The recordings were later transcribed verbatum.

Interpretive validity refers to the category of ascribing meaning to the behavior, statements, events recorded in the 'description' above. Here, the main concern is describing the meaning that *the participants* give to a particular event, situation, phenomena, etc. Interpretive accounts are drawn from the language of the participants and rely, as much as possible, on their own words and concepts (*ibid.*:289). I therefore try to use direct quotations of the participants whenever possible when presenting the data in Chapter Four.

Theoretical understanding of data goes beyond the concrete or 'experience-near' accounts of reality mentioned above to a more abstract and explanatory version. The researcher can bring theoretical constructions not only to describe or interpret the 'phenomena' or experience in question, but can use it to explain that experience. "Theoretical validity thus refers to an account's validity as a *theory* of some pheonomenon" (*ibid.*:291, emphasis in original). If one's theoretical explanation developed from research data fits the study, and is thus credible and defensible, the study can be said to have high theoretical validity.

This type of validity can be promoted by spending extensive time in the field to increase one's chances not only that the patterns one observes are 'stable' or consistent (or perhaps, inconsistent as the case may be) but also that the explanation the researcher is putting forth for a given phenomenon are credible. I endeavored to spend an adeequate amount of time in the field to support the claims made in this half-thesis.

3.4.5 Threats to Validity

Mertens (2005:39) asserts that "researchers should be aware of their basic beliefs, their view of the world (*i.e.* their functional paradigm), and the way these influence their approach to research." Throughout the course of my research, I became increasingly aware of how the questions I chose to ask the women with whom I was working as well as their various perceptions of me, influenced our time together. I have certain beliefs about what constitutes 'healthy' and 'nutritious' food as well as what those words mean. I also come from a background of critically examining the ingredients I use in my cooking according to my

perceptions of what is healthy or envionmentally-friendly. This came out in my questioning and occasionally seemed to strike my co-researchers as odd. If this process of meaning-making either conflicted with or didn't relate to their own, it could have affected the answers they gave.

After we became more comfortable with one another, questions and 'jokes' began to emerge about my finding them jobs both here and in America. I began to detect a perception of a power differential with their perception of one who is associated with a university. In the context of increased risk and vulnerability in which this study was based, where the co-researchers were often living very close to the poverty line, I became sensitized to the evident need for short-term gain as an incentive to participate.

I also began to notice that even our discourse on 'nutrition' was rooted in very different cultural and social backgrounds. As a white, college-educated, Western woman, I felt I was perceived by my fellow cooks as more knowledgeable about nutrition (in its scientific conception) than they. I tried to compensate for this by increasing my knowledge of *isiXhosa* terms relevant to the concept of nutrition and by avoiding academic language and taking up authoritative positions.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

I initially met with Ms. January and Ms. Joseph at Good Shepherd School to describe the project I was undertaking and to invite their participation in the study. I let them know what was involved and assured them they could withdraw at any time. I received their verbal permission to photograph and videotape them and assured them I would not use their photographs (or video tapes) in a highly visible form (such as the internet). I also agreed to compensate them for all resource use (food, electricity, etc.).

Mertens identifies several characteristics of the transformative paradigm and its associated ethical implications for methodological choices. One of those characteristics outlines the need for:

> an analysis of power inequities in terms of the social relationships involved in the planning, implementation, and reporting of the research…to ensure an equitable distribution of resources (conceptual and material) (2005:36).

At one of our cooking sessions, Sister Titi asked if I was compensating Ms. January and Ms. Joseph for their time. Though the situation was initially awkward, it was a good opportunity to clarify our expectations more fully. We did come to an agreement about an amount of money to be paid for their time and resources used and this helped to open a forum for more honest communication in future sessions. In addition, the gift of an iron cooking pot was given to the women at the end of the study.

3.6 Data Analysis

In the synthesizing of my data in Chapter Five, I drew upon Bassey's (1999:70) use of analytical statements. Analytical statements are based concretely in the raw data and speak directly to the research question. They are framed in hypothesis form, and though I did not set out with pre-determined hypotheses at the start of this study, I have used my research aims and objectives, as well as the themes which arose from the data to structure the statements.

I began by coding the data in the interviews, video transcripts and session in Hamburg, using themes I generated in analytical memos. I have used these themes to present the data in Chapter Four. I made an effort to use extensive quotations directly from the participants to allow their voices to remain distinct as well as to help ensure face validity in the development of the analytical statements. In Chapter Five, I present the analytical statements and their subsequent interpretation and discussion.

Chapter 4: Cooking, Conversations and Construction (of Knowledge)

Our people were not professors, but their practical doings were professional. Even if our people had no knowledge theoretically, they never told anyone, they didn't know what they knew, they were brilliant.

--paraphrase of Cebo Mvubu, Hamburg

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the data generated through the research design process I outlined in the previous chapter. As outlined in Chapter One, the primary aim of the study was to understand how *Xhosa* women's narratives of the nutritional value and preparation of traditional foods interplay with their practices and to reflect on our interactions as a learning process. To do this, I sought to work with local women to explore traditional ways of making nutritious food and to give voice to stories of people, places and practices around traditional foods and nutrition in the context of the Eastern Cape.

4.2 The participants

As described in Chapter Three, I worked as a researcher addressing my research interest and questions, in a team with four co-researchers engaging indigenous foods and concerns around nutrition. That team included Linda January, Pamela Joseph, Sister Nomsa Titi and Gladys Tyatya. Consistent with the research design of this study, the situated stories of the five participants influenced the data generated and the reflections that have emerged. To enhance understanding, this section gives a brief introduction to the women participating in the study.

Rachel Jolly: Though I briefly introduced myself in Chapter One, additional comments will help complete the picture relevant to this study. I majored in and received an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies and have worked in the field of environmental education for over twelve years. Though I have always been interested in food and its production and preparation, living in the rural and agricultural state of Vermont, USA has strengthened my interest in continually educating myself about where my food comes from, how it is grown and what path it travels before reaching my plate.

I try to eat locally as much as possible, and for the most part, maintain a vegetarian diet with the occasional exception of locally produced, organic meat. These characteristics situate me within a predominantly white, middle-class group of fellow citizens who either have had

access to the types of markets these food preferences require, the education that led to the preferences, the income that is needed to afford these particular foods, or all of the above. I enjoy cooking and though I do not garden, I am a member of a community-supported-agriculture program in my town and thus receive my produce directly from the farmer who grew it.

Figure 4.1 Rachel Jolly and Linda January

Linda January: Linda is a married mother of three who grew up in Joza location in Grahamstown East and still lives there today. She was one of six children in a single-parent household and recollects that she was the only one of her four sisters interested in cooking. When she was a young teenager, she showed an interest in learning to cook and actively learned from her mother. Coming home from school, she made *amarhewu*, adding yeast and flour to left-over maize porridge and leaving it to ferment for the day. Her mother planted a garden and that provided a big portion of their food. As she states, "Because she wasn't working, we didn't have money and we grew what we ate."

Today Linda still struggles to make ends meet. Though she has skills as a seamstress and is eager to build her own business, she has had trouble finding customers to help meet the initial capital investments which are required. She is solely responsible for providing the meals for her family and enjoys cooking a lot. She no longer has a garden in her modest lot in Extension Eight as she found the neighboring chickens and animals would eat too much of the produce so she purchases her food from local shops.

Pamela Joseph: Pamela is a young woman in her late twenties. She also grew up in Joza and now lives in Extension One. She and her uncle were the two children in her household as she

was growing up. She learned to cook by watching her mother. She started paying attention to cooking because she didn't have a choice as she was given responsibility of cooking for her family when she was about 13 years old.

Pamela now has one seven year old son and is not married. She has completed Matric and a course in Management Assistance but is presently unemployed. She has never had a garden and enjoys cooking very much.

Figure 4.2 Pamela Joseph

Sister Nomsa Titi: Nomsa grew up in Tantyi location and still lives there today with her mother. She is one of six children and has never been married. Though her father worked, her mother was also forced to go out to look for work to provide sufficient income for her family. As the oldest of her siblings, Nomsa was given the responsibility of helping to cook for her family beginning roughly at the age of fourteen. She, too, had to find work to help the family, leaving school early, after completing Standard Nine. She found work as a nurse and then later went back to school, financing her own studies as she finished her Matric. Sister Titi later went on to obtain diplomas in general nursing, midwifery and psychiatry.

Figure 4.3 Sister Nomsa Titi

Sister Titi worked as a nurse for the Municipality from 1986-2004 when she retired. In her profession, she consistently focused on the correlation between diet, physical activity and medical treatment for the various ailments she came across. When she began to do home

visits, she saw the need for assisting people nutritionally and became involved in a Soroptimist-sponsored initiative to motivate people to plant food gardens. She helped them obtain seeds and instituted a neighborhood garden competition, explaining the objectives as three-fold. She wanted to inspire people to clean their premises for "environmental purposes," to empower individuals to grow their own food, and to boost their nutritional status.

Gladys Tyatya: Gladys was born in Riebeck East and went to school there, in Grahamstown, the former Ciskei, and Fort Beaufort. She finished her Matric and has since taken several short courses in business and typing and most recently, in environmental education when she completed the Goldfields Course in 1999. While working as an administrative assistant in the Environmental Education Unit at Rhodes University, she completed a diploma in Early Childhood Development through the Center for Social Development.

Gladys grew up with her parents, learning how to cook by watching her mother and by her mother watching her as she cooked. Her father was strict and expected the children to "cook properly" and not just whip something together. Though her mother had a vegetable garden while Gladys was growing up, Gladys was more fully involved with the garden at Archie Mbolekwa, her school in Joza. Her mother had encouraged the family to eat *imifino* and used *ilaxa* (wild *imifino* and salt) as a remedy for diarrhea and an upset stomach. After moving out of the home, however, she did not prepare much indigenous food anymore. She says that she never took nutrition seriously before working at the EE Unit but has since been motivated to bring indigenous food back into her kitchen.

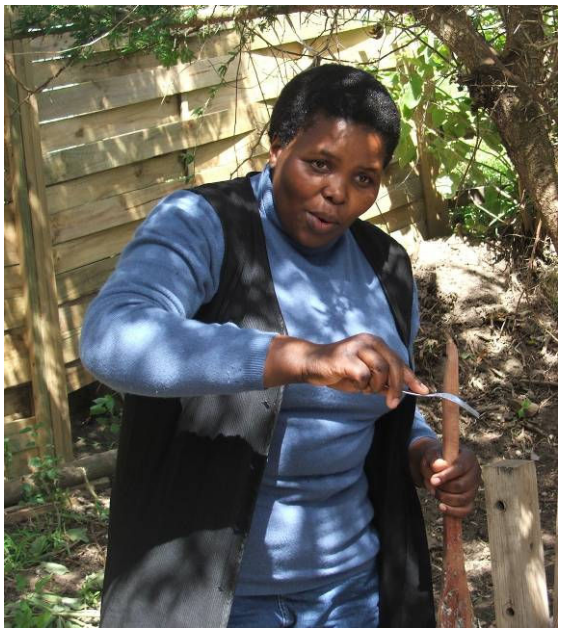

Figure 4.4 Gladys Tyatya

4.3 One on One Interviews

When I first met with Linda January and Pamela Joseph, I asked questions about the ways they had learned to cook the indigenous dishes mentioned previously, the role those dishes played in their diet while growing up versus present times, and what they knew about the

nutritional aspects of these foods. What came to light early on was that the English word 'nutrition' did not appear to resonate with the *isiXhosa* speakers and I became curious as to how Gladys Tyatya, a member of the research team who initially was helping with interpreting, was translating that word.

Weeks later, I initiated an informal discussion at our Environmental Education Unit with native *isiXhosa* speakers and those who had learned it as a second language. We all agreed that 'nutrition' can be understood in a variety of ways, from the quantifiable food science perspective regarding amounts of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, etc. to a holistic and everyday health perspective on what is 'good' for the body and mind, what gives one strength, or makes one feel well.

The *Xhosa* phrase '*Ndiphilile*' describes a way of being and literally means "I am in a state of living/being" but idiomatically means "I am well" (G. Euvrard, personal communication, September 18, 2006). The phrase '*ezempilo*' means health in relation to cleanliness whereas '*impilo*' refers to health and how you're feeling. '*Izakamzimba*' refers to food that builds our bodies and '*ukutya kwempilo*' is healthy food (*ibid.)*. This discussion expanded my sense of the range of ideas that were coming up in my initial interviews to define the scope and focus of the study we were going to undertake together as well as the challenges of grappling with the understanding of nutrition in a second language.

The youngest of the participants in the study, Pamela Joseph, showed an awareness of 'current' dietary concerns when she said:

> By the time (my grandmother) started making (*amarhewu)*, I was very fat conscious (laughs). I think that it's very fattening. But I grew to like it. It's very sour, and sugar on top of the sourey taste is very nice (I.2.9)[4].

She notes the media's effect on bringing these concerns to her attention:

> I'm very sugar and fat conscious. My metabolic system is playing tricks on me! (laughs). So I'm very conscious of those things. The media has influenced me a bit. I try to get the "balanced diet" and all that—milk, poultry, vegetables, fruits, etc. African diet has always been very healthy. We're not 'sugar people.' But what we do have is fat. The fat has always been there (I.2.14).

[4] These codes all refer to passages taken from interview or video transcripts found in the appendices.

The initial interviews also brought up a distinct contrast between the way things were done (with regards to food preparation and cooking) when the women were children (and when their mothers and grandmothers were young) and now.

> Before, we didn't have a fridge. And we have more money now. Before we'd have *pap*, *amasi*, *umngqusho*, *amarhewu* and meat once a month, if we were lucky. Now, we have much more meat (once a day). And we didn't have money then. It was wake up, and go to the garden! But now (acting out motions a bit), it's you must wake up and here's some money, go to the shop and go and buy some chicken, some bread. We never bought bread! And before we had to grind the maize by hand and use a stamp (a pounder). We ground maize by hand until the early 1980's. Now we buy ACE mealie meal. We made *amasi* from fresh milk given to us by a family's cow in Peddie (I.1.9).

While we were discussing *amarhewu*, Pamela's grandmother, who was sitting nearby, entered our conversation. She said, "I grew up having (*amarhewu*) regularly, since I was a baby. All the time" (I.2.11). When she was asked why she didn't prepare *amarhewu* when Pamela was growing up, she said, "It's a waste of sugar!" (referring to Pamela's comment above that she only likes it with sugar), and added that Pamela was lazy (*ibid.)*. To this, Pamela laughs and states, "Because it takes time. You have to wait for the yeast to rise and all that" (*ibid.*).

Time and convenience were recurring themes as we cooked together and deepened our conversations on traditional food and nutrition; they were mentioned several times as reasons for changes in practices from traditional childhood methods of food preparation to current ones as well as for different food choices altogether. Exposure to the dietary practices of other cultures was also commented on:

> … because you go out and you see all these different kinds of food. In our house, we have traditional English dinners on Sunday, Monday it's *umngqusho*, Tuesday it's chicken and rice…and all this other stuff (I.2.13).

A third point of interest which came out in the interviews was that the very act of inquiring into the practices around food preparation and food choice was not familiar to either of the women. "Growing up, there was no explanations, no menus, that today we're eating this and tomorrow that. It's just we ate *umngqusho* today, and tomorrow *umpoko*" (I.1.7). "(My grandmother) didn't specifically tell you that this was good for you, it was just this is what

we were eating" (I. 2.6). Pamela said that when she was growing up, they didn't use the words 'balanced diet,' but that is what they ate (1.2.18).

When I asked Pamela if her son will learn how to make the foods we had been discussing, she said emphatically, "Yes, my son will learn. He won't be conscious that he's learning, but he'll learn. He definitely is going to" (I.2.17).

4.4 Cooking Sessions

On the two occasions we cooked together, we made three different dishes: *amarhewu, isigwamba*, and *umphokoqo*. Linda mainly took charge of cooking and narrated her actions entirely in mother tongue. Pamela volunteered to serve as a translator from *isiXhosa* to English. The other *Xhosa* women, also familiar with the dish we were cooking, chimed in when they had a question, a different opinion of how to do something or to clarify a point they thought was unclear. I also participated in the cooking process and asked questions throughout, receiving answers from any of the women who felt they had an answer. Linda's English was strong enough that she could simultaneously 'member-check' how her story was translated and there was often much laughter when one woman's certainty about a step was questioned by another of the women as we probed and explored a variety of practices and their significance.

Throughout our cooking sessions, I became aware that three interrelated themes continued to emerge in the narratives: the specific how-to steps of preparing the food, the explicit nutrition narratives of the individual foods and the changes to the food preparation or recipes that have occurred over time. In the following section, I will outline the details of those three emergent themes for each of the three foods we prepared.

4.4.1 *Amarhewu*

The group described *amarhewu* (also known as *mahewu*) as a fermented energy drink composed of mealie meal, yeast and flour. It is a popular food among the *amaXhosa*, commonly used for celebrations, rituals and social gatherings; similar mixtures are found in other parts of southern Africa.[5]

[5] An interesting cultural belief regarding *umqombothi*, a similar drink to *amarhewu*, is that if during a cultural gathering any of the drink is spilled, one should not thoroughly clean it up so that the ancestors may come and drink it (N. Titi, personal communication, October 6, 2006).

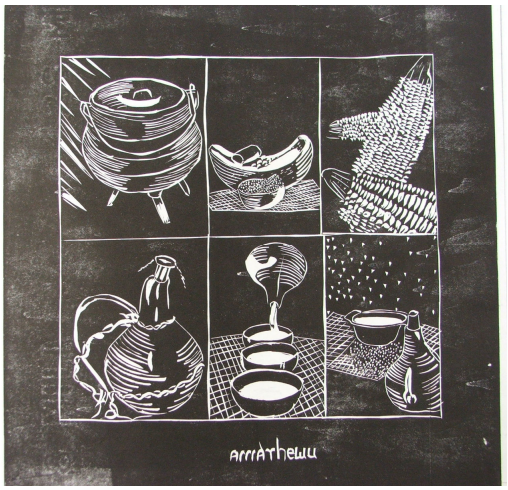

Figure 4.5 Keiskamma Art Project amarhewu *print*

4.4.1.1 How-To Steps for Preparation

The knowledge practices that were displayed and simultaneously explained in the production of *amarhewu* are as follows:

- Combine about 4 spoons of flour and 1/2 teaspoon of yeast together and stir.
- Add about 1/2 cup of lukewarm water and stir until all the dry ingredients are dissolved. Let it stand, preferably covered with cling wrap. (Sister Titi would also add a bit of sugar).
- Leave for 24 hours.
- In the meantime, bring about a litre of water to a boil. Never add salt.
- Dissolve about 2 cups of mealie meal in cold water (to avoid lumps) and then slowly add to boiling water, using wooden spoon to stir (use wooden so it doesn't get too hot). Add and stir, add and stir.
- Stir until it thickens and then cover.
- Periodically stir for about 30 minutes and remove from heat
- Wait until it cools and stir in yeast mixture.

I have summarized this in a conventional recipe format, but it is important to note that the group members consistently pointed out that they do not use specific measurements, rather they estimate from experience what looks right.

Figure 4.6 Pamela adds water to the dry yeast as Linda looks on

These steps were performed by Pamela, the youngest member

of the team, who, in the initial interview, had said she never drank *amarhewu* and that her grandmother only started making it when she was 21 or so. She was very familiar with the way to make it, though, and indicated that she likes it when sugar is added (I.2.9).

4.4.1.2 Explicit Nutrition Narratives

I had read and heard about *amarhewu*'s health benefits from a variety of sources. This information, however, was not made explicit in my initial interviews with the team members as described in Chapter Three. Those interviews showed a need for a more experienced voice in the areas of health and nutrition. I consulted authors like Kota (2006) to better focus and refine my questions. When Sister Titi joined the group, we all were exposed to a more overt narrative around these issues.

When asked about the nutrition qualities of *amarhewu,* Sister Titi had this to say:

> *Mahewu* can be used as a full meal or as a dessert; you become so full. You'll never go hungry. You can take a pint as breakfast, lunch or dinner. Some take it with a spoon of sugar, but I don't like it with sugar. (H1)

She later said that the only things missing from *amarhewu* were the fat and roughage; other than this, it "has everything the body needs" (N. Titi, personal communication, October 6, 2006). She also stated that she and others experience heartburn occasionally after eating *amarhewu*, though they never used to when they were younger. She theorized that perhaps this is because "the body is complaining that there's no fat" in the drink (*ibid.*).

4.4.1.3 Changes over Time

When making this dish with Pamela, I was told the fermentation starter was made with half a teaspoon of yeast and four spoons of flour. When I asked what they used before the days of yeast packets, one of the women answered, "yeast cubes," as this was an earlier form of store-bought yeast. Sister Titi also noted that when the weather is warm, yeast is not even needed, and one can just mix flour, sugar and lukewarm water. Though she said this "isn't as nice (to begin with)," by the second or third time it is used, it will be.

A practice still occurring in rural areas across the region is to use a starter composed of germinated sorghum, ground into a powder, and combined with water (and perhaps sugar, to

hasten the fermentation process) (R. O'Donoghue, personal communication, September 19, 2006). The group of Grahamstown (peri-urban) women did not initially know of this, however it came up in later discussions in the rural village of Hamburg (to be discussed below). Sister Titi also noted that before the days of yeast, they used one cup of *umqombothi* (another fermented sorghum drink, similar to *amarhewu* but fermented for a longer period) and added one spoon of flour to create the starter.

When reflecting on the changes that the 'recipe' of *amarhewu* has undergone over time, Sister Titi commented that she thinks today's users are missing a lot that their parents' generation were getting. She adds:

> We tend to think we're clever now and ignore their kind of diet. It's still very good, with this ready-made food, and of course, the products have lots of nutrition. So we think we're clever. I don't know. But if we were using that old kind of grinding, we'd get more than this. Because these types of food (referring to mealie meal) are fortified. And our old people were much stronger than we are. They were not disposable like we are (T.2.204).

4.4.2 Isigwamba

Figure 4.7 Keiskamma Art Project isigwamba *print*

As with *amarhewu,* in order to focus my questions and open up specific nutrition discourses, I needed to orientate my knowledge by consulting other authors and researchers regarding this particular food. *Isigwamba* is a mixture of greens (either wild or cultivated) and mealie rice (a coarse form of mealie meal). It is traditionally made with *imifino*, wild, leafy greens, of which there are over 30 species in the Transkei area alone (Husselman and Sizane, 2006:2). For a variety of reasons (as discussed below), many people today are using cultivated greens, such as potato, pumpkin, beetroot and turnip leaves as well as spinach and cabbage.

4.4.2.1 How-To Steps for Preparation

The following recipe format brings together the knowledge practices described and demonstrated in the preparation of *isigwamba*:

- Wash all of the cabbage and spinach, and discard only very dirty bottom of stems (of spinach). Some suggest to peel off outer skin (so it doesn't get stuck in your teeth).
- Cut *imifino* (spinach and cabbage) very finely.
- Finely chop an onion and 2-3 spring onions.
- First put the cabbage into the pot and cover with water, then put chopped onion on top (though Gladys would first cook cabbage with mealie rice, then add onion later to "contain the taste.").
- Let onion and cabbage cook.
- When onion and cabbage are partially cooked, add the spinach.
- Set heat very low.
- Thoroughly rinse mealie rice in cold water to take out the starch (3 times).
- Add spring onion to pot and raise heat.
- When water comes to a boil, distribute about 2 cups – it depends on the amount of greens – of mealie rice evenly over greens. Do not stir.
- Cover pot and let cook for about 20 minutes.
- Add about 3/4 mug of mealie meal and add salt to taste (place in hand first to measure).
- Add about 1/4-1/2 cup of animal fat (drippings or Holsum, a processed vegetable fat) and stir into greens.
- After you add the fat and a little bit of salt, cook for about 10-15 minutes more, check smell to make sure it's done.

Figure 4.8 Linda chops cabbage as Pamela and Gladys prepare the spinach

Though we tried to obtain wild *imifino* for our cooking session, we were unable to find any. This is an indication how urban or peri-urban women who are either unable or do not want to grow the 'weeds' on their own property (if they have it) may be restricted to using the cultivated forms of greens.

4.4.2.2 Explicit Nutrition Narratives

While preparing *imifino* in Linda's kitchen, I was told more than once that the stems of the spinach were the healthiest part and shouldn't be discarded. Linda had said, *"Le ndawo yespinach ibaluleke kakhulu kuba kulapho sifumana khona* ***izakha mzimba****..."* using the term

"izakha mzimba" which means food that "builds our bodies." When I asked why the stem was the healthiest part, they consulted with one another and said*:*

> I don't know. I think she (Linda) says that because this part (the stem), because it stays in the ground, and the ground gives the nutrition to the actual food, I think this bears most of the nutrition, more than the leaves. We think so; we were never actually told (T.2.10).

The spinach stems came up again when Sister Titi said:

> These spinach ends have lots of nutrition, and you can make soup out of it. You can make vegetable soup out of it. You find that the juice that comes out of there has all the stuff that you need, nutritions (*sic)*, vitamins, and so on. This part is very good (holding up the end of the spinach stalk). You musn't throw it away. Or you can reserve it, if you find the spinach is too white, you can reserve it and make soup out of it another time (T.2.65).

The importance of washing the spinach well, so that all subsequent water (or juice) from the greens could be used, was also stressed.

I asked the group members if *imifino* was eaten by people of all ages and of both genders, but then remembered, mid-question, that men traditionally did not eat the greens. I asked the women if this was true and Sister Titi said:

> But lately, the men are getting it. They feel that they are getting a lot of vitamins. They've discovered that. Especially that this one is only cabbage and spinach. The *imifino*, the wild *imifino*, men used not to eat it. They say it's eaten by women (T.2.69).

When I asked why this was, I initially misspoke, asking, "Why did the men eat it?" Sister Titi responded, "Because they wanted to taste what we are eating, and they feel it's good, it's healthy." Once I clarified, and asked why men did not eat it previously, she answered, "They said it makes them shy, not to behave like a man. Like they would behave like a woman."

Sister Titi also said that *isigwamba* (and *imifino*) were good for children and could be used as a weaning food, because it's "nice and soft." She added:

> What I like most about it (*imifino*), besides its nutritious value, is it is good for the tummy. It keeps the tummy working. If you have a block, if you have a problem of constipation, it gives you a 'good time' to go (T.2.110)!

4.4.2.3 Changes Over Time

I was told in both the interviews and our cooking sessions that wild *imifino* is rarely eaten in Grahamstown and the suggestion was made that this is a recurring trend for most urban areas. Pamela Joseph's grandmother commented on why she doesn't eat the wild greens. "We don't cook the wild kinds because it's dirty. It grows by the road and gets all the street dirt. It's not nice. We would have spinach and cabbage and foods that you grow" (I.2.12).

Though Linda January's mother cooked the wild *imifino*, when we went out to Linda's garden, she knew there were some types of *imifino* there but wasn't able to identify them. When asked about her thoughts on the decrease of the use of wild *imifino*, Pamela commented:

> I think it's changed because others don't show us anymore, because for instance, I don't even know how *umfuno* (same as *imifino)* actually looks, the leaves. The leaves look like, one next to another, they all look the same to me, at least. … Whereas with spinach, I know how it looks. When I go to Fruit and Veg, I know this is spinach. … One thing I do know about (*imifino*), though, is that smell it has. Yeah, it has this smell about it. To me (T.2.36 and T.2.42).

A second way in which *isigwamba* has changed over time is in the maize meal being used. Both the mealie rice and the mealie meal used to be ground by hand using a grinding stone. Today, most *Xhosa* women (both in urban and rural areas) buy manufactured, processed maize meals.

4.4.3 *Umphokoqo*

Figure 4.9 Keiskamma Art Project
amasi *print*

The team introduced me to the dish of *umphokoqo,* a dish of steamed and fluffed mealie meal served with *amasi*, or soured milk. I was told it's a common dish, eaten by *amaXhosa* of all ages, mostly in the summer time, as the *amasi* is a good cooling food.

4.4.3.1 How-To Steps for Preparation

Below are the knowledge practices outlined verbally and in action as we prepared *umphokoqo* together:

- To make *umphoqoko*, you boil some water in a kettle (since it's quicker and saves energy), put the water into a pot and add a bit of salt.
- You then add mealie meal to the boiling water (approximately 3 parts water to 1 part meal), making sure to distribute it evenly in the pot and simmer on low heat. Don't stir it.
- You wait five minutes at the most and then use a *fork* (not a spoon) to stir it; don't use big circles (or you will get lumps). If you use a spoon to stir, it would be stiff pap.

Figure 4.10 Adding amasi *to the steamed mealie meal*

- When the water is absorbed, you put the stove on very low heat and allow it to cook for about 30 minutes.
- You can notice the change in smell when it's done.
- When it's done, put it outside to cool.
- When it's cool, you serve it up into bowls and pour *amasi* on top.

The remaining slightly-burnt bits at the bottom of the pot are called *intshela* and are well-liked by some.

When I was presenting my research to my fellow MEd students, a dynamic discussion opened up around *umphokoqo*. Many students from the Transkei insisted that the steamed mealie meal alone is called *umphokoqo* whereas once *amasi* is added, it is given a different name—*umvubo*. Gladys Tyatya disagreed and remarked that the *isiXhosa* used in the Transkei is different than that used in this part of the Eastern Cape. She said *umvubo* could be used to describe *amasi* served with steamed mealie meal, samp or rice, but then that would be specified by the speaker—that they were eating *umvubo umphokoqo* (G. Tyatya, personal communication, November 20, 2006).

4.4.3.2 Explicit Nutrition Narratives

I was told by Sister Titi that *umphokoqo* is a healthy dish that is good for someone who is sick because it's a soft food which has all the nutrients needed for the body.

> It's just soft food that does not need to be chewed for a long time, if you can get what I mean. And, with this ACE (mealie meal), it has got lots of nutrition, and of course, with *amasi*, there is a lot of nutrition in that food there (T.3.101).

Our conversations around *amasi* opened up a larger discussion about processed food versus home-made. Sister Titi said that home-made *amasi* is more nutritious than store-bought, adding, "Cream is there. Fats are there. It is much healthier than this one (shop-bought)" (T.3.111). When I asked why that was, she referred to the inconsistencies of shop-bought varieties:

> You don't know. This sour milk doesn't taste the same. You will never know which one is better than the other. And it can change your stomach. … Others would have diarrhea… Meaning something that has been put doesn't … suit someone (T.3.115*)*.

Linda and Pamela both commented on the processing of the store-bought *amasi.* Linda noted that the color is yellowish whereas fresh milk is white and the group attributes this to the colorants or preservatives that might be added. When I asked if sugar is added to these processed brands, Sister Titi responded,

> We don't know. They never tell us. They don't tell us their recipes, of what they have added in. There's a lot of businesses making this because they know we like *amasi*. … We don't know the best one, unless you make your own *amasi* (T.3.135 and T.3.141).

Gladys later brought up her preferred brand to buy—Wylie's—a local dairy. Sister Titi added,

> …I've been there and seen their dairy and how they process the milk. I'm very particular when it comes to this. I want to see the process itself, which is a different one from other's. Other's…I don't know about these two (the two brands we had on the table at the time, iAfrika and Strikers). (Wylie's) also do yoghurt…They don't add much, they make sure their animals are healthy and so on. They test their animals for… (tuberculosis) (T.3.167 and T.3.181*)*.

4.4.3.3 Changes Over Time

Gladys, Linda and Sister Titi had all grown up on home-made *amasi*. "My mother used to milk cows and goats. Especially goats. My mother told me that I was using goat *amasi* which is more healthy and so nice to taste"(T.3.124). Though everyone had agreed that home-made *amasi* was healthier, the women didn't make their own: "…we don't have time to let it sour. We don't have space, we don't have time. We don't get fresh milk somewhere, you always

buy it ready as it is" (T.3.107). Sister Titi said occasionally they make their own, but all said the majority of people definitely buy pre-packaged *amasi* from the stores.

When discussing the mealie meal for *umphokoqo*, the issue of hand-grinding was brought up again. Sister Titi said, "Things are made easier for us now. So we're lazy to do it the old fashioned way. There's still no … grinding stones" (T.3.72). Gladys wanted to clarify. "It's not because we're lazy, it's because we don't have resources" (I.5). She said they haven't had access to resources such as grindstones. This began an interesting dialogue:

> **Sister Titi:** Our mothers thought they were old-fashioned and left them behind. Also, we are working mothers; we don't have time to grind. We are too busy; life is so complicated these days.
> **Gladys:** We can do that (use grindstones) because now education encourages us to go back.
> **Sister Titi:** We thought they were foolish, but now we see… We never knew we had something of value, that we had something in demand. Because we were brainwashed by the economists so we would buy their products. And now there is no one who makes these grinding stones. We have lost that part of our culture. I wish we could bring it back… My fear is that children won't even know what they (the grinding stones) looked like.
> **Gladys:** And we are so fortunate because we live next to this institution (Rhodes) that is teaching us these things about indigenous foods. Because now that Rob has started telling me these things, I'm eating more indigenous foods and I feel stronger (I.5).

Another difference in the methods of cooking *umphokoqo* today versus the time of their mothers and grandmothers was in the kind of pots they were using. Their mothers used three-legged iron pots and cooked outside over a fire. Now they cook with aluminum pots on electric or parafin stoves. When I asked why they switched to aluminum pots, Pamela first answered that it was because they look nicer, though they do burn food faster. Sister Titi added that she thinks iron pots use more energy than aluminum. When I brought up the idea of iron pots adding iron to the diet, an important mineral especially for women, the group reflected that this was indeed important (T.3.185-193). However, the discussion didn't go further and wasn't brought up again until our session at Hamburg.

For all three dishes, the team commented on a number of practices that diverge, depending on whether the context was rural or urban. The following section describes the discussions which emerged when we combined the two narratives.

4.5 Hamburg Discussions: Rural & Urban

As mentioned in Chapter Three, three of the co-researchers (Sister Titi, Gladys Tyatya and Linda January), Rob O'Donoghue and I travelled together to the rural village of Hamburg in September of 2006. Rob was involved, not just because of his role as my supervisor, but because of his previous work with the Keiskamma Art Project and an interest and background in Indigenous Knowledge and nutrition. He has worked with several Masters and PhD students in the past around these issues and had previously addressed the Keiskamma Art Project to propose a partnership project around food, gardening and nutrition. The aim was to develop artwork which could be used in an environmental education process to address questions of sustainability and which could have immediate, tangible benefits for people in a context of poverty and risk. The outcome was the design of a wall hanging and six separate placemats which incorporated the stories of various foods through pictures (see Appendix 5).

In Hamburg, we gathered together a group of artists from the Keiskamma Art Project to join the 'urban' Grahamstown women in discussion and practice about the foods with which we had been working. Bringing traditional cooking tools (a grinding stone, grain grinding mill and winnowing basket) to the center of our circle helped fill out the learning space. We also set similar language parameters as had been used during the cooking sessions: the cooking practices were to be described in *isiXhosa* with one person (in this case, Sister Titi) volunteering to do English translation. In this way, one form of 'member-checking' could be simultaneous.

We began by cooking *isigwamba* and immediately began discussing *imifino.* Noseti Makubalo (from Hamburg) named three different types of *imifino* that she used regularly and indicated that others from the area used them as well. The Hamburg women were also clearly familiar with using cultivated spinach for the dish, and that is what we proceeded to cook with that day.

When Rob brought out a tin of "traditional *marogo*" (a processed blend of leafy greens, oils, nuts and spices), that he had found months before in a shop, the group was quite surprised, never having seen this previously. The consensus was that it was very tasty. When the question was asked about the difference between eating that and eating field greens, Gladys answered that when you get it from the field, you know where it's been and it's still packed

with vitamins. Rob concurred, using western science as a form of validation, saying, "Scientists say tinned is good, but fresh is better."

The fact that the spinach should be thoroughly washed so that all subsequent water released from the greens could be used was brought up by one of the Hamburg women. Rob reflected that this was an example of non-waste often seen in indigenous practices.

For this gathering, we brought iron pots and used them for our cooking. Though most of the women present had used iron pots growing up and many from Hamburg still do today, the trend is a shift away from iron toward aluminum or other materials. Noseti Makubalo had recently bought a cast aluminum pot (that was not anondized), in the same shape as the traditional three-legged iron pot. Rob had recently been to a tradeshow in Bathurst where these pots were being sold and the sales pitch for aluminum had been, "no rust!" Though we didn't ask Noseti what convinced her to buy her new pot, her decision was consistent with the trend across the Eastern Cape. During our cooking session, the subject of anemia and women's need for iron was brought out by Rob. He talked about the negative press being given to rust in the iron pots that, though unsightly, is actually beneficial to health if taken in trace amounts. He spoke about the potential negative effects of aluminum on the kidney and on memory and advised against using aluminum. At the same time, he publicly gave Noseti his iron pot as a gesture of goodwill. She has since commented how much she uses and likes her new iron pot.

Figure 4.11 Linda January grinds grain again for the first time in over 30 years

As the spinach was cooking, our discussion moved on to mealie meal, as it came time to add the mealie rice to the *isigwamba* and to begin cooking the *umphokoqo*. Sister Titi read aloud the ingredient list from the package of ACE mealie meal and a discussion about maize ensued. Many did not know that maize was not indigenous to South Africa. Having a grinding mill and stone in front of us prompted much dialogue as well as the opportunity for women who have only heard about the days of grinding stones to be able to try their hand at actually grinding grain into meal. Later, this was described as the most interesting part of the day for some of the

participants. A container of dried corn kernels was passed around and Rob described the process of refining grain, which takes away the nutrients, only to have some of them added back chemically before ending up on supermarket shelves.

When viewing the freshly milled mealie meal, Cebo, the only male participant in the group, commented that this grain was, "third rate" and that ACE was "first rate." When questioned as to why that was, he said because the freshly ground meal looked "dirty" and not as fine. Sister Titi interjected, "That's because we've been brainwashed by the people who make (the processed meals)!" Though he added that the whole grain looks dirty when it's cooked, when pressed, he confessed that he had never seen the cooked whole grain, but he suspects it's similar to other 'inferior' brands of store-bought processed meals. Later, when the group had a chance to do a taste comparison of the freshly ground meal versus the ACE, Cebo admitted he had changed his mind and now preferred the whole grain. He reflected that he's only ever eaten the ACE meal and so that's what he liked and was used to (H6).

Eighty-three year old *Gogo* was the only one still using a grindstone. She immediately recognized the stone in our circle as not being made for maize as it was not big enough. The stone she used also had grooves in it to better grind maize. This provided another opportunity for dialogue about the indigenous grain of sorghum as this grinding stone we had brought was used to grind that grain. She noted that she uses her stone specifically to make *isigwamba* and makes the mealie rice and mealie meal simultaneously (some of the grain ends up being more coarse and is mealie rice, and the grain which is fine is the mealie meal), adding it all at once to her pot. This was brought up by Linda, Gladys and Sister Titi earlier in our cooking sessions when we talked about the days of hand-grinding. They had said proudly that there was "no waste" in the use of this method (T.2.139).

Figure 4.12 Gogo *describes her grinding stone methods*

While Gladys was stirring the *umphokoqo* with a fork, someone asked what was used before the days of forks. This prompted a round of quick discussion before the concluding answer that a wire whisk was used. Rob then asked, "And what is wire made out of?" He answered his own question by saying it is steel with an outer layer of zinc which boosts the immune system. This led to Cebo's comment paraphrased at the beginning of this chapter: our people were not professors, but their practical doings were professional. Even if our people had no knowledge theoretically, they never told anyone, they didn't know what they knew, they were brilliant.[6]

In our Hamburg discussions, the question of yeast was again brought up. When the question was asked, "What was used in the days before yeast packets?" The Hamburg woman answered, "yeast cubes," as we had heard before with the women of Grahamstown. When '*Gogo*' entered the discussion, she too only remembered the days of yeast cubes, saying "That's as far as I go" when we asked what was before yeast cubes. When Rob described the process of germinating, drying and then grinding sorghum to make yeast, Sister Titi remarked with recognition that he was describing the process of making *umqombothi. Gogo* agreed.

When serving the *umphokoqo*, we topped it with store-bought *amasi.* This opened up discussion about the source of the rural women's *amasi* and Noseti volunteered that she makes her own, using fresh milk. The cultural practice of traditionally having only men make and handle *amasi* was discussed, but several women said that they no longer observe this custom.

As it came time to serve the *isigwamba,* the discussion of fat arose. The Grahamstown women added either store-bought 'Holsum' (homogenized palm oil) or animal drippings. They told me that in earlier days, people rarely added fat to the pot. Sister Titi said that animal fat was too precious a commodity: "They wouldn't slaughter a chicken for this *isigwamba* business" (H3). She added, however, that when she uses it in her home today, she doesn't need to worry about feeding her family meat that day (H6). This addition of Holsum

[6] Though we didn't probe this comment further at the time, I wished we had, as it is a key idea in this study. The people had the knowledge but didn't know they did. Perhaps it is through theorizing today, that we are able to uncover some of the rich knowledge that existed and continues to be reconstructed and reinterpreted. This idea shall be explored further in Chapter Five.

is a logical step when finances are tight and one is trying to stretch protein or provide maximum health benefits and feed a hungry family on the least amount of money.

Gladys Tyatya said wild *imifino* doesn't need fat to taste nice, but the cultivated kinds of greens benefit from the addition of fat. She lives with a woman from the former Transkei, who doesn't think it is *isigwamba* if fat is added. When a question was raised about the need to be concerned about fat in our diets, the Hamburg group concluded we did. They agreed that it was an essential part of the diet, but there was such a thing as 'too much.' No one had an answer as to how much was too much, but interestingly, one of the women from Hamburg, Noseti Makubalo said that the only fat she uses is the fat she has used to line her cooking pot. Rob O'Donoghue said this might be "just enough" fat. When we discussed possible implications to changes in lifestyle (such as avoiding the fast food of KFC), one of the participants said he'd rather die than give up KFC!

4.6 The Use of Artwork

Though it was not in the original design of this study, the development of the Keiskamma artwork around indigenous foods led to some interesting observations. The artists designed an embroidered wall hanging (see Figure 4.9) as well as six individual prints of six indigenous foods. The pictures were specifically designed without words so as to generate a different kind of engagement with the pieces than those which had 'spelled out' the story for the viewer. Imagination and creativity were required. The artists originally undertook 'telling the story' of the foods, showing some of the animals, tools and/or steps in the process of the dishes' preparation.

Figure 4.13 Keiskamma Art Project embroidered wall hanging

When I brought one of the prints back to Pamela and Linda for viewing, a couple of things occurred. One, the children in the home, who, on every previous session, had immediately relegated themselves to another room to play while we were 'working,' voluntarily emerged when they heard us speaking about the artwork. They crowded around our table to look at the pictures along with Linda and Pamela. This reminded me of the powerful impact of artwork and its potential for use in education. The pictures also prompted much back-and-forth discussion between Pamela and Linda when I asked them to tell me what stories they 'saw' (See Appendix 6). Memories of the way things were done when they were young and speculations about what each specific cooking implement was, came forward immediately.

Secondly, I sensed that the work of 'some artists somewhere' working on pictures depicting indigenous foods lent the entire study validity in the eyes of Linda and Pamela. They seemed more interested in our joint work after this date and the occasion inspired the subsequent visit to Hamburg.

4.7 Gastronomica in Knysna

On 26 September 2006, Rob, Noseti Makubalo (from Hamburg) and I traveled down to Knysna for the festival of Gastronomica. Unfortunately, professional and family conflicts made it impossible for the other women to join the trip. Gastronomica is an annual food and cultural festival celebrating and affirming the "integrity of people, product, place and ingredients" (Gastronomica web site, 2006). Rob, Noseti and I presented about the work both the Grahamstown women and I had been doing in this study as well as the Keiskamma Art Project's artwork on indigenous foods. Our objectives were to share some of the stories that have emerged about how indigenous food practices are changing in modernity and to informally discuss with the audience members the nutritional implications of some of those changes.

On the drive down to Knysna, the three of us had time to begin to synthesize the findings that had been generated thus far in the study. We began to reflect about the practice-validating narratives that were emerging in the cooking sessions and in Hamburg, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. We considered the discussion in Hamburg where no one had realized that corn was not indigenous to South Africa and how sorghum, an indigenous grain, is now seldom used. It seemed that often, the past can become passé and old can be seen as 'no good.' Noseti brought up, however, the fact that more men are starting to eat *imifino*,

because they're realizing "how stupid they were to be missing what we were getting" (R. O'Donoghue and N. Makubalo, personal communication, September 26, 2006).

We considered that nutrition is about continually asking what would be the best of the foods we have available in the present day. In the various group sessions we had, I saw that change doesn't happen just by talking about what is 'healthiest,' especially when only people with similar life experiences are gathered together. Diversity (as we saw in the Hamburg session) tends to open up questions and generate answers that offer more than what individuals know. This idea will be addressed in further detail in Chapter Five.

It was only when Noseti told us that if one adds cold *amasi* to warm *umphokoqo* it makes the milk sour, that I remembered Linda putting the cooked dish outside during our cooking session. At the time, I had thought nothing about it, and I was reminded of Cebo's comment that his people sometimes didn't know that they knew something, they just "did it." Noseti added a cultural idiom to the practice of cooling *umphokoqo* by telling us that there is a *Xhosa* belief that if you eat very hot food, it makes your breath bad.

Figure 4.14 Rachel, Noseti and Rob present at the Gastronomica Festival in Knysna

At the festival itself, approximately 60 audience members tasted our previously prepared dishes of *isigwamba* and *umphokoqo* (both hand ground and processed) and listened as we described issues that had come up around iron cooking pots, wild and cultivated *imifino*, hand-ground and processed mealie meal, local and mass-produced *amasi* and yeast. This discussion offered the unexpected benefit of enabling me to synthesize my thoughts on the

work we had been doing, and begin to marry the nutrition and education discourses.

4.8 Final Interviews

At the conclusion of my field work, I conducted individual and informal, semi-structured interviews with each of the four co-researchers. After briefly reviewing what we had done together, I asked what they had gained from the project and what, if anything, they were doing differently or would they plan to do differently as a result of the project. I also asked for suggestions on anything they thought could have been done differently or better if the project were to be carried further.

One strong theme which emerged in the responses was a sense of pride about their cultural heritage. Gladys Tyatya noted a comment her instructor in her Gold Fields course[7] had told the class: "We are all teachers and learners." She felt that this held new meaning after participating in this project since she saw that:

> … by coming together to do the same thing and then noticing differences, we all learn something from each other. It reminds me where I am coming from and I end up feeling proud of myself, of being Gladys Tyatya!
>
> This cooking has helped me a lot by getting more information, by learning from the older generation. By asking one question, it makes me curious to learn more. Since being involved in this project, I now make sure I cook *imifino* once or twice every week and my family really enjoys it. I now eat *umphokoqo* too. I'm not afraid of what my friends say. I dish it up and start educating them.
>
> Hamburg was a great trip. I felt very proud of my culture and of the *gogo*—she was very honest. If she didn't know something, she said so. I really liked the demo of the two kinds of *umphokoqo*—I remember feeling the different texture, noticing the different colors. I remember getting full faster from the hand-ground meal than from the ACE. Everyone was more interested in that one, not the one we bought from the shop.
>
> I would like to see the EE Unit provide a space whereby I could cook indigenous food for learners and educate them so that the new generation can gain a lot about their culture (I.5).

She recollected that before coming to work in the EE Unit, she wasn't 'that serious' about nutrition. Though her mother had encouraged her children to eat *imifino* and to use *ilaxa* as a

[7] The Rhodes/Gold Fields Course is an introductory level environmental education course which Gladys completed in 1999. Her recollection of her tutor's comment that we are all teachers and learners refers to the 1992 NGO Forum Principles which states that "we are all learners and educators."

home remedy for diarrhea or loss of appetite, she had "kind of given up indigenous foods" when she moved out on her own. She says she has since been motivated by Rob, not just by talking about indigenous foods, but by 'doing' indigenous foods—cooking and discussing together. She started her own food garden three years ago (*ibid.)*. Since she has been working at the Environmental Education Unit for several years, her reflections and practices find their roots in more than this specific study.

Sister Nomsa Titi, who has been working in the field of nutrition and health for over two decades, has thought a lot about the good nutrition *Xhosa* foods have to offer, but she expressed concern about the mass production of some of the foods.

> I feel that our culture has been used by those people making flavored *amarhewu*, *amasi*, etc. Some white man got the recipe and made an industry of it and is now benefiting. We are being used as a tool and that is very painful (I.6).

A second recurring theme arose from the visit to Hamburg and the opportunity to see traditional cooking practices that some of the Grahamstown women had forgotten, such as grinding. Linda January commented that she used to use a grindstone, but hasn't in at least thirty years, and misses using it with her grandmother. She said that when *Gogo* had spoken about the old way of making yeast, she remembered that her mother used to do it that way, but hadn't remembered before that (I.3).

Pamela Joseph said that she gained a lot from the project. "Especially when it comes to nutrition, I never thought about what we ate." She said that when Sister Titi joined the group, she learned more. "I now eat the white stalk of the spinach; I used to cut it off and throw it out" (I.4).

Sister Titi said that it worried her that there was only a small number of people involved in this study because she thought more people in her community needed to benefit from the topics discussed.

> We need to include more people in order to bring their consciousness back to the indigenous food. Our tendency as black people is to undermine our background, our own food. We are brainwashed, we want ready-made food which doesn't have any value whatsoever (I.6).

This led to an impromptu brainstorming session of various ways we could make the project stretch further. We are still in the midst of that process. Sister Titi underscored the urgency of the situation when she said, "'The sickness' (HIV/AIDS) has come to our people and they are dying like flies; this can be prevented and good nutrition is so important with that" (I.6).

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of the process and the data generated as well as how these integrated into findings within the learning interactions of the group. The general themes that emerged are:

- Indigenous Knowledge practices have changed radically and rapidly in recent times as people have moved from self-sufficiency of rural shortage to urban poverty and consumption within a cash economy. We see these changes reflected in the use of pre-packaged yeast (rather than hand-made using germinated sorghum), processed and refined mealie meal (rather than hand-ground mealie kernels, or prior to that, sorghum grain), store-bought *amasi* and *amarhewu* (rather than fresh milk and hand-made yeasts) and through an increased use of sugar, salt and fat.
- The narratives around nutrition reflect the speakers' context of poverty, busy lifestyles and a blending of indigenous and western concepts of health.

In the following chapter, these findings will be explored in greater depth, and in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the education process of co-engaged learning. This will be done using analytical statements to revisit the data for evidence of themes which pertain to learning and nutrition.

Chapter 5: Engaging with the Data

> *The past is not simply there in memory but it must be articulated to become memory. Memory is* recherch*é rather than* recuperatio*n.*
>
> Huyssen (cited in Popkewitz, 2000:8)

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reported the unfolding study of practice-based enquiry (through the main events, experiences and conversations) as it developed. The nutrition/health discourse which emerged reflected a rapid change in indigenous practices between, but even within, a single generation, with a notable reduction in nutritive value in the food (with the increase of processed and refined foods, an increase in fat and sugar use, etc.). Also noteworthy was the blending of indigenous within modern discourses on health and nutrition and the way the learning interactions in the rural areas and across arising health concerns shaped insights and learning in our group. In the context of a collaborative enquiry, this developed in a context of urban poverty, loss of regular contact with rural areas and busy lifestyles.

In this chapter, I will examine the developing study in relation to the nutrition issues and associated educational practices reviewed in Chapter Two and documented in Chapter Four[8]. I have done this using analytical statements after Bassey (1999:70) to address my main research objective: to examine *Xhosa* women's narratives of nutritional value in the preparation of traditional foods. This approach allows me to extract evidence in relation to the research question and to review the learning interactions as educative processes. Though the statements are in hypothesis form, they are posed as tentative findings within a small case study of the urban *Xhosa* women with whom I started the collaborative project. The evidence in the study has pointed me to these statements as a useful way of synthesizing the data and the literature reviewed at the outset of the study in relation to the research question. I do not intend them to be conclusive or generalizable.

5.2 Modernization

Analytical Statement One: The modernization discourse is a key factor in influencing the interplay between narratives and practices.

[8] I will restate some of the data presented in Chapter Four, but with a particular focus and in order to tease out evidence that supports the given arguments.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the population of Grahamstown East continues to grow as those in rural areas move toward urban centers looking for work. The women participating in this study either grew up in rural areas and moved to Grahamstown or grew up in Grahamstown, but had previously lived more of a 'subsistence' lifestyle, relying on gardens and relatives with livestock animals, and making staple food items such as bread by hand. As modernity brings changes in lifestyles and the population shifts from rural to urban areas, common-sense ways of knowing that were rooted in previous generations are also changing. Linda January's comments on the contrasts between her childhood food patterns and those of today epitomize this:

> Before, we didn't have a fridge. And we have more money now. Before, we'd have pap, *amasi*, *umngqusho*, *amarhewu* and meat once a month, if we were lucky. Now, we have much more meat (once a day). And we didn't have money then. It was wake up, and go to the garden! But now it's you must wake up and here's some money, go to the shop and go and buy some chicken, some bread. We never bought bread! And before we had to grind the maize by hand and use a stamp. We ground maize by hand until the early 1980's. Now we buy ACE mealie meal. We made *amasi* from fresh milk given to us by a family's cow in Peddie (I.1.9).

Lutho Kota (2006), in her thesis on using *amarhewu* in the Consumer Studies curriculum in her King Williams Town high school, was impressed with the ingenuity of using leftover porridge to create this healthy, energy drink for rural people working in the fields as well as an everyday food for domestic use. She found, however, that this was now seen as a practice of the poor with many people no longer drinking *amarhewu* at all, or preferring to buy it ready-made from the supermarket (O'Donoghue *et al.*, in press). Similar observations emerged in this study, but rather than an association with the poor being given as a primary reason for not producing home-made *amarhewu*, lack of time in busy lifestyles was cited. Kota (*ibid.*) also found a widening use of *amarhewu* in the care of people suffering from HIV/AIDS as the stabilizing effect on their digestive system was noticeable. Sister Titi also noted this benefit to the digestive system.

Though discussions about using the starter ferment (*umlunuso*) only emerged in Hamburg when we were probing the earliest forms of yeast that were used, Kota had found that the sharing of the *umlunuso* was a way of fostering a feeling of community and an ethos of mutual care among one another, ensuring no one would go to bed hungry (*ibid.*). While we were in Hamburg, Sister Titi made a passing comment that revealed that this sense of communal sharing may not prevail in urban settings such as Grahamstown anymore.

"*Amarhewu* is healthier without (dried, shop-bought) yeast, but it's quicker with yeast and now people don't want to be as dependent on their neighbors. You avoid people relying on your shoulders" (H2). She said that if you run out of something (such as salt or yeast), "you look at your watch to see if Pick 'n Pay is still open, rather than disturb a neighbor" (*ibid.*).

Many customs associated with foods also appear to have changed. As mentioned in Chapter Two, there is a widely-held *Xhosa* belief that men should not eat wild *imifino* for fear that it would make them cowardly, impotent, shy or "less of a man." (Asafo-Adjei, 2004; Husselman and Sizane, 2006). All of the women with whom I worked confirmed that this belief is currently less widely held and men are beginning to eat more *imifino*. Sister Titi said, "They feel they are getting a lot of vitamins. They've discovered that" (T.2.69). On a separate occasion, she added, "In their minds, they pretend it's not *imifino* (when it's cultivated)" and that's why they eat it now. She specified that men are more likely to eat cultivated greens than those that grow wild.

The custom of men traditionally only handling *amasi* (and the calabash used to contain it) was brought up in Hamburg discussions as well. Though all of the people present admitted this custom had changed, with women now making the *amasi*, this was more of a felt reality for the Hamburg women. None of the Grahamstown women (nor presumably, the men in their households) still make *amasi* by hand, while the people with whom we met in rural Hamburg, do.

Though all of the Grahamstown women said they still knew how to make *amasi*, they said they didn't have the time, the space, or the animals to do so (T.3.107). They showed a mistrust of some of the conventional shop-bought brands, however, and expressed a preference for the local dairy with which they were familiar.

Though none of the Grahamstown co-researchers grew wild *imifino*, some of the Hamburg women still did. Chweya and Eyzaguirre (1999:4) offer further support for this trend, stating, "urban and peri-urban migration have led to a decline in consumption of these traditional vegetables." As populations move from rural to urban settings, fewer people have space for gardens and therefore have less opportunities to grow *imifino.* Whatever does grow on their land (if they have any) is more likely to be dirty from vehicle and pedestrian traffic and animals. Pamela's grandmother offered this as the main reason they don't grow wild greens

in their yard (I.2.12). Lastly, urban lifestyles usually are associated with a faster pace and people are seemingly less inclined to take the time to gather wild greens themselves.

Corn meal was only introduced into South Africa in the last 250 years or so and thus the indigenous knowledge systems related to it are relatively recent or limited. *Umphokoqo* was introduced to me as a food that was good for someone who was ill since it was soft, easily digested and full of nutrients. Though forks are now used to fluff the mealie meal after steaming, the Hamburg discussions brought up the fact that in earlier times, a wire whisk was used, which added trace elements of zinc to the diet, an immune booster (important for people living with HIV/AIDS). In addition, the use of iron pots helped incorporate small amounts of iron into the diet which has the potential of helping to combat anemia. As mentioned in Chapter Four, due to a number of factors—price, ease in handling, energy use, rusting—the modern trend has been to move away from using iron pots.

When we used the hand-ground mealie meal for the *umphokoqo* while in Hamburg, the group was surprised by and pleased with the taste of the "dirty-looking" grain. Cebo's expectations that he wouldn't like it and that it was "third rate" compared to the refined, commercial ACE brand, was indicative of the effect of modernization on behavior. After trying the whole grain, he admitted that he had never had anything other than refined meal and so that was what he was used to and liked; he surprised himself by prefering the taste and texture of the whole grain.

In combination, the initial interviews, the cooking sessions, the urban/rural dialogue in Hamburg and finally, the presentation in Knysna, allowed time for reflection about the blending of 'old' and 'new' cooking practices as well as 'old' and 'new' knowledge about what constitutes a healthy diet. After hearing each other share the traditional and, most agreed, healthier, forms of some of the most oft-used ingredients in *Xhosa* dishes (such as hand-ground mealie meal or 'home-made' yeast), participants started to take more notice about the additives in the shop-bought versions of *amasi*, mealie meal or *amarhewu*.

5.3 Knowledge Embedded in Practice

Analytical Statement Two: It is incorrect to assume that knowledge can always be consciously expressed, especially when it is embedded in practice.

The terms "indigenous knowledge practices" and "indigenous ways of knowing" arose, in part, because of the awareness that for many indigenous peoples, their knowledge is 'in the doing.' Le Roux (1999) proposed the term "indigenous knowledge processes" because the ever-changing and dynamic acts of doing/knowing carried meaning-making within them. Cheney (1999:151) refers to this different way of knowing when he tells the story of a Yukon First Nation elder who describes her confusion over being asked about her concept of environmental ethics. "We would never have a subject called environmental ethics." she says, "It is simply part of the story" (*ibid.).*

Cebo, the young man who joined our discussions in Hamburg, captured this embedded knowing well, when, after hearing the inherent wisdom of using a zinc-plated wire whisk for fluffing the *umphokoqo*, remarked, "Our people were not professors, but their practical doings were professional. Even if our people had no knowledge theoretically, they never told anyone, they didn't know what they knew, they were brilliant" (paraphrased). Though *Gogo* and other elders around Cebo might not have been able to articulate their knowledge in words, or even "know that they knew," this knowledge was expressed through their actions.

The discussions around yeast, in both Grahamstown and Hamburg, were also an illustration of knowledge embedded in practice. Both times the women were asked, "What was used in the days before yeast packets?" yeast cubes were given as an answer. Even elderly *Gogo* said that was "as far as she went" with her knowledge. However, when Rob described a process of germinating, drying and then grinding sorghum to make yeast, both Sister Titi and *Gogo* immediately recognized the process of making the fermented drink of *umqombothi*, a method of creating yeast 'from scratch.' Linda January later commented that she only remembered that her mother used to make yeast that way when *Gogo* mentioned it (I.3).

In the initial interviews in the homes of Linda January and Pamela Joseph, both indicated that they weren't specifically 'taught' how to cook, but rather, they were shown, and they learned; there weren't explanations. There was also no specific talk of eating specific foods because they were 'good for you' or using language of a 'balanced diet.' The language of nutrition, perhaps, wasn't an "efficient instrument for expressing what people had jointly experienced and wanted to communicate" (Elias, 2000:8) but concepts such as 'food that builds our bodies' (*izakamzimba*) or 'healthy food' (*ukutya kwempilo*) might have been.

When making *umphokoqo*, Linda casually placed the dish of cooked mealie meal outside to cool before we added the *amasi*. I didn't prompt discussion about it at the time and we didn't probe the practice further. Noseti Makubalo later told me that adding cold *amasi* to warm *umphokoqo* sours the dish and makes it taste bad. While a scientific way of knowing might be able to explain the process chemically, the embedded knowing in the doing (of placing the dish outside to cool) was expressed only in practice, not in words.

I was told several times that the stalk of the spinach was an important part to use and should not be thrown away. Though nobody was able to tell me why (and when pressed, only theorized that because that was the part in the ground, it "bears most of the nutrition" (T.2.10) this was a practice I observed in both Hamburg and Grahamstown. Women from both areas stressed the importance of washing the spinach well during preparation, so that all subsequent water (or juice) from the greens could be used. Sister Titi had said, "You find that the juice that comes out of there (the spinach leaves and stems) has all the stuff that you need, nutritions (*sic*), vitamins, and so on" (T.2.65). This was an example of the more consciously expressed knowledge that came out once a more experienced peer (Vygotsky, 1978) entered the group. This insight will be further explored in Section 5.4.

Rather than standing in opposition to science, indigenous ways of knowing often complement or support the scientific, or 'other way of knowing.' Indigenous knowledge practices can often talk to the question of 'how to?' and western knowledge or scientific concepts often answer 'why?' When the how's and why's are intermeshed, a "situated understanding of and respect for indigenous practices" can result (O'Donoghue *et al.*, in press:10). Though Hanisi (2006) found that all the learners in her high school science class 'knew' the process of fermentation intimately by watching *amarhewu* or *umqombothi* being made in their homes, none 'knew' how to explain the process through a chemical formula or even knew the process as "fermentation," *per se*. When she linked these two 'stories,' they became conscious of their knowledge and it gained a deeper meaning because of its relevance to the learners' lives.

Throughout the co-engaged narratives in this study, meaning-making increased as stories arose in the variety of contexts (interviews, cooking demonstrations and rural/urban discussion) in which we found ourselves. This "embodied knowing" is differentiated in a

developing story of practical reason where things are done, first, because they work, and concepts are used to explain and provide insights. This is a key point relevant to environmental education and will be discussed further in Section 6.3.

All of these observations are congruent with the conclusion drawn by O'Donoghue *et al.* (2005:200) that research related to indigenous ways of knowing should not only be place-based, but rooted in mother tongue, intergenerational in scope, and appreciative of the fact that knowledge is held and verified in community. Though it is not possible to *assume* that knowledge (including Indigenous Knowledge) can always be consciously expressed, the addition of diverse group members make this more likely. This will be discussed in the following section.

5.4 The Benefit of Diversity within a Group

Analytical Statement Three: Group interactions, narrative and diversity that bring contrasts to light make knowledge more explicit and available for reflection.

Given the above findings, I found myself feeling frustrated in the initial interviews and cooking session with the co-researchers. If the other women were indeed 'co-researchers,' where was the joint exploration for meaning and learning? I had noted in my research journal that we were sharing knowledge 'matter-of-factly,' not probing deeply or challenging assumptions. I reflected that perhaps I was relying too much on their knowledge to inform and generate discussion. I was thus unconsciously serving to reinforce the prevailing orientation, not arriving at shared common ground *together*.

The very fact of my being an outsider, unfamiliar with the food dishes we were making and the cultural history behind them, did help give rise to a certain deepening of narration. The cooking practices in question, which usually could be done by rote, even 'absent-mindedly,' had to be *explained* to this American newcomer. Through this act, knowledge was being made more explicit in the cooking demonstrations.

As illustrated in Chapter Four, the discussion around the addition of fat to *isigwamba* changed from the Grahamstown cooking sessions to those we had in Hamburg. As individual cooks, the Grahamstown women could be said to have confidence and control over the

specific steps of their practice. When I first asked about the use of fat during the cooking sessions, the answers were fairly blunt and straight-forward – this is what "we've always done." [9] When more people were brought into the discussion, especially from different backgrounds (rural and urban), more explanations were brought forward. Fat is now used more than it used to be, one doesn't need meat if fat is used, etc. As Huyssen wrote, "The past is not simply there in memory but it must be articulated to become memory. Memory is *recherché* rather than *recuperation*" (cited in Popkewitz, 2000:8).

Sister Nomsa Titi's addition to the group was her wealth of experience and knowledge in the healthcare profession which included a general awareness of nutrition. When she joined our group in the cooking sessions, the conversations were enriched by discussion of "nutrients," "proteins" and references to home remedies. For example, when speaking of *amasi*, she said, "It's good for somone who is sick because it's a soft food and has all the nutrients needed for the body. Home-made *amasi* is more nutritious than this one (referring to the shop-bought product). Cream is there. Fats are there. It's much healthier than this one" (T.3.101 and T.3.111). She also touted the benefits of *isigwamba* to relieve constipation. When Gladys spoke about liking the taste of Wylie's *amasi* the best, Sister Titi brought in her story of having visited their farm and liking what she saw (T.3.167). Pamela, in her final interview, commented that she "never thought about why we ate what we did." She added, "Especially when Nomsa was around, I learned a lot" (I.4).

Sister Titi herself seemed to demonstrate the influence of being exposed to the rural voices of Hamburg community and the ensuing discussions. Earlier in our cooking sessions she had stated, ACE mealie meal has "got lots of nutrition" (T.3.101). During the Hamburg discussions, when Cebo described the hand-milled mealie meal as "third rate" because it looked dirty and not as fine, Nomsa said we've been "brainwashed" by the people who make it. She tried to teach Cebo why the whole grain was more nutritious. Later, in her final interview, she stated, "We are brainwashed, we want ready-made food which doesn't have any value whatsoever" (I.6).

[9] Pamela's comment quoted in Section 4.2 also illustrates this point: "(My grandmother) didn't specifically tell you that this was good for you, it was just this is what we were eating." These can be said to be types of 'practice-validating justifications' as a means to normalize the behavior.

Gladys Tyatya, in her final interview, reflected on the value of coming together to interact around an issue of shared concern. Remembering the statement her Gold Fields tutor had used, that "we are all teachers and learners" (referring to the 1992 NGO Forum Principles), she said that seemed true in this study.

> By coming together to do the same thing and then noticing differences, we all learn something from each other…This cooking has helped me a lot by getting more information, by learning from the older generation. By asking one question, it makes me curious to learn more (I.5).

Elias made reference to concepts which "sleep" until they are recalled "because something in the present state of society finds expression in the crystallization of the past embodied in the words" (2000:8). Using deliberative co-engagement and reflexivity throughout the research, and continually focusing on the differences between the way things are done now compared with when the team of co-researchers were young, revealed important insights. The examples of adding fat to *isigwamba* as a recent practice, using a wire whisk for *umphokoqo* before forks were used, making yeast by hand through the germination of sorghum, and not needing to buy separate mealie meal and mealie rice when grinding corn by hand are all concepts that were 'asleep' in some manner and only were recalled by discussion in the rural context of Hamburg.

As mentioned earlier, issues of health and nutrition only began to be examined once this co-engagement was initiated, especially when urban 'met' rural. As Gladys mentioned in her final interview, the idea of everyone being teachers and learners took on new meaning. Equally importantly, the 'doing' of cooking while talking about it was also essential for 'waking up' some key concepts. Huyssen's message of needing to articulate the past for it to become memory (cited in Popkewitz, 2000:8) was particularly relevant when the knowledge was still 'embedded' in the practice, and not necessarily conscious. Gladys also referred to this when she said that it was not just by talking about indigenous foods, but by 'doing' them – cooking and discussing them together – that she felt the motivation to incorporate them back into her daily life (I.5).

Gladys and Linda both recalled the Hamburg visit as being a particular highlight for them where their learning was the greatest. Vygotsky (1978) wrote of a "zone of proximal development" which points to the difference between what a learner can do on her own and

what she can do with a more experienced peer. The Hamburg villagers were not necessarily more experienced in cooking than the Grahamstown women, but their context was different and that diversity brought out discontinuities which led to reflection.

Vygotsky focused on the number of developmental processes which were stimulated within an individual but which only occurred in the context of interaction of the individual with peers in his/her surroundings. In working with the concept of the zone of proximal development, Rogoff (1990) suggests the notion of "appropriation" to better illustrate the learning which is taking place through the interrelated and active interaction of learner with peer. "It would not be sufficient to focus on individual learning or competence development without paying attention to the interpersonal relationships as socio-cultural activities in which learning and development are taking place" (Simovksa, 2005:177).

When the group in Hamburg reflected on the health consequences of refined and processed foods or aluminum pots, the opportunities for learning increased. Wals and Heymann (2004:2) have written that "the conflicts that emerge in the exploration of sustainability, are prerequisites, rather than barriers, to reaching solutions that can be sustained for longer periods of time." It was during the discussion that some of the women from Grahamstown were pushed beyond asserting "this is how we've always done it," to search for explanations and justifications.

The evidence in this case study suggests a confirmation of Lave and Wenger's (1991) emphasis on the importance of locating learning in activity, context and culture. If, as they suggest, learning occurs not only within the individual, but in the relationships between people and their interactions, increased diversity within a group (and thus the opportunities for the "prerequisite conflicts" suggested above) holds the ability to make knowledge more explicit and thus, available for reflection. This is one way a community of practice, as defined by Lave and Wenger, could come into being. Participants' shared concerns about health and nutrition and the situated context allowed for particular pieces of information to take on greater relevance. Their 'learning by doing' also integrated the participants as agents within the world and their activity. The participants in this study could be seen in constant negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in their worlds (*ibid.*:50-51). This notion of participation:

> thus dissolves dichotomies between cerebral and embodied activity, between contemplation and involvement, between abstraction and experience: persons, actions, and the world are implicated in all thought, speech, knowing and learning (*ibid.*:52).

5.5 Strengthening of Cultural Identity as a Result of Co-Engagement

Analytical Statement Four: Cultural identity can be strengthened through reflexive, co-engaged learning interactions.

It is easy to draw parallels between the research on indigenous ways of knowing conducted by Asafo-Adjei, Kota and Hanisi (O'Donoghue *et al.*, in press) and the research in this study. They all used a communal capital of indigenous cultural practice as the starting point for deliberative social interactions around lifestyle choices in a southern African context. They write:

> The most striking insight was how generative social engagement is at once reflexive and enabling of agency whilst strengthening community and cultural identity in a widening modern world of and at risk (*ibid.*:10).

The final interviews with the team of Grahamstown women also indicated an enabling of agency and a strengthened cultural pride. Gladys commented that:

> since being involved in this project, I now make sure I cook *imifino* once or twice every week and my family really enjoys it. I now eat *umphokoqo* too. I'm not afraid of what my friends say. I dish it up and start educating them…It reminds me where I am coming from and I end up feeling proud of myself, of being 'Gladys Tyatya!' (I.5)

Gladys showed a particular interest in taking the work further when she commented on her desire to incorporate indigenous food and nutrition issues in future education scenarios (I.5).

Sister Titi's sole concern about the way the study was carried out was that there were only a few people involved. "We need to include more people in order to bring their consciousness back to the indigenous food. Our tendency as black people is to undermine our background…" (I.6). During the study, she expressed pleasure and pride when commenting on the fact that Linda (and an implied 'we' as the *amaXhosa)* didn't need to measure food amounts. "None of this tablespoon of this…they're highly skilled. Gosh! I like this!" (T.2.143). More than once the women commented that there was "no waste" in their cooking methods; this was 'rediscovered' in the session in Hamburg when *Gogo* spoke about the

ability to create mealie meal and mealie rice at the same time when hand-grinding the grain (thereby having a use for all of the ground material) (H6).

The interaction which began in the cooking sessions and culminated in a 'member-checking' session held in Hamburg around grinding meal by hand also expressed a sense of pride as well as loss. Sister Titi had rationalized the loss of hand-grinding during the cooking sessions by saying, "Things are made easier for us now. So we're lazy to do it the old fashioned way. There's still no … grinding stones" (T.3.72). Later, when we were discussing the data thus far, Gladys wanted to clarify. "It's not because we're lazy, it's because we don't have resources" (H1). She said they haven't had access to resources such as grindstones. The ensuing dialogue invited further reflection:

> **Sister Titi:** Our mothers thought they were old-fashioned and left them behind. Also, we are working mothers; we don't have time to grind. We are too busy; life is so complicated these days.
> **Gladys:** We can do that (use grindstones) because now education encourages us to go back.
> **Sister Titi:** We thought they were foolish, but now we see… We never knew we had something of value, that we had something in demand. Because we were brainwashed by the economists so we would buy their products. And now there is no one who makes these grinding stones. We have lost that part of our culture. I wish we could bring it back… My fear is that children won't even know what they (the grinding stones) looked like.
> **Gladys:** And we are so fortunate because we live next to this institution (Rhodes) that is teaching us these things about indigenous foods. Because now that Rob has started telling me these things, I'm eating more indigenous foods and I feel stronger (H5)

The observations and comments made after showing Linda and Pamela the Keiskamma art on indigenous foods for the first time (see Section 4.6) also seemed significant in increasing motivation and pride upon hearing that crafters were producing pieces of art around the foods which formed an 'ordinary' part of their lives. This pointed to a sense that our 'small study' had gone beyond the local and that there was a 'critical mass' beyond our view that lent validity to the learning.

Both Hart (as cited in Lotz-Sisitka, 2004) and Lave and Wenger (1991) make reference to learning involving the construction or growth in identities. Though the focus is on learning through participation, in *social* interaction (which might seem to de-emphasize the individual), Lave and Wenger (1991:52-53) insist that participation in social practice "suggests a very explicit focus on the person, but as person-in-the-world, as member of a

socio-cultural community." The specific people in the specific circumstances may master new understandings or new skills, but, Lave and Wenger argue, these new understandings do not exist in isolation; "they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning" (*ibid.*:53).

5.5.1 Changes in Identity: Rural and Urban

Though at the outset I had not expected the topic of 'identity' to arise within this study, given the focus of the research on narratives around Indigenous Knowledge in an urban setting, it is not necessarily surprising that it did.

> In more traditional situations, a sense of self is sustained largely through the stability of the social positions of individuals in the community. Where tradition lapses, and lifestyle choice prevails, the self isn't exempt. Self-identity has to be created and recreated on a more active basis than before (Giddens, 1999:47).

When I presented my research findings in my MEd class (see Section 4.4.3.1), I received a strong reaction from my colleagues from Bizana (a rural area of the Eastern Cape) to my characterization of *umphokoqo* as steamed mealie meal with *amasi*, rather than *umvubo*, the term they use for that combination of foods. Their concern, they said, is that this would go down 'in history' as *Xhosa* indigenous knowledge and that it was wrong. "We no longer trust the knowledge of a person who moves to an urban area because it is influenced by Western values," said Wiseman Jenkins, one of my classmates. Aside from alluding to a notion of a static body of practices or traditions (*i.e.* that which is rural and 'traditional') as the sole constituent of Indigenous Knowledge, Jenkins' comment reflects a strong sense of identity with rural practices that are inherently 'non-Western.' Though Gladys Tyatya confirmed slight differences in the language of *isiXhosa* between the former Transkei and here in Grahamstown (which she used to explain the apparent *umphokoqo/umvubo* discrepancy), the participants in this study are more removed from a rural lifestyle and the more detailed nuances of the food description appear to have been lost[10]. Urban dwellers are typically more

[10] In town people tend to have fewer food combinations. In rural areas, *umphokoqo* with *amasi* is *umvubo* and with *amarhewu* is *umcuku* (often held over and fermented for eating the next day), but these terms are often dropped until people are reminded of them. The predominant combination is *umphokoqo* and *amasi* (*umvubo*) and children have the choice of simply eating the steamed meal with some sugar or *amasi* (G. Tyatya, November 20, 2006). Urban life appears to have both shaped a reduction in diversity as well as formed new choice combinations that have lost some of the nutrient/health value of the traditional/rural foods.

exposed to the influences of globalization and consumer culture and the changes modernity brings to lifestyle (discussed in Section 5. 2) inevitably affect identity.

Another colleague, Nandi Rasi, stated, "When you come to town, you don't want to be associated with rural practices—you want to be a modern, a Western, woman." This comment hints at the complex issues surrounding identity in a culture of globalization. Though this topic is beyond the scope of this study, it points to important areas for environmental educators, as researchers and practitioners, to consider when examining Indigenous Knowledge in southern Africa.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to answer my research question by discussing what I have come to understand about how *Xhosa*'s women's narratives of the nutritional value and preparation of traditional foods interplay with their practices and how that has been developed as a learning process. Through reflecting back on the context of the literature presented in Chapter Two, the data points to the significance of using co-engagement as a starting point for enhanced learning interactions. The findings presented in this chapter will be summarized and conclusions and recommendations will be developed in the final chapter.

Chapter 6: Reflections, Implications and the Future

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a summary of the findings of the research in relation to the research aim of understanding how *Xhosa* women's narratives of the nutritional value and preparation of traditional foods interplay with their practices as well as the documentation of our co-engagement as a learning process. This leads into a discussion of possible implications for environmental education. Finally, I provide a reflexive critique of the research process which informed the study and consider possible recommendations for further research and collaborative learning interactions.

6.2 Summary of the key interpretations of the study

The evidence presented in Chapter Four gave rise to four key interpretations:

1. The modernization discourse is a key factor in influencing the interplay between narratives and practices.

Given trends in urbanization and a shift to a cash economy, changes in practice around cooking have likewise shifted. These include a change in cultural customs associated with foods, increased reliance on shop-bought, processed or refined foods, a loss of knowledge regarding wild plants identification and a tendency towards self-sufficiency rather than communal sharing. The narratives about *Xhosa* cooking practices reflect this shift. This points to the importance of situating stories in practice as a starting point for meaningful interactions.

2. It is incorrect to assume that knowledge can always be consciously expressed, especially when it is embedded in practice.

Indigenous Knowledge is often characterized by being situated in practice with the knowledge-holders often not "knowing that they know." The way in which the women in this study described the acquisition of their knowledge capital related to cooking, health and nutrition, was consistent with what is often found in intergenerational ways of knowing: much is taught through watching and doing rather than through words or conceptual explanations. It is, therefore, incorrect to assume that knowledge can always be made explicit through verbal articulation, for example. Rather, it may be more fruitful to find ways

to open up dialogue around ‘embodied knowledge’ as we examine our own ‘practice-validating justifications’ which serve to normalize our behavior.

3. Group interactions, narrative and diversity that bring contrasts to light make knowledge more explicit and available for reflection.

Rather than simply ‘getting together,’ co-engagement and a diversity of voices seem to give rise to questions, collective momentum, motivation, reflection and greater disequilibrium which helps to make knowledge explicit and subject to negotiation and renegotiation of meaning. Practices that were justified because they were ‘cultural,’ have ‘always been done a certain way’ or were simply ‘good,’ tended to be probed at a deeper level when, for instance, someone with a health background entered the group or an outsider contrasted those practices with an alternative approach. This suggests the possible benefits of diversifying the voices of a group in situated, social learning.

4. Cultural identity can be strengthened through reflexive, co-engaged learning interactions.

By bringing attention to and showing a valuing of indigenous practices, the women in this study expressed a newfound or reinvigorated sense of pride in their cooking/health-related practices and ways of knowing. Co-researchers noted a desire to include more indigenous food in their modern diets, an interest in educating others about the nutritional benefits of indigenous foods and an urge to hold on to and share some of the practices of the past. Through a process of co-engagement and deliberation around indigenous ways of knowing, agency can be enabled whilst strengthening cultural identity.

6.3 Implications for Environmental Education

In the same way that the HIV/AIDS discourse has shifted from a purely epidemiological perspective to a livelihoods approach, environmental educators increasingly view health and nutrition as relevant issues (Simovska, 2005). Understanding the interdependent relationship between an individual’s or a households’ health and the natural environment is beginning to be seen as a priority within environmental education. Understanding the ‘human capital’ (skills, indigenous and local knowledge) as part of the asset base of a community, individual or household has also taken on new importance. This study not only explored a small cross section of this human capital in Grahamstown East, but also shed light on learning processes using co-engagement as a method in understanding and learning. The contextual factors and

limitations of poverty, unemployment and urban living and their influence on dietary choices and practices also proved significant.

Many environmental educators have often thought that if we could just get learners together and share our knowledge around environmental issues and problems, change would result. This is appearing more and more to be an erroneous vision. If, as Barnes (1992:19) says, we must "know what we know" before we can change it, it is critical to first engage learners with what they know. That may start with getting *explicit* explanations of what is known before bringing new knowledge into the equation.

It has long been recognized that language is a critical player in the learning process. Using narrative and stories in co-engagement better enables us to see knowledge as "a conversation" (Cheney, 1999) rather than a monologue. Hanisi (2006) found that the scientific concept of acid fermentation held more meaning after her learners made the association with their own practice of making *umqombothi*. This study with Grahamstown women, as well, illustrated the benefits of combining narrative and stories with action to come to a reflexive, rational space. Rather than beginning with the teaching of concepts to lead to explanatory practice to result in awareness-creation, this study points to an alternative for environmental education. Engaging together in shared practices (and context) as a starting point can prompt questions that then demand deliberation. This process can take conceptual knowledge, ethical and value-related reflections as well as practical reason into account as we work to examine behavior and lifestyle choices.

In the use of narrative in this study, history (implicit story) and context of practice was a 'main actor' in the story rather than just the backdrop. The fact that the women involved in the study grew up in the townships of Grahamstown and not in Hamburg or Cape Town had a direct effect on their knowledge about nutrition, for example. Similarly, an aspect of "disequilibrium" in our settings of social learning seemed to stimulate our learning, as when everyone agreed, it was more difficult to reflect and deliberate on our own knowledge. In a 'storying in practice,' however, the possibilities of engaging with and reflecting on what was being done and in what way, as well as the question of what was best and what might be done differently or better, had an opportunity to arise.

Linda's struggle to feed her family on an extremely limited income has much to do with the kinds of food her family eats. Her knowledge of what it takes to feed a family with such small financial assets, is of course, greater than mine. She is operating in the context of practice, and as such, brings a capital of experience which has the potential to find articulation through narrative. In a more authoritative education environment, knowledge may be shared, but won't necessarily be internalized and incorporated into one's own "action knowledge".

Our choices around food are complicated, taking into account many factors. People often recognize 'good food' and can identify healthy versus unhealthy food if asked, but they might be less discerning with their own nutrition choices. Why is KFC so popular even when some customers might know that the food served there is 'not healthy'? During the course of this study, when I reflected on my own context of the United States, eating 'ethically' or 'environmentally' tends to be seen as an option mainly for the affluent. Though it is possible to find free range, hormone-free chicken or organic, locally grown, whole wheat, these products are much more expensive than their growth-hormone-filled or refined, mass-produced counterparts. Even without a concern for 'the environment' (where one is not looking necessarily to buy organic or local), the 'healthier' options (whole grains, foods low in sugar, preservatives or other additives) tend to be more expensive than processed, refined foods. In an urban environment, where one is not growing his/her own food, is it possible to be both poor and a healthy eater? Possibly, though if one is limited by time to get food onto the table, it makes the task even more challenging (see Figure 6.1).

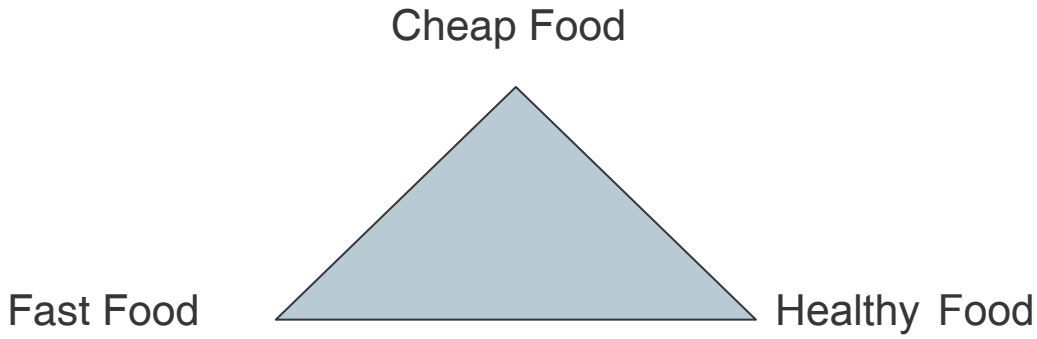

Figure 6.1: In the modern age, it is possible to obtain food from two of the three points of the triangle, but very difficult to acquire all three. Note: Fast food is understood to be food that can be prepared quickly, and not the food from restaurant chains such as KFC or McDonald's.

During our session in Hamburg when we actually ground dried mealies into mealie-meal using a hand mill, participants saw the time and effort required. One woman asked where she could get a mill like the one we had brought, but no one had an answer. They are simply not available anymore, as mechanization and industry have made them virtually obsolete. Yet most if not all of the people present claimed to enjoy the taste, texture and smell of the hand-ground versus the refined product, especially once they learned of the increased nutritional value of eating the whole grain.

Home-made *amarhewu* takes at least 24 hours to prepare and is more commonly being replaced by the store-bought and flavored (often with sugar added) processed brands. Though these are more expensive than the hand-prepared version, many people are electing to pay the extra price for the convenience of faster food. The exception seems to be when there is a large cultural gathering or party and large quantities are needed, then the drink is still made by hand. Sister Titi expressed her dismay at the trend of favoring the processed, flavored brands during our final interview. Not only are these less healthy, she said, but "some white man" is benefiting from mass-producing a *Xhosa* traditional food and using their people as "a tool."

Though wild *imifino* is inexpensive (or free if one grows it him/herself), easy to prepare and very healthy, it is rarely grown anymore in the context of an urban lifestyle. This is leading to the loss of knowledge about and the recognition of the different varieties of greens. As Pamela Joseph noted, "I don't even know how *umfuno* actually looks, the leaves. … Whereas with spinach, I know how it looks."

The *amasi* served over *umphokoqo* similarly could be cheaper if made in the home directly from fresh milk. But as with *imifino*, urban lifestyles are leading to a distancing from sources of fresh milk and processed brands are taking the place of home-made. In the shift to processed foods, there is typically an increase in sugar, colorings, preservatives and other additives, as well as increase in packaging (which contributes to a solid waste problem).

As environmental educators, the activities we design need to take these contexts and ambiguities into account. Beginning our interactions with co-engagement around stories and shared concerns is one way of helping to ensure that our enquiries are rooted in felt realities. As noted in Chapter Two, indigenous knowledge systems appear to be neither static nor

sacrosanct. Traditional food and health practices are directly interwoven with their physical and social contexts and will continue to change as the contexts of people's lives change. The questions for educators remain: how can we engage in and reflect on narratives about nutrition and health with indigenous peoples and what can we learn from them about educational processes?

This study points to the fact that, especially when knowledge is embedded within practice, educators might need to think carefully about learning processes we create where reflexivity and deliberation is the goal. Offering abstract propositions which bear little relationship to the lived realities and the struggles within them, may do little to uncover or challenge assumptions that underlie our practices. While the findings that have come out of this study can only be tentative, it appears that we need more than simply getting together to construct and reconstruct knowledge. We need co-engagement, a diversity of voices and disequilibrium.

Researchers within Cultural Historical Activity Theory are working on developing conceptual tools to better understand dialogue, multiple perspectives and voice as well as networks of interacting activity systems (University of Helsinki, Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, 2006). This study points to the importance of making explicit linkages between an individual's narratives and the socio-material conditions of their everyday practice. In addition, this study's interpretations of the learning which exists in *relationship* with others highlights the fundamental role of conflict or at least, disequilibrium, in meaningful learning (Wals and Heymann, 2004). This is perhaps, appropriate, given the expected conflict in the coming decades as dramatic changes in lifestyle are anticipated in order to cope with changing environmental conditions.

> The resolution of issues both leading up to and resulting from these shifts is unlikely to occur without friction, controversy and conflict, as they represent complex social, political, economic, ecological, aesthetic and ethical concerns (*ibid.*:8).

6.4 Critical Review of the Study

Within the scope of a half-thesis, working with a small number of women has been productive and our collective learning has provided insights and new understandings. However, to deepen insights into my research question and goals, it would have been

advantageous to have worked with three to five more women, of a variety of ages and backgrounds from Grahamstown East. The backgrounds of the co-researchers were simultaneously an advantage and disadvantage. All four of the *Xhosa* women in the study have spent the majority of their lives in the peri-urban setting of Grahamstown. They are thus at least one generation removed from the intergenerational knowledge practices of the traditional foods and cooking methods. Though working with women from a rural context might have led to other useful insights on indigenous foods, the evolution of learning with Grahamstown women from interviews to cooking sessions to dialogue with women from rural settings provided a unique opportunity to reflect on what brought about the knowledge practices and the struggle to generate new understandings beyond what was known and discussed in their shared contexts.

Though my being a foreigner and a non-*isiXhosa* speaker could easily have been seen as a detriment, I believe that it in educational terms, it also served as a useful starting point. I was an outsider without much knowledge of *Xhosa* indigenous foods or customs and I could unabashedly come in knowing 'nothing', using my difference as a point of making explicit and challenging unspoken assumptions or embedded knowledge and beliefs. I certainly would have preferred to have an intimate knowledge of *isiXhosa* and believe that might have helped in more rapidly gaining the trust and having a closer understanding of the co-researchers from the very beginning. I became quite aware, early on, that Linda January and Pamela Joseph, especially, were expecting a financial benefit as a result of their participation. This, I am aware, might have influenced their eagerness to participate in the study. Given the context of poverty and unemployment in which the co-researchers are located, the benefits of learning or 'an enhanced understanding', even of a shared interest or mutual concern, may not have been enough of a benefit (see Section 3.4.5).

If I had been staying in the area for a longer period of time, I would have liked to extend the discussions and see what areas of study could have been deepened with greater involvement from the participants/co-researchers. Given the groups' interest in the health and taste benefits of using the whole grain, for example, I would have liked to see where we could take our new understandings.

6.5 Areas for Future Research

This study has provided tentative openings for further enquiries that could explore co-engagement involving children and adults working in contextually situated and socially engaged arenas. The design of the study is significant as a means of exploring the possibilities of co-engagement to make knowledge more explicit and available for examination. The use of situating narrative also serves to highlight a potential intrinsic 'investment' in the shared explorations.

My recommendations for further research include working with women who have openly disclosed their HIV status. Given that the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its connection to nutrition and food security formed a primary impetus for the research, HIV+ co-researchers would potentially share a strong 'intentionality' in the learning and might open up useful insights around relating new knowledge to personal experience. Recent studies (Rosenberg, 2006) have shown that education around conceptual knowledge about HIV alone does not work to change high-risk behavior. Research using co-engagement methods could explore alternative starting points for education about the disease.

The addition of the Keiskamma artwork to this study provided unexpected openings for further discussion and story-sharing around indigenous knowledge practices. Research incorporating this art and its use in eliciting narratives around health and nutrition practices could be pursued with children or adults and might provide opportunities to evoke recollections of family or community practice and develop appreciation of long-standing, if currently neglected, traditions.

Situating future studies related to indigenous ways of knowing in a rural context and inviting rural and urban women to participate through the entire study might provide a unique dimension of learning around change and identity. An anthropological or phenomenological approach would be helpful in this context in order to uncover embedded practices where knowledge is not necessarily held consciously. Likewise, exploratory studies around issues of identity in rural and urban contexts and its relation to ways of knowing might benefit from the diversity in backgrounds and day-to-day lifestyles. In the context of social learning, it might be useful to more closely examine the way interpersonal interactions mould an individual's sense of self, and how that, in turn, affects the way we interact with the world.

6.6 Conclusion

This case study has explored how a small group of Rhini *Xhosa* women's narratives of the nutritional value and preparation of traditional foods interplay with their practices. In addition, it has documented the development of our co-engaged learning process as we moved from one-on-one orientating interviews to group cooking demonstrations to an urban-rural/ old-new dialogue that made discontinuities explicit.

This study has highlighted the change in practices and customs around food associated with a modern lifestyle and the accompanying change in narratives. In its exploration of indigenous ways of knowing, the study argues that it is not correct to assume that knowledge can always be consciously expressed or articulated, especially when that knowledge is embedded in practices. Reflexive co-engagement grounded in situated story and a diversity of voices in our group were found to be effective methods in making our knowledge more explicit and thus available for reflection. Through exploring shared concerns in a reflexive, co-engaged way, members of our team demonstrated a strengthening of cultural identity and a potential enabling of agency.

In the peri-urban area of Grahamstown East, characterized by high rates of poverty, unemployment, poor nutrition and HIV/AIDS infection, individuals and households are pressed to make maximum use of their human, natural, social, physical and financial assets. As community members endeavor to make the best possible nutrition and health choices for themselves and their families, each draws on her own capital of knowledge which reflects learning through a variety of methods and experiences. This study suggests that there are significant benefits in gathering a diverse group of voices together for reflexive co-engagement as we strive to use our knowledge in our work towards social and environmental transformation.

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Appendix 1
Interview with Linda January I.1

11 May, 2006 at her home (6813 Extension 8)

Note: due to bad tape recording, most of this is paraphrased

Where did you grow upand how many were in your house? (I. 1.1)
Joza. It was my mother and six children—1 boy and 5 girls.

Where did your parents grow up? (I.1.2)
In Tantkey Location.

How did you learn to cook the Xhosa foods we mentioned? (I.1.3)
My mother showed me, from the time I was about thirteen years old, because I was interested. My sisters only wanted to eat, they didn't care about cooking. I was the only one who learned.
My mother was not working, just busy at home. When we came home from school, we cooked *mdoko* (*amahewu*). You take the yeast and mix it with flour and pap and leave it in the sun.. When that porridge is cold, you mix it and leave it for the whole day. And that's how you make it.

Do you remember your mother ever talking about nutrition? Did she ever talk about why you ate those foods? (I.1.4)
(Not really understanding the question). My mother planted a garden and we ate from that. Because she wasn't working, we didn't have money and we grew what we ate.

Do you have a garden now? (I.1.5)
No, too many donkeys.

Did you eat *imifino* growing up and do you now? (I.1.6)
Yes to both (later found out she doesn't eat any of the wild leafy greens…just cultivated).

(I tried again to ask again about nutrition but she didn't understand). (I.1.7)

Growing up, there was no explanations, no menus that today we're eating this and tomorrow that. It's just we ate *umngqusho* today, and tomorrow *umpokoqo*.

Is what you ate as a girl very different from what you are eating now? (I.1.8)
Yes, now I have meat, and chicken and rice and fruit…

So now there's more diversity? (I.1.9)
Yes.
And before, we didn't have a fridge. And we have more money now. Before we'd have pap, *amasi*, *umngqusho*, *amahewu* and meat once a month, if we were lucky. Now, we have much more meat (once a day). And we didn't have money then. It was wake up, and go to the garden! But now (acting out motions a bit), it's you must wake up and here's some money, go to the shop and go and buy some chicken, some bread. We never bought bread! And before we had to grind the maize by hand and use a stamp (a pounder). We ground maize by hand until the early 1980's. Now we buy ACE mealie meal. We made *amasi* from fresh milk given to us by family's cow in Peddie.

Today, what's your average breakfast, lunch and dinner? (I.1.10)
Breakfast it's egg or porridge or corn flakes. Lunch—rice, meat and veg. Dinner—bread and tea and maybe fruit (if you have your big meal at lunch, you have a light dinner and vice versa). And we have *amarhewu* every day. And *amasi* (store-bought). We make *umngqusho* 2 times/week.

Do you know of anyone who still makes *amasi* from cow's milk or does everyone buy it in the store? (I.1.11)

Everyone buys it.

Appendix 2
Interview with Pamela Joseph I.2

11 May, 2006 at her home (220 Nduna 1)
Note: Though I taped this, the recording was not high quality so this is mostly paraphrased

Where did you grow up? (I.2.1)
Here in Joza.

Where did your parents grow up? (I.2.2)
Tantyi.

I'm interested in *imfino*, *amasi*, *amarhewu*, *umngqusho*, etc. How did you learn how to make these? (I.2.3)

We were taught. As your mother makes it, you just learn it. She doesn't explain. Just like you learn how to make omelettes, I guess (laughs).

Do you think as a young girl, you were in the kitchen all the time or was there a certain age where you started paying attention to cooking more? (I.2.4)

No, I started paying attention to cooking when I didn't have a choice. I had to cook. I'd say that was when I was about 13. I was given the responsibility of cooking for my family (2 children and 2 adults).

So you just spent time in the kitchen watching your grandmother and then when it was your responsibility, you cooked, yes? Did you just learn by trial and error? (I.2.5)
Yes, that's how I learned.

Did your grandmother ever talk about the nutrition value of what you were eating or did she ever talk about why you ate what you did? (I.2.6)
She didn't specifically tell you that this was good for you, it was just this is what we were eating.

How often did you eat each of those foods I mentioned? (I.2.7)
We'd eat more of *umpoqoko* during the summer and more *umngqusho* (correct the spelling) during the winter. On average, we have samp and beans about once per week, even now, we have *umngqusho* at least one day per week.

So you'd eat these foods seasonally? Why is that? (I.2.8)

Well, the *umngqusho* is heavy, it's spicy, and it's usually served very hot, and it has vegetables, and is good for the colder weather. The *umpoqoko* was good for the summer because it is served cold.

How about the other foods? *Amarhewu* or *imifino*? (I.2.9)
I never drink *amarhewu*! I don't know why. My grandmother only started making it when I was 21. It is very yoghurtish. By the time she started making it, I was very fat conscious (laughs). I think that it's very fattening. But I grew to like it. It's very sour and sugar on top of the sourey taste is very nice.

How often would she make it? (I.2.10)
Every day. She'd make about 5 litres.

(To the grandmother, who was sitting there): Why didn't you make *amarhewu* Gogo? (I.2.11)

It's a waste of sugar! And she (Pamela) was lazy!

Pamela: (laughing). Because it takes time. You have to wait for the yeast to rise and all that.

Gogo: I grew up having it regularly, since I was a baby. All the time.

How about *imifino*? (I.2.12)
I don't think she cooked that. The one time it was cooked was by my aunt.

Gogo: We don't cook the wild kinds because it's dirty. It grows by the road and gets all the street dirt. It's not nice. We would have spinach and cabbage and foods that you grow.

Do you feel that the amount of these foods that you're eating has changed today? (I.2.13)
Yes, because you go out and you see all these different kinds of food. In our house, we have traditional English dinners on Sunday, Monday it's *umngqusho*, Tuesday it's chicken and rice…and all this other stuff.

So has anything you've heard about nutrition from the media or magazines or people you've spoken to or anywhere else, has that influenced your diet at all? (I.2.14)
I'm very sugar and fat conscious. My metabolic system is playing tricks on me! (laughs). So I'm very conscious of those things. The media has influenced me a bit. I try to get the "balanced diet" and all that—milk, poultry, vegetables, fruits, etc. African diet has always been very healthy. We're not "sugar people." But what we do have is fat. The fat has always been there.

What do you use for fat? (I.2.15)
Fish oil.

And what did you use before they had fish oil? (I.2.16)
Gogo: "Holsum." (a fat spread like margarine)

And will your son learn how to make these foods? (I.2.17)
Yes, my son will learn. He won't be conscious that he's learning, but he'll learn. He definitely is going to.

I know you said a lot of the nutrition ideas you get are from the media, but do you remember if there was the same kind of sense of a "balanced diet" when you were growing up? Even if they didn't use the same words? Looking back, do you consider what you ate fairly balanced? (I.2.18)
Yes, we didn't use the words, it was fairly balanced.

So what is an average week like for you, food-wise? What do you eat? (I.2.19)
Porridge for breakfast, home-made dough for dumplings (both meat and veggie), "English" food (rice, veggies, meat), *umngqusho.* We have meat one meal a day, 7 days a week.

Is that very common for people to make their own dough for bread and dumplings? (I.2.20)
Yes, it is (laughing).

Have dumplings been a part of the African diet for a long time? (I.2.21)
Yes, I think so.

Do you have a garden yourself? (I.2.22)
No

Appendix 3
Umphokoqo Video Transcription T.3

June 13, 2006
Present: Linda January, Pamela Joseph, Gladys Tyatya, Nomsa Titi and Yvonne Nsubuga (on video camera)

T.3.0 Rachel: So we're making *umphokoqo* with Linda and Pamela and Nomsa.
T.3.1 Linda: Ndizakugalela amanzi eketileni, ndiwalindele abile ndiqale ndiwagalele umbizeni
T.3.2 Pamela: So she's putting on some water to make the water boil. Put it in the kettle.
T.3.3 Gladys: kutheni lento uqale umise amanzi ngeketile ungaleli amanzi embizeni?
T.3.4 Pamela: Why are you putting the water in the kettle and not on the stove?
T.3.5 Linda: Kuba kaloku izakuthatha ixesha elide ukubila esitovini iketile yona ibilisa msinya
T.3.6 Pamela: The kettle is quicker.
T.3.7 Linda: Ndizakugalela umilimili kulamanzi asembizeni kunye netyiwa, ndikhe ndiwuvale ndingawuzamisi ngangemizuzu emihlanu
T.3.8 Pamela: I'm putting the boiling water into the pot and adding a bit of salt.
Adding my maize to the boiling water, just waiting five minutes at the most.
T.3.9 Linda: Ndiwuzamise ngefolokhwe udibane, ungasebenzisi icephe
T.3.10 Pamela: Stirring the maize into the water, using specifically a fork rather than a spoon, because if you use a spoon, it's going to be something different.
T.3.11 Linda: Umlilo wam ubesezantsi ndingawenzi mkhulu ukwenzela ungatshi umpokoqo
T.3.12 Pamela: With a very low heat.
T.3.13 Linda: Niwuyeke ngange hafu yemizuzu ube nokuvuthwa
T.3.14 Pamela: The cooking will probably take about thirty minutes.
T.3.15 Linda: nxa kulungile uqale ukuphakela Bantu.
T.3.16 Pamela: And if it's ready after 30 minutes, you can dish it up.
T.3.17 Linda: Nxa ungekavuthwa uba nevumba elixelayo ukuba adikavuthwa, uwugcine umlilo kwiqondo elisezantsi
T.3.18 Pamela: Raw maize tastes a lot different, it even smells different than cooked maize.
T.3. 19 Linda: Nxa kulungile uqale uphake
T.3.20 Pamela: If it's ready, you dish up.
T.3.21 Linda: uwuphakele esityeni esikhulu uwupholise. Ndizakugalela umulili ngoku kula manzi abilileyo
T.3.22 Pamela: We're going to put the maize into the boiling water.
T.3.23 Linda: nxa ugalela ungagaleli endaweni enye
T.3.24 Pamela: Don't pour it into one space.
T.3.25 Linda: umlilo ngalo lonke ixwsha kufuneka ub se za tsi
T.3.26 Pamela: Low heat, of course.
T.3.27 Linda: ndizakhe nduyiyeke imizuzu noba mihlanu
T.3.28 Pamela: Wait for it to simmer for 5 minutes without stirring.
T.3.29 Rachel: Without stirring? And so you added maybe 3 parts maize to 1 part water? Do you think?
T.3.30 Pamela: I don't know, should we ask her?
T.3.31 Rachel: No, she understands my English (laughing). (to Linda) Do you think it's about right: 3 parts maize to 1 part water, or even more than that? Or do you just go by looks?
T.3.32 Linda: nangaphezulu

T.3.33 Pamela: There's a whole lot of maize compared to water. Yeah, I would say three to one.
T.3.34 Linda: ngoku ndiyayizamisa idlulile imizuzu yam
T.3.35 Pamela: After about a few minutes, then you can stir.
T.3.36 Linda: nantsi ke ngoku ndiyayizamisa. Nxa uzamisa akufuneki uzamise ngokungathi uzamisa ipapa
T.3.37 Pamela: In stirring, don't use big circles.
T.3.38 Rachel: So you use a fork always, to stir?
T.3.39 Linda: ngalo lonke ixesha usebenzisa ifolokwe, hayi icephe
T.3.40 Pamela: You're not using a spoon, of course, otherwise it won't be *umphokoqo*. It would be stiff pap.
T.3.41 Rachel and Yvonne: Oh!
T.3.42 Linda: kufuneka uzamise ngolu hlobo
T.3.43 Pamela: But I have clots if you use big circles when you stir.
T.3.44 Linda: ndiyawuzamisa ngoku udibane wonke kungabikho imilimili ngaphantsi
T.3.45 Pamela: You're going to stir up until the mealie meal is stirred into the water.
T.3.46 Rachel: So you wait until all the water is gone.
T.3.47 Nomsa: We're going to starve; this is too late.
T.3.48 Rachel: (Laughing) I know, this looks good. It's just a snack.
T.3.49 Nomsa: How many are we? 6? This can serve 2 people. We eat FOOD.
T.3.50 Rachel: When you eat, you really eat.
T.3.51 Nomsa: Especially with meat.
T.3.52 Linda: uyabona ke ngoku udibene wonke kakuhle
T.3.53 Pamela: The water has gone into the maize all together.
T.3.54 Linda: so ke uzakuvala isciko sembiza
T.3.55 Pamela: Put on your lid, and let it simmer.
T.3.56 Rachel: So even there's no water, it won't burn?
T.3.57 Pamela: no it won't. If the eat is low.
T.3.58 Linda: umlilo ulungile usezantsi, uzaziphekela ngokwayo. Half an hour. Oops, I'm supposed to speak Xhosa.
T.3.59 Rachel: No (laughing) half an hour is okay.
T.3.60 Rachel: So for half an hour, you just let it sit and simmer.
T.3.61 Yvonne: Without stirring?
T.3.62 Pamela: Not continuously. Just occasionally.
T.3.63 Rachel: Oh, just occasionally.
T.3.64 Linda: uzabila ke ngoku uye uvuthwa ngokuvuthwa uthambe ndiwuzamise ke ngoku ungatshi
T.3.65 Pamela: Rachel, have you noticed the smell between now and when it started? We're going to check after ten minutes so you can smell it.
T.3.66 Rachel: Now is anything besides the maize different between the way your mothers or grandmothers used to do it? Besides the kind of maize that you buy? Is anything else different? Did she used to use an iron pot?
T.3.66 Nomsa: Yes, the 3-legged pot was used by our grandmothers or mothers. My mother used to use a 3-legged pot.
T.3.67 Rachel: The iron kind?
T.3.68 Nomsa: Yes, she used to cook it outside with a prepared maize. Not this one. This kind that you grind on your own, you grind it your own way.
T.3.69 Rachel: She used to grind the maize herself?
T.3.70 Nomsa: Yes.

T.3.71 Rachel: Okay. And do you think it's as healthy now? Or healthier? Or the same? What do you think?
T.3.72 Nomsa: Things are made easier for us now. So we're lazy to do it the old fashioned way. There's still no, no…yintoni lamatye.
T.3.73 Gladys: Grinding stones.
T.3.74 Nomsa: Grinding stones.
T.3.75 Rachel: No body uses those.
T.3.76 Gladys: We do have one…at the unit (referring to a demo one in the Env. Ed. Unit).
T.3.77 Rachel: But no body uses it.
T.3.78 Gladys and Yvonne: uh-uh. Just for show.
T.3.79 Rachel: Does anybody use it? In the rural areas?
T.3.80 Nomsa: I don't think so. People …(can't make out tape)
T.3.81 Rachel: And is this a healthy dish, is it good for you?
T.3.82 Nomsa: Yes, it is healthy.
T.3.83 Rachel: And why is it, who is it healthy for? What's in it that's healthy?
T.3.84 Nomsa: It is suitable for a child, from weaning age up to old, old ladies. So everyone fits in.
T.3.85 Rachel: So everybody eats it? All ages, both genders…
T.3.86 Nomsa: All ages, all genders.
T.3.87 Rachel: But like *imifino*, it's mostly just the women, right?
T.3.88 Nomsa: Yes.
T.3.89 Linda: hayi, ndizakuzamisa kwakhona ngoku ungatshi
T.3.90 Nomsa: This is a quick meal that you can do for the family. 45 minutes. Very quick. Doesn't take much time. I think an hour is enough. Within an hour you're eating.
T.3.91 Rachel: And do you eat it alone, or with other things?
T.3.92 Nomsa: You eat it alone.
T.3.93 Gladys: And also you can eat *umphokoqo* with tea.
T.3.94 Rachel: With tea? So is it usually eaten at night time, as your tea, as your supper?
T.3.95 Nomsa: Anytime is tea time for eat. You can use it for breakfast, you can use it for lunch, you can use it for supper. It has no specific time.
T.3.96 Rachel: So all of you eat it for…sometimes breakfast, sometimes lunch, sometimes supper.
T.3.97 Everyone: Yes.
T.3.98 Rachel: Okay. And is this, do you think this would be good for someone who is sick, like someone with HIV, is it a good, nutritious, like, strong food?
T.3.99 Nomsa: Yes, it is, because it is soft. It has got all the nutrients that are needed for the body.
T.3.100 Rachel: What do you mean it's soft? Do you just mean it's soft in texture?
T.3.101 Nomsa: It is soft. It's just soft food that does not need to be chewed for a long time, if you can get what I mean. And, with this ACE, it has got lots of nutrition, and of course, with amasi, there is a lot of nutrition in that food there.
T.3.102 Rachel: Mmm. And amasi, it's just soured milk, right?
T.3.103 Nomsa: Soured milk.
T.3.104 Rachel: Nothing added. It's just milk that's been…there's no sugar?
T.3.105 Nomsa: Now, in our days, we don't know what's in there (everyone laughs). But usually, if you can just use ordinary milk, then let it be sour. It is more nutritious than this one.
T.3.106 Rachel: And do you think anyone does that? Or does everyone buy that?
T.3.107 Nomsa: No, we don't have time to let it sour. We don't have space, we don't have time. We don't get fresh milk somewhere, you always buy it ready as it is.

T.3.108 Rachel: Right. How do you let fresh milk sour? You just put it on the counter and let time go by?
T.3.109 Nomsa: Yes.
T.3.110 Rachel: Oh, okay. So no bacteria goes in that's harmful?
T.3.111 Nomsa: No. And it's more nutritious. Cream is there. Fats are there. It is much healthier than this one.
T.3.112 Rachel: The kind that you make yourself? The fresh one?
T.3.113 Nomsa: Yes.
T.3.114 Rachel: Why is it healthier?
T.3.115 Nomsa: You don't know. This sour milk doesn't taste the same. You will never know which one is good than the other. And it can change your stomach..
T.3.116 Pamela: And it's processed. It's processed a lot.
T.3.117 Nomsa: Others would have diarrhea…
T.3.118 Yvonne: Oh?!
T.3.119 Nomsa: Yeah! Meaning something that has been put doesn't in, doesn't suit someone.
T.3.120 Rachel: Mmm, and when all of you were kids, did they also have this, or did you make it fresh?
T.3.121 Nomsa: No.
T.3.122 Rachel: So it's only recent.
T.3.123 Pamela: (laughing) In our time, we had it (laughing hard). I grew up on this same thing.
T.3.124 Nomsa: You have caught me with this one. Why should I address the chicken? I never had this one when I was a child. My mother used to milk cows, and goats. Especially goats. My mother told me that I was, uh, using goat amasi, which is more healthy and so nice to taste.
T.3.125 Rachel: Was it? And this was in Grahamstown?
T.3.126 Nomsa: Yes, in Grahamstown farms. At Salem.
T.3.127 Rachel: So outside…
T.3.128 Nomsa: Yes.
T.3.129 Rachel: And you, Linda, did you have this kind of amasi?
T.3.130 Linda: And the color is yellowish. Ordinary milk is white, but this one is yellow.
T.3.131 Rachel: So maybe they add some things to this, preservatives and things…
T.3.132 Nomsa: (Nods)
T.3.133 Yvonne: And colourants…
T.3.134 Rachel: And colourants, too? Do you think they add sugar?
T.3.135 Nomsa: We don't know. They never tell us. They don't tell us their recipes, of what they have added in.
T.3.136 Yvonne: Yes, they're supposed to…
(While Linda is stirring and fluffing the *umphokoqo*)
T.3.137 Gladys: ndiyaqala ukuwabona la masi
T.3.138 Nomsa: They always talk like this…
T.3.139 Gladys: kudala ekhona
T.3.140 Linda: ngawantoni
T.3.141 Nomsa: There's a lot of businesses making this because they know we like amasi.
T.3.142 Rachel: I saw. When I went to the store, I saw they had 4 different brands, and I didn't know if you had a favorite, so I just got this one.
T.3.143 Nomsa: So you made your own choice?
T.3.144 Rachel: Yes.
T.3.145 Nomsa: Like us, we don't know the best one, unless you make your own amasi.

T.3.146 Rachel: But no body does, no one makes their own, anymore…right?
T.3.147 Nomsa: We do. You buy your 2 litre, and let it stand for 3-4 days, when it becomes amasi, you just add on with fresh milk and then…it expands to 4 litres.
T.3.148 Rachel: How about you, Gladys? Did you grow up using this kind?
T.3.149 Gladys: No.
T.3.150 Rachel: Fresh kind?
T.3.151 Gladys: Yes.
T.3.152 Rachel: And did you grow up in Grahamstown?
T.3.153 Gladys: No. In rural areas.
T.3.154 Rachel: So in Grahamstown, like 30 years ago, did anybody have animals then that they would have milked for their own milk or was it only in rural areas for a long time?
T.3.155 Nomsa and others: There are still cows.
T.3.156 Rachel: So there's still some people who would milk them and have fresh…? But the majority, no.
T.3.157 Nomsa: The majority, no.
T.3.158 Rachel: So you only add amasi at the end? Or I guess I should wait until you get to that part.
T.3.159 Pamela: Do you notice the smell? You can smell it now, it's different.
T.3.160 Rachel: Yes. I'm surprised it doesn't burn without the water.
T.3.161 Nomsa: Gladys is worried about this…
T.3.162 Others: (lots of Xhosa conversation about the number of brands of amasi available, like "Africa" brand and Striker)
T.3.163 Gladys: I prefer Wylie's.
T.3.164 Nomsa: I always buy from Wylie's.
T.3.165 Linda: Okayyyy.
T.3.166 Rachel: Wylie's makes amasi?
T.3.167 Nomsa: Because I've been there and seen their dairy and how they process the milk. I'm very particular when it comes to this. I want to see the process itself, which is a better one from other's. Other's…I don't know about these 2 (Afrika and Strikers).
T.3.168 Linda: but, amnandi
T.3.169 Gladys: nakhe nawatya la amasi
T.3.170 Nomsa: I want to taste this one today. Iafrika.
T.3.171 Linda: Iafrika? Where did you buy this one?
T.3.172 Rachel: At Shoprite.
T.3.173 Linda: At Shoprite.
T.3.174 Pamela: (can't make out tape)
T.3.175 Nomsa: (can't make out tape)
T.3.176 Linda: Africa culture! How? I maybe taste this more than Strikers.
T.3.177 Rachel: But Wylie's is the local one so that's important. And when you went there, you saw. What did they do? How did they do it?
T.3.178 Linda: (in the background): Yeah, they are fresh!
T.3.179 Nomsa: They are at Fruit and Veg, there is other stores that sell this kind…
T.3.180 Rachel: But when you went to their farm, and you saw, how did they do it? You said you went there, right?
T.3.181 Nomsa: They also do yoghurt…They don't add much, they make sure their animals are healthy and so on. They test their animals for….
T.3.182 Rachel: TB..
T.3.183 Linda: iza kakuhle ke ngoku
T.3.184 Pamela: Coming all right? Come back to work!

T.3.185 Rachel: So why do you think people switched to aluminum pots, rather than the iron pots?
T.3.186 Pamela: It looks nicer (laughs).
T.3.187 Nomsa: What I think is it's energy that is used…it's less energy that is used than in an iron pot. An iron pot needs lots of heat to take up. As much as this whole lot of heat…? (couldn't make out)
T.3.188 Pamela: It is a problem that it burns the food much quicker.
T.3.189Rachel: Iron or aluminum?
T.3.190 Pamela: Aluminum.
T.3.191 Nomsa: It burns.
T.3.192 Rachel: Ohhh, so you have to be more careful….and iron pots give you a bit of iron, too, in your diet. So that's good for women, right?
T.3.193 Someone: yes!
T.3.194 Nomsa: awunabe kanti awukavuthwa umphokoqo
T.3.195 Gladys: zamisa uphake
T.3.196 Nomsa: Ai, man, this food is too little…So it's ?? Switch it off..
T.3.197 Linda: ndiwucimile ngoku uyakude uphume nalantshela isezantsi
T.3.198 Nomsa: la masi azakuxutywa nebisi
T.3.199 Linda: ewe sizakuweva kuqala
T.3.200 Nomsa: (can't make out)
(Linda and Pamela begin preparing the dishes, wiping the serving spoon, etc.)
T.3.201 Nomsa: So when you are eating this kind of meal, you don't use a flat plate.
T.3.202 Rachel: No? Only a bowl? Why? To hold the amasi?
T.3.203 Nomsa: Yes.
T.3.204 Linda: (murmurs something about already having some umphokoqo)
T.3.205 Pamela: She wants to know…(laughs) She says she thinks it's too little and she says she has some…
T.3.206 Nomsa: She said the weather is so cold that she doesn't want to cook *umphokoqo*…But I'm telling her that the stomach has no weather. Even if it's cold or hot or…just eat *umphokoqo*.
T.3.207 Rachel: But traditionally, you said, Pamela, that this is eaten mostly in summer time.
T.3.208 Pamela and Nomsa: Mostly in summer. Yes, yes.
T.2.209 Rachel: Because of the cool amasi.
T.3.210 Linda: ndizawupholisa ngoku akuzokukwazi ukuwutya ushushu
T.3.211 Yvonne: May I taste it without amasi? Just a little?
T.3.212 Gladys: You know when you eat *umphokoqo* with tea, you don't use spoon, you just use your hand.
T.3.213 Rachel: ohhh.
T.3.214 Nomsa: You blend it together.
T.3.215 Rachel: You don't put the tea in it, you just drink the tea, and eat the other..
(Gladys mimes drinking and then eating…
T.3.216 Yvonne: It's nice like that (alone)
T.3.217 Rachel: Yes, it's very nice. I like it. It's like couscous.
T.3.218 Gladys: You can also eat *umphokoqo* with amarhewu.
T.3.219 Rachel: Really? On top? Like the amasi.
T.3.220 Linda: ungema naphandle uzokufumzna umoya
T.3.221 Pamela: You are going to put it (the *umphokoqo*) outside.
T.3.222 Rachel: Why? Because you want it totally cold?
T.3.223 Pamela: Mmm..
T.3.224 Nomsa: Cool it outside then.

T.3.225 (lots of chit chat—can't make out)
T.3.336 Yvonne: Yes, that's what my children like. Inkumasi. It's more expensive than the other types.
T.3.337 Nomsa: Gladys doesn't want this.
T.3.338 Rachel: Gladys doesn't like any of them? Why?
T.3.339 Rachel: Because of the way they're representing Africa?
T.3.340 Nomsa: Happy Africa?
T.3.341 Pamela: It's ready now.
T.3.342 Nomsa: Now we're on Phase 2 (as everyone quickly clears the table to serve). (much laughter)
(more chit chat—can't make out)
(serves up the *umphokoqo* in each bowl and then pours out the amasi on each.
T.3.343 Rachel: It's hard not to have it burn, heh?
T.3.344 Yvonne: Let me see what is left.
T.3.345 Everyone: Intshela! Intshela!
T.3.346 Gladys: Do you want intshela?
T.3.347 Rachel: What's intshela?
T.3.348 Nomsa: That burned…
T.3.349 Rachel: It's delicious. So the main difference between this and pap is how much water you add and how you stir it?
T.3.350 Linda: (can't make out)
T.3.351 Pamela: More water.
T.3.352 Rachel: And you stir it with a spoon.
T.3.353 Linda: A wooden spoon. I've got a wooden spoon (goes to get it and demonstrates the action of stirring). Just use this spoon.
T.3.354 Rachel: and stir frequently.
T.3.355 Linda: And your heat must be low.
T.3.356 Rachel: And how long does that take? As long as this? About the same?
T.3.357 Linda: The same.
T.3.358 Rachel: You wait until the water is absorbed?
T.3.359 Linda: Yes.

Appendix 4
Isigwamba and *Amarhewu* Video Transcription T.2

August 1 2006
Present: Sister Nomsa Titi, Linda January, Pamela Joseph, Gladys Tyatya and Rachel Jolly

T.2.1 Rachel: Okay, can you tell me what you were just talking about, about the way you cut it, were you saying something?
T.2.2 Linda: le indawo yespinach ibaluleke kakhulu kuba kulapho sifumana khona izakha mzimba, ko kona kutya oku ususa lendawo iba semhlabeni, usivase wakugqiba usinqunqe.
T.2.3 Pamela: This is the most important part of the spinach, it's the most healthiest. Cut off the dirty part, and wash the rest.
T.2.4 Rachel: So Linda, you had said it was the healthiest part. Why is it healthy? Do you know? It's just good…?
T.2.5 Linda: (mumbles something to Pamela)
T.2.6 Rachel: And you can say, too, Gladys, if you have an opinion on it. Anyone can. Does anyone know why it's the healthiest part? I don't know.
T.2.7 Gladys: Kungokuba I spinach esi isiqu saso sifunxa zonke eza nutrients zomhlaba ezi kanye zifunwa ngumzimba. Andiyazi nokuba ndiphendula kakuhle.
T.2.8 Pamela: (laughs)
T.2.9 Rachel: What's so funny?
T.2.10 Pamela: I don't know. I think she says because this part, because it stays in the ground, and the ground gives the nutrition to the actual food, I think this bears most of the nutrition, more than the leaves. We think so; we were never actually told.
T.2.11 Rachel: Yeah, I've never heard that. That's interesting.
T.2.12 Gladys: enye into inika incasa nalambala umhle u green and white
T.2.13 Pamela: It gives a stronger taste to the spinach.
T.2.14 Rachel: Okay. Can I help do anything?
T.2.15 Linda: ungawalahli amagqabi kuba abalulekile kuthi
T.2.16 Pamela: These are the important parts. The outer leaves.
T.2.17 Gladys: kufuneka usisuse I skin kuba kaloku siyashekela apha emlonyeni nxa usitya.
T.2.18 Pamela: She just suggested that you take the skin off, because it stays behind (motions to her mouth).
T.2.19 Linda: yiza, ndizakufundisa ukunqunqa kwe khaphetshu ngoku
T.2.20 Pamela: She's showing you how to cut the cabbage.
T.2.21 Linda: kufuneka usinqunqe sibe fine sizokukwazi ukuvuthwa msinya
T.2.22 Pamela: Cut it very fine so it can cook more quickly. (Watching me) She is used to make the cole slaw.
(I cut cabbage, Pamela watches and sees I'm cutting it too thick.)
T.2.23 Pamela: Cut it as if you were making cole slaw, because this is very thick.
T.2.24 Rachel: So even finer? …Like that? Okay. So someone told me before that in traditional Xhosa culture, you wouldn't put anything sharp in the pot. They saw the picture, the video of the umpokoqo, last time, with the fork, and they said, "No, we don't put anything sharp in the pot. Have you heard that before?
T.2.25 Pamela: What do you use to stir then?
Rachel: I don't know. They said maybe you would transfer it out of the pot, and then use a spoon or something.
T.2.26 Gladys: Why?
T.2.27 Rachel: I don't know. They said traditionally, in rural areas, they would never put any sharp implements, or any sharp tools, in the pot.

T.2.28 Pamela: The only sharp thing that you don't put in, that I know of, is a knife. Directly into the pot.
(Rachel continues to cut cabbage, and Gladys continues to clean spinach).
T.2.29 Rachel: So you're taking, shaving the stems of the spinach off because it leaves an after taste? Is that what you were saying?
T.2.30 Pamela: No, Gladys says the skin stays behind on your teeth.
T.2.31 Rachel: (laughing) So that's the only reason you're doing it?
T.2.32 Pamela: I have to disagree with that. If something stays behind on my teeth, I just take a toothpick and I use it.
(Nomsa Titi walks in, having gotten lost finding Linda's, so a short discussion about that ensues.)
(Meanwhile, Linda is drying and preparing pot for cooking.
Pamela is cutting cabbage finer to "make up" for Rachel's poor work!)
T.2.33 Rachel: So when you guys were growing up, did you also make it with spinach and cabbage, or only the umfuno kind, when you were young? Like your mother's, did they use cabbage and spinach or only umfuno?
T.2.34 Linda and Pamela: Only umfuno.
T.2.35 Rachel: So why has that changed? Has that changed because of convenience, the time it takes to go out into the field and collect, or has it changed because people don't have it anymore in their gardens, or…why do you think?
T.2.36 Pamela: I think it's changed because others don't show us anymore, because for instance, I don't even know how umfuno actually looks, the leaves. The leaves look like, once next to another, they all look the same to me, at least.
T.2.37 Rachel: Yeah.
T.2.38 Pamela: Whereas with spinach, I know how it looks. When I go to Fruit and Veg, I know this is spinach.
T.2.39 Rachel: Did you grow up, though, watching your mother cook with imfino or with spinach?
T.2.40 Pamela: No, with imifino.
T.2.41 Rachel: Okay.
T.2.42 Pamela: One thing I do know about it, though, is that the smell it has. Yeah, it has this smell about it. To me.
T.2.43 Linda: sizakugalela ikhaphetshu lonke embizeni, sinqunqe netswele, zibile kunye ngexesha elinye. Ugalele imiliririrayisi
T.2.44 Nomsa: ispinach sona
T.2.45 Linda: Nxa lifuphi ukuvuthwa ikhaphetshu ugalele I spinach
T.2.46 Pamela: First the cabbage into the pot, first, then cut the onion on top.
T.2.47 Linda: ugalela ikhaphetshu kuqala embizeni unqunqe itswele uligalele phezu kwekhaphetshu
T.2.48 Pamela: Let those cook first, the onion and the cabbage.
(Gladys adds to Pamela's translation: so that they can boil together).
T.2.49 Linda: Nxa iqalisa ukubila ugalele ikopi yemilirayisi
(Gladys adds to Pamela's translation: You put a cup of mealie rice so that they can boil together with the cabbage.
T.2.50 Pamela: When the cabbage is fully cooked, we add the spinach.
T.2.51 Rachel: Is it too much?
T.2.52 Linda: No, not too much.
T.2.53 Linda: uyifumene phi milirayisi?
T.2.54 Gladys: Ndiyithenge ka maMcirha
T.2.55 Linda: They don't sell this (mealie rice) at our shop.

T.2.56 Rachel: Oh, okay. Gladys just taught me what mealie rice is. I never heard of mealie rice before.
T.2.57 Gladys: Nxa sozigalele zonke izinto, ugalela itswele ukugcina la ncasa yentswele.
T.2.58 Pamela: Linda prefers putting the cabbage and onion in first, together, but Gladys suggests we cook the cabbage first with the mealie rice, then we put the onion right after it, so it can contain the taste. It adds a very strong taste, the onion, when it's put much later on. But they are deciding when to put it on, I'm not sure.
T.2.59 Rachel: (laughs)
T.2.60 Pamela: Ayinangxaki nanjalo sipheka ngokupheka
T.2.61 Linda: Abanye bapheka bagqibe baligalele ngaphezulu ndandibone kuno Mami
T.2.62 Pamela: Others would cook the vegetables completely, and then put the onion in, raw, because it has a very strong taste.
(Pamela continues to cut cabbage, Linda motions to me with the spring onion)
T.2.63 Pamela: They'll give you to cut it.
T.2.64 Rachel: Is it just like this, that you want it?
T.2.65 Nomsa: These spinach ends have lots of nutrition, and you can make soup out of it. You can make vegetable soup out of it. You find that the juice that comes out of there has all the stuff that you need, nutritions, vitamins, and so on. This part is very good (holding up the end). You musn't throw it away. Or you can reserve it, if you find the spinach is too white, you can reserve it and make a soup out of it another time.
T.2.66 Rachel: And this dish, too, wild or not, umfuno or imifino, was eaten by all ages, both men and women…? Oh, no, this is the dish that is just eaten by women, right?
T.2.67 Nomsa: Yeah, basically.
T.2.68 Rachel: Still?
T.2.69 Nomsa: But lately, the men are getting it. They feel that they are getting a lot of vitamins. They've discovered that. Especially that this one is only cabbage and spinach. The imifino, the wild imifino, men used not to eat it. They say it's eaten by women.
T.2.70 Pamela whispers: Ask her why.
T.2.71 Rachel: Why? (pauses) I know why!
(Pamela and Rachel laugh)
T.2.72 Rachel: Why only women?
T.2.73 Pamela: You already know why!
T.2.74 Rachel: So Nomsa, why did the men eat it? (misspeaking)
T.2.75 Nomsa: Because they wanted to taste what we are eating, and they feel it's good, it's healthy.
T.2.76 Rachel: But why didn't they used to eat it?
T.2.77 Nomsa: They said it makes them shy, not to behave like a man. Like they would behave like a woman.
T.2.78 Rachel: And would all ages eat, the wild kind? Girls and women? Would young kids eat it, too?
T.2.79 Nomsa: Yeah, it's very good. This is what they prefer. If you ask their mothers…(phone rings and she leaves the room).
T.2.80 Linda: Namaxolo ekhaphetshu uyawavasisisa uwapheke nawo
T.2.81 Pamela: The outer cabbage leaves as well. Cut it and make sure you wash it properly.
(Gladys finely chops the onion, Pamela cuts more spring onion).
T.2.82 Linda: (unintelligible)
T.2.83 Pamela: The water will depend on the spinach or cabbage or..
T.2.84 Rachel: Okay, with cabbage, you need more water or less water, or…?
T.2.85 Pamela: Less water.
T.2.86 Linda: (unintelligible)

T.2.87 Pamela: Put it on very low heat.
T.2.88 Rachel: Okay, as low as with the umpokoqo?
T.2.89 Linda: Right.
T.2.90 Pamela: It cooks very quickly.
T.2.91 Rachel: And how do you know when it's done? Do you smell it or time it?
T.2.92 Linda: Xa ugalele yonke into uzakuwuva…(unintelligible)
(Gladys adds to translation: when you put together all the stuff, you're going to taste it)
T.2.93 Pamela: You time it I think. It doesn't have to completely cook, because you still have other things to add: you still have your mealie rice to add, and your spinach to add and your onion to add..
T.2.94 Linda: Ulinda ibile uqale ugalele ezinye izinto
T.2.95 Pamela: Just until it boils. Then you start adding the other things. You let it boil first.
T.2.96 Rachel: What are you getting the water ready for now?
T.2.97 Linda: Ndimisa amanzi for umdoko
T.2.98 Nomsa: Are you going to cook amarhewu today?
T.2.99 Rachel: If we can.
T.2.100 Pamela: She's getting the water ready for that.
(Linda starts chopping the spinach very finely. She then adds mealie rice (distributes evenly) to pot over cabbage and onion, no stirring).
T.2.101 Rachel: So you don't stir it? Just leave it.
T.2.102 Linda: Right.
T.2.103 Rachel: So how often would you eat this in a week? An average week? Any of you? Or does it just depend on your taste…?
T.2.104 Nomsa: Twice a week. It depends.
T.2.105 Rachel: Lunch or supper?
T.2.106 Nomsa: Any time. It could be any day, any time of the day.
T.2.107 Rachel: But not breakfast, you never have it in the morning?
T.2.108 Nomsa: You can. Because it's easily cooked. For those who bring lunch. You know, in my culture, when people go to work, they bring their food. So you can prepare it in the morning for your husband to take to work, as a lunchbox. It's easy, to take to work.
T.2.109 Rachel: Do you think people bring it into the fields? For people who work in the fields?
T.2.110 Nomsa: They do. They cook it in the morning and bring it. It's good, but you can eat it while it is cold as well. When it is leftover as a breakfast food, you can bring it, and eat it cold. What I like most about it, besides its nutritious value, is it is good for the tummy. It keeps the tummy works. If you have a block, if you have a problem of constipation, it gives you a "good time" to go!
T.2.111 Rachel: Okay (laughs). So what's the mealie rice for? When do you use that?
T.2.112 Nomsa: It's to add to the imifino. It's to make it stiffer. Otherwise, it's too soft.
T.2.113 Rachel: Do you always do that or just sometimes?
T.2.114 Nomsa: Always.
T.2.115 Linda: ukugalela kwakho I milirayisi ixhomekeke kwispinatshi sakho ukuba singakanai na embizeni
T.2.116 Pamela: Your mealie rice will depend on the amount of spinach you're cooking (pours about 2 cups into a Tupperware container).
T.2.117 Linda: kufuneka uhlambe imilirayisi phambi kokuba uyipheke
T.2.118 Pamela: You wash your mealie rice.
T.2.119 Rachel: With cold or hot water?
T.2.120 Linda: Cold.
T.2.121 Pamela: You wash it to take out the starch and to remove pieces of dirt.

T.2.122 Linda: uqiniseke ke ngoku ukuba I clean kakuhle
T.2.123 Pamela: You thoroughly wash it (as Linda rinses a 3rd time)
T.2.124 Gladys: kufuneka yisasaze embizeni nxa uyigelela amanzi uwalumkele angangeni
(Gladys later adds to translation: When you pour in the mealie rice, you have to distribute it around the pot, and make sure the water in which you rinsed the rice doesn't get poured into the pot)
T.2.125 Linda: litswele eli ndiligalelayo eliya lihlaza
T.2.126 Pamela: The onion. She's adding the spring onion. (no stirring).
T.2.127 Pamela: Then the mealie rice (distributed evenly over the vegetables)
T.2.128 Rachel: So I've never seen mealie rice. What exactly is it?
T.2.129 Pamela: Mealie rice, is it fine rice?
T.2.130 Nomsa: It's not rice, actually. It's like mealie meal. It's mealies.
T.2.131 Rachel: But it's not as coarse as mealie meal. Or, it's coarser?
T.2.132 Nomsa: It's coarser than mealie meal.
T.2.133 Linda: (unintelligible)
T.2.134 Pamela: So you don't stir it (the mealie meal).
T.2.135 Rachel: You just put it on top. Okay.
T.2.136 Pamela: Cover and you let cook.
T.2.137 Rachel: So this, too, when you talked about your mothers grinding the mealie meal, they would just grind it a little bit and they would make this (mealie rice)?
T.2.138 Everyone: yes.
T.2.139 Nomsa: When they would over-grind, they use it as a mealie meal. No waste.
(after 20 mins or so)
(Linda adds about 3/4 mug of mealie meal. Then puts some salt in her hand and adds that)
T.2.140 Pamela: Now you must add the salt.
T.2.141 Nomsa; You just put it in your hand.
T.2.142 Rachel: No one measures.
T.2.143 Nomsa: Yes! None of this tablespoon of this…they're highly skilled. Gosh! I like this.
T.2.144 Linda: ndigalela ityuwa ndikhe ndiyeke ibile
T.2.145 Linda: amafutha ee wors,inkuku nezinye siyawagcina for ukugalela kwimifino
(Gladys later translates: the fat from vors, chicken, etc., we keep it for cooking imifino)
T.2.146 Nomsa: are tasteful…
T.2.147 Rachel: Then you add the fat now.
(Linda adds about a 1/4 cup of animal fat and stirs it into imifino)
T.2.148 Nomsa: I fish oil ayinancasa ungayigalela ibhotile yonke kwimifino
(Gladys later adds to translation: the cooking oil doesn't have taste; you can pour the whole bottle.)
T.2.149 Nomsa: amafutha endiwathandayo yi dripping kodwa ayifumaneki
(Gladys later adds to translation: She likes drippings but you can't find them now).
T.2.150 Pamela: After you adding the fat, and a little bit of salt, you cook for 10-15 minutes, you smell it, and it's done.
T.2.151 Linda: Kufuneka uqiniseke ukuba yonke into idibene
(Gladys adds to translation: you have to make sure that everything is all mixed together).

Amarhewu:
T.2.152 Pamela: For the amarhewu, to start with, I'll be using about 4 spoons of flour, 1/2 teaspoon of yeast…

T.2.153 Rachel: Are you just saying spoonfuls for my benefit, or do you usually measure that way? Do you usually just estimate?
T.2.154 Pamela: I don't usually…I don't measure.
T.2.155 Nomsa: I will use a teaspoon to spill it out from the packet.
T.2.156 Pamela: You stir in luke-warm water now. (In monotone):Stir the dry ingredients first together. (Laughs)
T.2.157 Rachel: (laughing) You're a natural for a cooking show, Pamela.
T.2.158 Pamela: I know. I think I'll run my own show one day. I think about 1/2 cup will be enough. Stir, stir, stir, until all the dry ingredients are dissolved and you let it stand. Preferably cover it. With cling wrap, much better.
T.2.159 Nomsa: I usually add a bit of sugar.
T.2.160 Rachel: So what did they do before the days of yeast packets?
T.2.161 Nomsa: They used yeast cubes.
T.2.162 Rachel: Like your mother would use…
T.2.163 Nomsa: Yeast cubes.
T.2.164 Gladys: amanzi kufuneka abe dikidiki ugalele itisipuni le swekile kunye necephe lo mgubo uyiyeke imini yonke ibe nokubila.
T.2.165 Nomsa: (can't make out tape)
T.2.166 Gladys: igwele lomgubo lona lithatha ixesha ukubila ebusika ayifani ne yeast
T.2.167 Pamela: ohhh ayifani nale ithengwayo.
T.2.168 Pamela: She said you can use flour with the sugar only.
T.2.169 Rachel: No yeast?
T.2.170 Pamela: No yeast. In summer.
T.2.171 Rachel: When it's warm…
T.2.172 Gladys: Eli igwele lona alibinayo la ncasa imbi xa ulisela
T.2.173 Pamela: The one with the sugar and flour only, there's no after-taste. But this, you can smell this, the first part (the first phase of the yeast acting). (Rachel smells it). You just leave it for…let's say, 30 minutes?
T.2.174 Nomsa: nizakupholisa isidudu ngoku
T.2.175 Pamela: Hayi
T.2.176 Gladys: (can't make out tape).
T.2.177 Nomsa: Until tomorrow.
T.2.178 Rachel: So you let the yeast stand until tomorrow? Before you do anything else, just the yeast stands.
T.2.179 Pamela: We can cook that (the mealie meal) so that tomorrow, everything else is ready.
T.2.180 Pamela: (brings pot of water to a boil, then gets out ACE Mealie Meal). Never add salt. (pours about a mug full of mealie meal). This is about a litre of water. Come and have a look, Rachel. Do you think this is about a litre of water?
T.2.181 Rachel: I'd say so…but hey, you don't measure it, so I'll try and just look and learn it with my eyes.
T.2.182 Pamela: About 2 cups of maize..let's try 2 cups, and then we'll see. Then you add cold water, so it doesn't make…what do you call it? When it sticks together?
T.2.183 Rachel: Clumps. Or lumps.
(Pamela stirs the mealie meal and water). Preferably use the wooden spoon.
T.2.184 Rachel: Why?
T.2.185 Gladys: (can't make out tape)
T.2.186 Pamela: Because it's much longer.
T.2.187 Rachel: (laughing) That's not the only reason! Because it's longer!

T.2.188 Nomsa: Because you stand for a long time stirring so it doesn't form lumps. And with that other kind of spoon, you'll easily burn. Because it's got heat from the hot water, from the pot itself, and then you burn. But the wooden spoon, you can sit for 10 minutes (showing how you'd stir).
T.2.189 Rachel: So this kind of recipe is relatively unchanged. It hasn't changed over time…except for the processed mealie-meal.
T.2.190 Pamela: Uh-huh. Now we're adding and stirring, adding and stirring… (everyone laughs because of the tone she's using)
T.2.191 Rachel: And it's still on high heat, from when you were boiling? You keep it on high heat?
T.2.192 Pamela: (can't make out tape)
(Rachel takes over stirring and Pamela cleans up cooking area)
T.2.193 Nomsa: Rachel, for this demonstration, how much are you paying the host?
T.2.194 Rachel: I'm not paying enough probably. I want to pay for electricity use, and I'm giving you a little treat, like chocolate, but I don't know…
T.2.195 Nomsa: I mean the host.
T.2.196 Rachel: Yes, I know, Linda, the host. No , we haven't…I don't know.
T.2.197 Nomsa: Am I curious to ask, that this doesn't concern me?
T.2.198 Rachel: No, maybe it's something that Linda is too shy and polite to ask.
T.2.199 Nomsa: I must try and show that I'm old, so I'm treating you as my children, you must do the right thing at the right time, not so you'll say, "Nomsa, I don't want you in my house, with those ladies…"
T.2.200 Gladys: Like on Friday, we felt very sad when she said, "I don't have electricity."
T.2.201 Nomsa: Because they're not working..
T.2.202 Gladys: So we have to consider…
(Nomsa comes up and changes the subject by asking if I wouldn't burn myself if I were using a metal spoon).
T.2.203 Rachel: So is there anything you feel like you're getting now in your diet that you think your parent's generation wasn't getting? Or is there anything they got that you're not getting now that your parents were getting? Health-wise? Nutrition-wise?
T.2.204 Nomsa: In my own opinion, I feel like we're missing a lot. We tend to think we're clever now and ignore think their kind of diet. It's still very good, with this ready-made food, and of course, the products have lots of nutrition. So we think we're clever. I don't know. But if we were using that old kind of grinding, we'd get more than this. Because these types of food (referring to mealie meal) are fortified. And our old people were much stronger than we are. They were not disposable like we are.
T.2.205 Rachel: (Laughing) You're not disposable. Why do you think they were stronger?
T.2.206 Nomsa: Because they were eating good food!

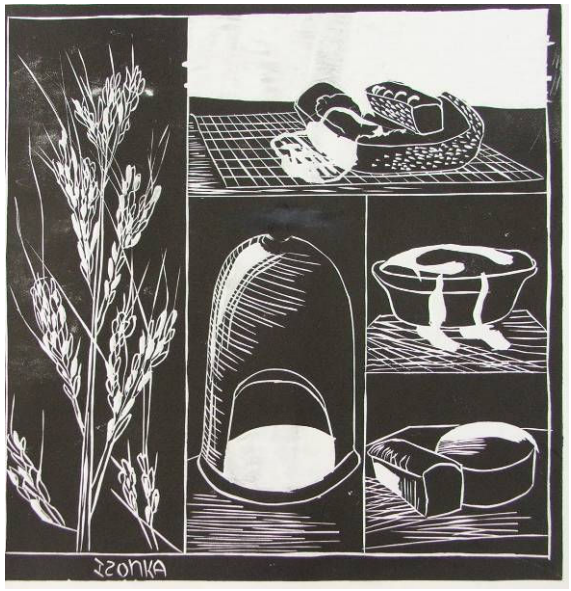
Appendix 5
Keiskamma Art Project
Indigenous Food Artwork

Embroidered Wall Hanging showing *umphokoqo, amasi, amarhewu, isigwamba, isonka* and *umqombothi*

Block Print of *amarhewu*

Block Print of *amasi*

Block Print of *isigwamba*



Block Print of *isonka*

Block Print of *umqombothi*

Appendix 6

Representation of data in images and narratives used for member checking

Isigwamba

- Gladys cuts the spinach and places the leaves in a dish of water to wash.
- Linda specifies that the bottom part of the stem is the most important, most nutritious part of the spinach, so be careful not to discard it.

- While Gladys shaves the skin off the spinach (so it doesn't get stuck in your teeth), Linda finely chops the cabbage and Pamela washes the spinach.

- The cabbage is put in a pot and put on the stove with water and a chopped onion on top.

- While Linda begins to cook the cabbage and onion, Pamela chops the spring onion.

Appendix 7

Final Interviews

Please Note: These interviews were not taped; the following are my careful notes from our sessions

Linda January, 5, October, 2006 I.3

She has cleaned schools before, but mostly has worked as seasmstress

Remembers the hand ground mealie meal experience in Hamburg the most and really liked the taste. She used to have a grindstone but doesn't know where it is now. Probably hasn't used it since the mid 1970's. She used to use it with her grandmother. Her grandmother taught her the different kinds of imifino. She used to make isigwamba with only mealie rice, mealie meal (the hand-ground combo) and imifino. When gogo talked about the yeast in Hamburg, it made Linda remember that her mom used to make it that way.

Pamela Joseph, 4, October, 2006 I. 4
Never been married, has one 7 year old son. Finished Matric and has taken a Management Assistance course. Doesn't have a garden but enjoys cooking. Is between 25-30 years old.

What did she get from this project? "Especially when it comes to nutrition, I never thought about why we ate what we did." Especially when Nomsa was around, I learned a lot. I now eat the white stalk of the spinach; I used to cut it off.

Gladys Tyatya, 4, October, 2006 I. 5
She was born in Riebeck East, went to school Grade A-Standard 3 there, then moved to Grahamstown, went to Archie Mbolekwa for Standard 4-5, then to Middle Drift (Ciskei) for Standards 6-9, then Imyibiba in Ft. Beaufort for St. 10. She was 1 of 5 kids. She has taken short courses in Gtown in Business, Computers (typing). Has been a petrol attendant and a secretary with the Regional Educare Council. Took the Goldfields course in 1999, in 2000 the REC (an ngo based in Bishu) retrenched her due to their financial difficulties. In 2001, started work on contract basis, 3 days/week in the EE unit. Has worked here ever since. Completed diploma in Early Childhood Development through the CSD in 2005.

Her mother taught her how to cook. She took turns with her siblings. She learned by watching and by mom's explanations. Her father was strict and said you don't just cook—have to cook properly. She now enjoys cooking. She has 2 children (one biological).

Before working in the EE Unit, wasn't that serious about nutrition. But mom had encouraged them to eat wild imifino. She had used it for remedy for diarrhea, loss of appetite, etc. Growing up, she had kind of given up indig. foods but has been motivated by Rob, not just by talking about it, but by "doing" indigenous food stuff…cooking and discussing together. She started her own food garden in 2003.

In her Goldfields course, the instructor had told them that "we are all teachers and learners." She feels this is true here: by coming together to do the same thing and then noticing

differences, we all learn something from each other. “It reminds me where I am coming from and I end up feeling proud of myself, of being ‘Gladys Tyatya!”

“This cooking has helped me a lot by getting more information, by learning from the older generation. By asking one question, it makes me curious to learn more.” Since being involved in this project (mine) I now make sure I cook imifino once or twice every week and my family really enjoys it. I now eat umphokoqo too. I’m not afraid of what my friends say. I dish it up and start educating them.

Hamburg was a great trip. I felt very proud of my culture and of the gogo—she was very honest. If she didn’t know something, she said so. I really liked the demo of the 2 kinds of umphokoqo—I remember feeling the different texture, noticing the different colors. I remember getting full faster from the hand-ground meal than from the ACE. Everyone was more interested in that one, not the one we bought from the shop.

I would like to see the EE Unit provide a space whereby I could cook indigenous food for learners and educate them so that the new generation can gain a lot about their culture. It was also good networking with another project—Keiskamma. This seems to be helping them to keep busy, get income to sustain a livelihood and visit other areas to show others what they are doing. I liked that.

Nomsa Titi, 6 October, 2006 I.6
I was born in Salem, but grew up in Tantyi location. I was one of 6—3 boys, 3 girls and I was oldest. Both parents raised me but my father died in 1986. I have always had a garden.

My mother used to ask us to cook and then would critique it and even make us do her tea over if it wasn’t served hot. That was embarrassing. I was about 14 when I started cooking, and I had to cook for everyone else. Mom went out to work when I was in St. 9. I finished St. 9 and then had to quit school and find work. I worked as a nurse and then went back on my own to finish Matric. Then got diplomas in nursing, psychiatry, and midwifery.

Worked as a nurse for the municipality from 1986-2004. I’ve focused on the correlation between diet, treatment and physical activity. “Nutrition is part and parcel part of my study, indirectly.” I visited homes and saw the need for assisting them nutritionally. With Soroptimists, motivated folks to plant gardens, get seeds, we did garden competitions. This did 3 things: cleaned their premises for environmental purposes, embarked on their own garden (empowerment) and boosted their nutritional state.

I was worried that in the demo’s you did, we were only a few people. We need to include more people in order to bring their consciousness back to the indigenous food. Our tendency as black people is to undermine our background, our own food. We are brainwashed, we want ready-made food which doesn’t have any value whatsoever. If we meet with the community, could do so at cultural meetings, church meetings, etc. “The sickness” (HIV/AIDS) has come to our people and they are dying like flies; this can be prevented and good nutrition is so important with that.

Feel that our culture has been used by those people making flavored amarhewu, amasi, etc. Some white man got the recipe and made an industry of it and is now benefiting. We are being used as a tool and that is very painful.