# Improving my professional practice by infusing values of social justice as a teacher educator

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, sincerely declare that this dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the degree:

# Magister Artium

is original and entirely my own work, except where other sources have been acknowledged. I also certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted at this or any other faculty or institution.

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Percivale Mondli Mdunge

Bloemfontein 05 January 2014

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*Dedication*

To my son, Smanga, with the greatest hope that you will grow up and be inspired to share similar values of respect, fairness, human dignity and kindness.

Percivale Mondli Mdunge

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# 1 CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

> In preparing for the International Conference on Teacher Education and Social Justice, I asked my colleagues at the College of Education at Wits University to comment on their courses in relation to social justice issues. Many claimed they had yet to consider links between their teaching and oppression. Even the methodology department indicated that its courses were not yet aimed at equipping future educators with teaching strategies that would enable them to challenge prejudice and discrimination in schools (Kumashiro, 2004: 264).

## 1.1 Introduction

There are a number of ways in which scholars around the world have debated and explained what they understand to be the definition or purpose of education. One definition that can perhaps be closely linked to the purpose of my study is based on Whitehead and McNiff's (2010) view that education is a transformational activity that regulates social organisations and moves social formation in the direction of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. I assume that values that will bring hope for the future of humanity are not naturally acquired and that it is only through the unlearning of messages from our early socialisation and critical reflective practice that we may arrive at some understanding of those values that would bring about transformation within our society. Values are a set of behaviour and attitudes that we learn through experience and this is reiterated by Arawi (2002: 1) when pointing out that:

> Some things in life we learn as we go. We call this experience. Other things we acquire either through our own effort and reflection, (like Sufi in seclusion trying to know more about his/her creator); or through the help of a guru, a mentor, or a teacher who happens to know more, and, for one reason or another, chooses to help us in any way.

I argue that in order for us to work towards an anti-oppressive society, we need to centre education as the primary tool for social transformation in order to end oppression. We need to be able to reflect on our daily practices as students or lecturers; as men or women; as African, Indian, white or coloured; as disabled or able-bodied; as heterosexual or homosexual on how we have acquired our set of values which we use to measure what is good and what is bad, what is normal and what is not. This study is a detailed account of my lived theory, which seeks to improve my own practice through infusing values of social justice in my teaching as a teacher educator in an institute of higher education. To provide a rationale for the study, I begin this chapter by identifying and explaining the concern that

has led to this study and I give an account of what drives my research. I then discuss the research questions that form the pillars of the study and explain the methods that I use to collect my data. Through my lived theory as a teacher educator, I detail the context of my research and provide my research design. Next, I explain some of the challenges of my study and how I plan to overcome some of them, noting that other practitioners who are engaged in active reflective practice could experience such challenges. To conclude the first cycle of my continuous reflective practice, I discuss the approach I will be using to analyse my data and evaluate whether or not my practice has been affected by my action plan.

## 1.2 Mapping out my concern: how I got to this point?

In 2008 South Africa was horrified at the reporting of a racist incident that occurred in one of the institutions of learning in the country, all in the midst of attempts to make amends with an apartheid regime which dominated the country for a number of years until its demise in 1994. The Reitz incident saw 4 former students enrolled at the University of the Free State humiliating African employees of the university by video recording them as they made a comical protest against the newly implemented multiracial residence living arrangements (Smith, 2011). This incident invoked a number of concerns about our country and the transformation process

> Indeed the video incident has highlighted the existence of a wide range of differing perspectives, especially among our students, about race relations and transformation. Racial fault lines and stereotyping, perhaps dormant or invisible for some time, have come to the surface again (Fourie, 2008).

This was a critical incident in our young democratic South African history as it opened up discussions about the pace at which the transformation process was moving and got us to ask questions such as *How are we supposed to engage with our racist past as individuals*? As I reflected on the incident, I asked myself a number of questions not placing blame on the four students for their actions, but questions like: *Where had they learned these notions about themselves and people of colour? After spending 12 years in formal schooling, had these notions about themselves and people of colour not been challenged? What other negative notions about their identities had they internalised that were not challenged through formal education, for example as males? Do institutions of higher learning provide spaces through their curriculums where students can engage in matters that are of most*

*concern for the realisation of transformation goals? How many other students have such bias notions of their own identities?* This process of enquiry encouraged me to reflect on my own lived experiences and personal socialisation that had taught me a number of societal normalised views of what it means to be a male or female, a white person or a person of colour, disabled or able-bodied, rich or poor.

However, the *Reitz 4* incident is just one of the daily experiences of oppression that was publicised amongst many that go unrecognised or unchallenged, in other words, similar experiences occur almost daily, it is not all that get publicity through the media. Through our socialisation we often internalise oppression and domination and as a result, we remain unaware of the existence of oppression and unconsciously collude with oppression. In this regard Harro (2010: 45) affirms that the

> socialization process is pervasive (coming from all sides and sources), consistent (patterned and predictable), circular (self-imposing), self-perpetuating (intra-dependent) and often invisible (unconscious and unnamed).

Due to the pervasive and invisible nature of oppression, our social experiences are fuelled by messages of what individuals, institutions and society deems to be the dominant discourse. Through the use of social networks, many individuals have publicly expressed some concerning view points about critical issues of difference that stem from their own socialisation and acquired set of values. People do so, often without consciously realising the oppressive nature of their remarks. An example of this could perhaps be made evident through the following snapped images of comments made by Facebook users:


**Figure 1.1: Mandla**


**Figure 1.2: Siya**


**Figure 1.3: Sbu**

In the first image Mandla[1] an aspiring young entrepreneur, after watching a local TV soapie which features a gay couple, updated his Facebook status by saying: *How will society stop with moral degeneration when Mfundi Mvundla[2] is making us watch men asking men out on dates on national TV?* Such a comment is common and by far represents a cultural homophobic essence. In this regard Blumenfeld (2010:379) explains that

> Cultural homophobia (sometimes called collective or societal homophobia) refers to the social norms or codes of behaviour that, although not expressly written into law or policy none the less work within a society to legitimize oppression. It results in attempts either to exclude images of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people from the media or from history or to represent these groups in negative stereotypical terms.

Homosexuality is often regarded as a sin by most religions and homosexuals are subsequently portrayed as being the cause of moral degradation in society. Once again, the values Mandla holds are synonymous with those that society, institutions and individuals view as the norm where a homosexual identity is regarded as the *other* (Kumashiro, 2002).

Figure 1.2 is also a Facebook status update by an African friend[3] of mine who graduated with an undergraduate degree in business in 2009. He updated by saying: *Also I need to find me a doctor ... a white one because a coolie or black one only want money and your life is secondary ... called the one I went to earlier this week and she says she doesn't make appointments for follow-ups*. In this status update one can identify internalised racism and subordination as the perception portrayed in that white people make better doctors than doctors from other race [4]groups. He even uses the term "coolie[5]" to refer to Indians to emphasise what he thinks about people of colour, and this is true of many other professions. He based his judgement of non-white doctors on a stereotype that only white doctors are good doctors and have good patient care. Thus, he colludes with a stereotype that is rooted in a form of oppression that prejudices on the basis of race and racism. This form of collusion is underscored by Hardiman and Jackson (1997) when they argue that

[1] Names have been changed and all Facebook users referred to are African males
[2] South African TV producer
[3] This person was contacted and agreed to say his real name could be used for my study
[4] Race in this study is used to refer to a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color) and not as reffering to genetic or biological racial categories.

[5] A derogatory term used as a racial slur to refer to Indian people, particularly in South Africa

people who have been socialised in an oppressive society and accept the dominant groups' ideology, learn to accept a negative and hurtful definition of themselves. By accepting a negative stereotypical definition of his race group, my African friend colludes with oppression.

The final snapped status update (cf. Figure 1.3) is by another friend of mine (Sbu) who graduated with a degree in education in 2009 and is currently working as an educator. He updated by saying: *A man cries inside, but always sticks it out. Now you're acting like a 'bhujwa[6]' don't come crying by us.* This is perhaps common in our early socialisation where we learn as young boys messages about what is acceptable masculine behaviour. Such messages place a man under a lot of scrutiny by other men (Kimmel, 2010) who keep you in check to ensure that you behave according to the norm. Here an internalised view that crying makes you less of a man is conveyed and as a very common view, it often leads to name calling such as *sissy*, *coconut* and many others.

I use these 3 images to help map out some of the concerns that have led me to engage in this study. I deliberately mention the 3 Facebook users' level of education and profession because it should raise questions about what role both schooling and tertiary education has played in challenging discriminatory perceptions about the Othered (Kumashiro, 2002). Whilst all of them graduated from different universities in South Africa, I am challenged by the question as to whether spaces were created for them to engage with issues around transformation, oppression, discrimination and prejudice. The consequences of silencing and marginalising these issues in higher education have a far-reaching negative impact in working towards goals of social transformation and a non-discriminatory society. Thus, we have to reflect on our role as educators in facilitating social transformation. Arawi (2002:3) spells out the role of education when explaining that:

> A man can only be a man through education. He is nothing more than what education makes him. When we educate children, we should teach them about the status quo, yet we have to make them also think of the need to improve the human condition.

[6] Zulu word used to describe men who are perceived as 'soft' or not masculine in nature and who are viewed as having a white personality. They are also referred to as coconuts meaning they are black on the outside and white on the inside.

For example, one can only imagine how an educator who has been brought up believing that crying is feminine, will deal with a crying male learner. Tatum (2010) states that our identities are shaped and socially constructed by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors and social contexts, and the influence thereof results in our own cherished and practiced values. However, due to the nature of our unequal society that subordinates some identities whilst privileging others, it becomes crucial for educational practitioners to intervene and engage students in dialogue around issues pertaining to equality, social justice and discrimination. This study is subsequently a response to my concern about the role I play in challenging oppression and engaging my students in classroom discussions and dialogue that not only troubles our first socialisation, but also involves the unlearning of those negative perceptions we might have learned about the Other (Kumashiro, 2002).

## 1.3 Rationale for my study

The highlighted concerns, mentioned in the last section, alerted me to a disturbing realisation that educational institutions are not effectively addressing issues of racism, heterosexism, classism, sexism and many other forms of oppression. This realisation not only informed the rationale for my study, but also my argument for conducting this study. By viewing oppression as a learned form of behaviour and attitudes, I argue that if we learn oppression and discrimination, it is also largely possible to unlearn such behaviour and attitudes. I therefore centre my research interest on my own understanding of how oppression operates and how it is maintained through the dominant discourses. Despite my awareness of my responsibility as a teacher educator to work towards teaching for social justice, I am also dissatisfied with the separation of my own values from my daily practice. Like Riding (2008), I argue that my own personal narrative is crucial and important in determining the sort of educator that I am, and that my life history informs how I approach my life as a teacher educator. By using Harro's (2010) cycle of socialisation, I critically interrogate my own socialisation and identify the roles played by family members, friends, media, school, church and university in shaping the values I hold.

My decision to undertake this study was further informed by the extent to which the *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS)[7] (2003) promotes values of a non-discriminatory and equal society to address the negative impacts of our former apartheid government. This not only places great responsibility on educators and how they approach their daily teaching and learning experiences, but also more so on teacher training institutions and teacher educators. This imperative is defined in the NCS document (DoE, 2003: 2):

> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa forms the basis for social transformation in our post-apartheid society. The imperative to transform South African society by making use of various transformative tools stems from a need to address the legacy of apartheid in all areas of human activity and in education in particular. Social transformation in education is aimed at ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our population. If social transformation is to be achieved, all South Africans have to be educationally affirmed through the recognition of their potential and the removal of artificial barriers to the attainment of qualifications.

Education is therefore not merely about transferring content knowledge, but should also seek to address social issues in order to transform society. One of the tools we can use to transform our society is through carefully planned educational curricula and learning programmes which do not marginalise issues that confront our daily lives and how we experience life in general. These daily issues include various forms of racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, classism, religious oppression and many others. Thus, education should seek to shape a person who has a healthy conception of both him(her)self and others (Arawi, 2002). Both the NCS document, and Whitehead and McNiff (2010) place education at the centre of facilitating social transformation. My profession as a teacher-educator subsequently motivates me to critically reflect on how I can work towards realising the goal of social transformation through teaching for social justice.

## 1.4 Research aim and critical questions

The guiding question in my quest is *how can I improve my professional practice by infusing values of social justice as part of my daily practice*? This question forms the summative

[7] At the inception of this study, the NCS was still used as the curriculum document that informed my teaching. Although the *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) replaced the NCS, its implementation is a gradual process that commenced in 2011 with Grade 1 and Grade 12.

purpose of my study in that it aims to address the feeling of dissatisfaction within me about how I can play a more active role in facilitating the transformation process by teaching for social justice. In my quest and given my understanding and accepting the role I play as a teacher educator, I wish to deepen my theoretical understanding of values of social justice. I agree with Arawi's (2002) view that when we commit ourselves to teaching, we should equally commit ourselves to teaching about values that will empower our students to be agents of change. Furthermore, Whitehead (2008) alerts us to the possibility that if we claim to identify with a particular set of values and then ignore them in the process, we become a living contradiction. I thus seek to employ methods of teaching that create spaces to teach for social justice in any subject matter, consciously engaging both my students and colleagues in dialogue around social justice.

To help guide my inquiry process, I will work with four critical questions:

- What is my own understanding of social justice and its values?
- Why is it important for me to influence my practice not to be a living contradiction?
- How do I improve my own professional practice as a social justice educator for the benefit of my professional growth and development, and that of my students and colleagues?
- How can I open up spaces for my students and colleagues to engage in issues of social justice?

## 1.5 Deepening my understanding of social justice

In this section I seek to provide my own understanding of social justice by referring to scholars whose work has shaped this interdisciplinary field of study. Drawing from scholars such as Miller (2002), Rawls (1999), North (2006), Young (1990) and many others whose work focused on social justice, I begin this section by acknowledging that the concept *social justice* is hard to define. I agree with Sturman in North (2006: 507) that "the field of social justice ... has been and remains a hotly contested arena." In order for me to work towards teaching for social justice, I first need to explore its meaning. Due to the contested nature of the paradigmatic views presented on social justice, and for purposes of this study, I do not wish to engage with each and every theorist who has contributed to shaping social

justice as interdisciplinary field of study. Rather, I begin this section by giving a brief exposition of justice in general, followed by a differentiation between different kinds of justice so as to indicate what social justice is not. In addition to a discussion of social justice as a distributive theory of justice whereby social goods or resources should be equally distributed amongst all citizens, I conclude this section with a strong argument that social justice should rather be seen as a process and goal towards the elimination of any unjust, unequal structures in society that lend themselves to oppression.

### 1.5.1 Miller, Rawls and Young on social justice

In order for me to make meaning of what is social justice, it is important to make a distinction between the different kinds of justices i.e. justice as a whole, social justice and other forms of justice. Like Miller (2002: 17) I subsequently work with the premise that by indicating what social justice is not, it will help me to gain a better understanding of what social justice is. I therefore not only need to differentiate between legal justice, private justice and social justice, but in order for me to improve my teaching practice by infusing values of social justice, I also need to know what these values are and what they are not.

When considering *justice* as a noun, the online Oxford Dictionaries (2012) refers to just[8] behaviour or treatment, for example a concern for justice, peace, and genuine respect for people. Miller (2002: 19) claims that "the *subject-matter* of justice is the manner in which benefits and burdens are distributed among men *[sic]* (strictly, sentient beings) whose qualities and relationships can be investigated". The underlying pillar of justice, according to this view, seems to be the notion that no human should suffer carrying a burden, whilst another enjoys all the benefits by themself. Rather, the notion that all humans should equally share all benefits and burdens of society is based on the principle of equality.

With regard to *legal justice,* Miller (2002: 22) is concerned with the punishment of wrongdoings and the rewarding of compensation for injury through the enforcement of the

[8] Definition of *just* according to the Oxford online Dictionaries (2012) as an adjective, is based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair, for example *a just and democratic society*

law. This form of justice deals with two issues. Firstly, it stipulates conditions under which punishment could be inflicted and ensures that punishments inflicted fit the nature of the crime as stipulated by law. Secondly, it lays down procedures for applying the law that form part of the legal justice (Miller, 2002: 22). *Private Justice* on the other hand, concerns the dealings of humans with their fellows when they are not acting as a participant in any social institutions (Miller, 2002). For example, the division of duties or goods amongst family members or a group of friends, so who is responsible for the cleaning of the house, preparing meals and other family duties.

In distinction from the foregoing, Miller (2002:22) explains *social justice* as a concern with

> the distribution of benefits and burdens throughout a society, as it results from the major social institutions- property systems, public organisations etc. It deals with such matters as the regulation of wages and (where they exist) profits, the protection of persons' rights through the legal system, the allocation of housing, medicine, welfare benefits etc.

The use of the term *burdens* in the above quotation refers to tangible benefits whilst the use of the term *benefits* refers to intangible benefits. Burdens in this context refers, for example, to not having access to medical treatment centres, poor conditions of living such as no housing, poor or lack of services such as water and or electricity. Examples of shared burdens would include the equal distribution of working hours amongst employees, earning a fair and decent wage that is worth the time spent on work, having equal access to medical treatment, water and electricity and decent housing, to name just a few (Miller, 2002). Benefits, on the other hand, refer to the inclusion of intangible benefits such as *inter alia* prestige, respect and valuing (Miller, 2002: 22). Thus, based on the notion of the equal distribution of benefits, one could subsequently argue that social justice will for example be concerned with ensuring that people who are infected by HIV/AIDS are valued and respected in society, and are not excluded in the workforce. Whilst the notion of an equal distribution of burdens in society is based on the so-called distribution paradigm of social justice, the ensuring of an equal distribution of benefits draws on the recognition paradigmatic views of social justice.

I argue that the foregoing description of social justice by Miller has a lot of value when considering the South African context. The current situation in South Africa is

predominantly characterised by the existing rapid widening gap between the middle class and the lower class. In this regard May (2008: 2) states that the "[i]n per capita terms South Africa is an upper-middle-income country, but most South African households experience outright poverty or vulnerability to being poor". Whilst the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, this situation presents itself as a vicious cycle where those in the lower class find it harder and more impossible to break away from their poverty (Linford, 2011; Malala, 2012). In this regard, it could be assumed that a distributive theory of justice can serve as a powerful tool to address such inequality by working towards an equal and fair share or distribution of resources such as ownership of land, compensation and job opportunities. I argue that my practice should be informed by a desire to work towards addressing these inequalities through creating a space for empowerment for my students with education that promotes both academic excellence and the realisation of transformational goals.

The American philosopher John Rawls shared similar views of justice as Miller. In many of his work, Rawls (1971) wrote about distributive justice as a form of justice that seeks to distribute the wealth and other economic goods of society fairly amongst its citizens. Arneson (2007: 80) reveals, according to Rawls, that the primary focus of justice is focused on how society is structured. In other words, fairness must be considered when social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties, and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. In his recent work, Rawls (1999: 7) acknowledges the pervasive nature of the deep inequalities that not only exist in society, but also affect our chances in life as human beings; these are the inequalities that the principles of social justice must first apply to. Rawls (1999: 53) identifies the first principle of justice as having an equal right to basic liberties and the second principle of justice as addressing social and economic inequalities. He subsequently identifies basic liberties as *inter alia* the right to vote, to hold public office, and freedom of speech. The second principle he argues, deals with social and economic inequalities that exist in our society so that they are both "(a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged persons, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of equality of opportunity" (Garrett, 2011). Although both these principles are referred to as principles of justice, I position them as part of my understanding of social justice.

The notion of social justice as distribution, however, has been criticised (Young 1990, Boyles, Carusi and Attick, 2009: 32). In this regard, Boyles, Carusi and Attick (2009) argue that social justice as distribution tends to focus a lot on material goods and their distribution, often not taking into account those goods regarded as immaterial. Drawing on Aristotle's understandings of social justice, Boyles, Carusi and Attick (2009: 32) critique social justice as distribution by arguing that

> [w]hile the giving and taking of material things is straightforward, those things that are immaterial, under distributive justice, must be reified, assumed as material, in order to understand them first as property and second as something that can be given and taken away.

Young (1990:1) also cautions against the conflation of social and distributive justice and suggests the conceptualisation of social justice in a manner that goes beyond the distribution of material goods/benefits:

> I argue that instead of focusing on distribution, a conception of justice should begin with the concept of domination and oppression. Such a shift brings out issues of decision-making, division of labour and culture that bear on social justice but are often ignored in philosophical discussions.

Having elucidated a general meaning of justice and differentiated between the different kinds of justice, this study draws primarily on Young's presentation of the notion of social justice. Whilst I also regard structural power dynamics in society as often regulatory in many forms of oppression, I argue that social justice cannot only be concerned with the distribution of economic and political good. Rather, it should be concerned with challenging societal norms that position us as unequal beings in a society interspersed by structures of inequality. In the next section I contextualise the latter argument to make my own meaning and understanding of social justice.

### 1.5.2 My understanding of social justice in the South African context

Besides the unequal distribution of resources such as wealth, land and many others, the relationships that exist between human beings are also fuelled with levels of inequalities, often associated with particular identities that dictate people's life chances (Young, 1990). These identities include *inter alia* race, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs and nationality. When considering how a particular identity can dictate people's life chances, the mistreatment of foreign nationals (xenophobia) by both South African citizens and law enforcement officers can serve as a good example (News 24, 2012). Often foreigners are

subjected to poor service delivery, mistrust and false accusations related to crime and drug dealing, and often suffer violence and at times endure death because of certain South African citizens believing themselves to be superior to other nationalities. In this regard I argue that the challenging of such mistreatment of the othered due to their social identities, is just as crucial when interrogating what social justice means. Social justice does not only concern itself with the distribution of resources; rather it requires challenging the ways in which social institutions position social groups. Working at an institution of higher education, I acknowledge that my practice should be influenced in such a way that I will be able to challenge negative and oppressive constructions of identities.

Young (1990: 15) argues that wherever social group differences are concerned and inequalities operate amongst the social groups, social justice should be aimed at eliminating such inequalities. She suggests that social justice means the elimination of institutionalised domination and oppression. Any aspect of social organisation and practice relevant to domination and oppression is, in principle, subject to evaluation by ideals of justice. Unlike distributive justice, Young's conception of justice does not restrict the scope of social justice by failing to address social structure and institutional oppression. Rather, by arguing that oppression entails the domination of people to follow rules set by others Young (1990: 38) extends the scope of social justice to the addressing of issues of oppression. Constraints placed upon oppressed people are attributed to different social institutions such as the church, legal system, the media and many others, including society at large that dictates what is to be regarded as the norm. In Chapter 3, I will also reflect on the role various social institutions played in shaping my own identity.

Young's (1990) acknowledgement of existing oppression makes explicit the need to understand how domination restricts those who are oppressed. Whilst the dominant group dictates what is normal or valued, who is to be valued and who is not to be valued, an unequal society is created on principles of injustice. It is in such an unequal society that those who do not belong to the dominant group often live restricted lives dictated by the rules set by the dominant group. The consequences of failing to adhere to the rules set by the dominant group, are often terrible. North (2006: 513) explains that when

> the values, perspective and life worlds of dominant groups permeate cultural and institutional norms" (Lynch & Baker, 2005, p. 143), individuals and groups who cannot or choose not play by the rules of those in power often face exclusion, marginalisation, or silencing.

Thus, justice according to Young (1990: 157), means that

> [p]eople should be treated as individuals, not as members of groups; their life options and rewards should be based solely on their individual achievement. All persons should have liberty to be and do anything they want, to choose their own lives and not be hampered by traditional expectations and stereotypes.

South African history is such that it segregated its citizens according to race where whites were privileged over others. Men are valued and seen as the superior gender whilst marginalising women from certain fields of careers. Taking into account all the injustices of the past, I argue for a holistic view of social justice. The social justice that I speak about is one that works towards ensuring that those who were previously disadvantaged and given a lesser share of the nations' wealth, were barred from certain career paths must be given opportunities that will allow them to decide for themselves what their own destinies are. I identify my practice as one of the vehicles that enables me to challenge the many forms of oppression that exist through my teaching, engaging my students and my research. To enable me to challenge oppression, I feel it is important to question my own understanding of my multiple identities, and to foster the values of respect, compassion, equality and fairness in my private life and my professional life, i.e. in all my interactions with others.

## 1.6 Research design

### 1.6.1 Research paradigm

As my research is aimed at the improvement of my professional practice, it is framed within a transformative paradigm which positions itself with a strong emphasis on issues of social justice and social transformation. This is affirmed by Mertens (2010: 21) who explains that the transformative paradigm places "central importance on the lives and experiences of the diverse groups that, traditionally, have been marginalized (i.e. women, (minorities), and persons with disabilities)".

Drawing on a transformative paradigm, my research is based on the following assumptions:

- oppression relates to social constructs that can be re-constructed to be more socially just;
- teacher education institutions should assist in this re-construction by teaching anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2004);
- the teaching of values of social justice is crucial in teaching for social transformation and the advancing of the whole student; and
- the teaching of values that facilitate transformation should be the responsibility of all those involved in shaping the minds of students.

### 1.6.2 Research methodology

Bearing in mind the nature of my concern and the intended aim of my study, I find it important to work with a research methodology that will enable me to critically investigate my own practice. Rather than dealing with a rigid theoretical research design, I opt for an action research methodology. It is my contention that action research will enable me to address those concerns that are not only close to my practice, but with which I can exhibit some influence and make a change (Ferrance, 2000). Although there is no fixed definition for action research, McNiff and Whitehead (2002) define it as a form of inquiry that enables practitioners to investigate and evaluate their work by asking questions such as *What am I doing?* and *How do I improve it?* These questions are answered through a systematic and carefully planned process that employs research techniques, for example the use of journals, interviews, video and audio recording of lessons, validation groups and many others. Similarly, Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart, and Zuber-Skerritt (2002: 125) define action research as a form of collective reflective inquiry where

> [p]articipants in social situations undertake to improve: (1) the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices: (2) the participants understanding of these practices and the situations in which they carry out these practices.

Despite the fact that reflective inquiry has proven its utility as a method of research that contributes to knowledge production, some have criticised the action research approach as not being entirely scientific. However, regardless of reference to action research as unscientific and a little more than common sense, Ferrance (2000) argues that there is substantial evidence that through such a process of inquiry, educational practitioners can engage in a systemic reflective process of inquiry resulting in learning that improves their

practice. This could be made true by reading articles and dissertations such as Nel's (2005) Ph.D-thesis entitled *Creating meaningful blended learning experiences in a South African higher education classroom: an action inquiry.* In her study (Nel, 2005) investigated how best to incorporate blended learning into her classroom, as at the time The University of The Free State was still new to the practice of blended learning. Having identified a number of problems such as the diverse student population from different socio-economic backgrounds; large classes; improper preparation of students for higher education (Nel, 2005: 2) she sought to find ways in which she could integrate the traditional face-to-face mode of teaching with new technologies. Having identified her concern, she piloted the use of blended learning practice with a group of students in one of her modules and in her findings she reports on how "some students also realised the advantages of not having to go through all the trouble of arranging face-to-face meetings where everyone had to be present" (Nel, 2005: 28). In her thesis, Nel (2005) reflects on her successes and areas where she could have improved in implementing blending learning in her classroom in the form of action cycles.

Through action research, researchers are able to identify concerns that directly affect their own area of work. By detailing their experiences in a narrative, solutions can be explored and plans of actions can be undertaken to overcome specified concerns. In this research I employ a similar approach to my own area of work by making use of what Whitehead and McNiff (2010) refer to as action cycles.

In my research one cycle of action will be employed. My reflective cycle begins with the identification of a concern that relates to my own teaching practice. As already explained, I am concerned with my observation that my own teaching is divorced from values of social justice and I therefore seek to identify spaces I can exploit to engage my students in issues of social justice. I then investigate ways in which I can infuse these values in my teaching of modules through a systematic process which is in line with the existing curriculum. The first cycle ends with a reflection on and evaluation of my action plan which seeks to investigate whether I have been successful in my quest of infusing my values in my teaching. The following diagram resembles that of McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead (2003) and will be used in my study:

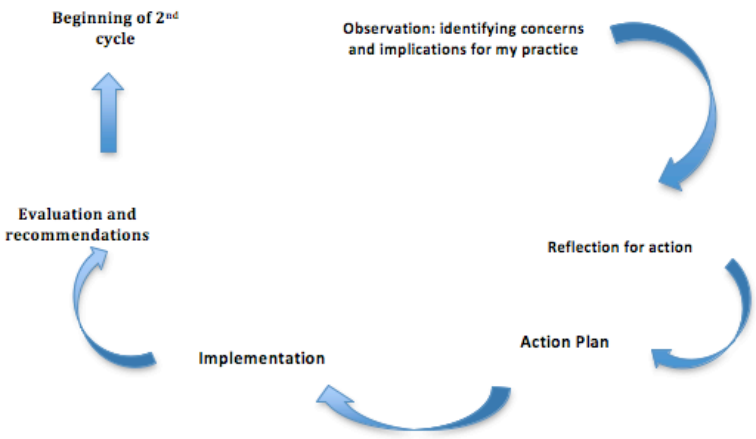


Figure 1.4: My reflective cycle

In addition to the above action cycle, my study will also be informed by what Zuber-Skerrit (2001) refers to as a spiral of a continuous iterative process which involves research, development, intellectual inquiry and practical improvement, reflection and action. When Zuber-Skerrit (2001) refers to a spiral of continuous iterative processes she is referring to the process of learning from our past practices and crtitiquing how we view the present and envision the future. In alignment with my attempt to improve my own professional practice, the latter will be based on examples that can support the development of shared meaning within the context of my practice (Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart, & Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). However, it is important to note that the action cycle in this study is not only underpinned by my own lived experiences, but also by the way in which these experiences shape the type of teacher-educator I am.

## 1.7 Research process

### 1.7.1 Data collection

The collection of data is a very important process in any living theory study as it often determines the necessary action to be taken to help the researcher address his/her research questions. Ferrance (2000) explains that in action research studies, multiple sources are used to better understand what is happening in the classroom and that a number of vehicles are available for the collection of data. The latter can include *inter alia* interviews, journals, video recordings, case studies, tests report cards, diaries, audio recording, focus groups, and validation groups. The aim of various forms of data collection is to generate evidence to

help support whether or not a person is developing his/her own learning to influence others in an educational way (Whitehead & McNiff, 2010).

For this study, both audio and video recordings of my lessons will serve as reflective tools. I view this method of data collection as powerful in monitoring my actions while teaching and it could also be used by others to critique my teaching. According to Whitehead and McNiff (2010), it is through the monitoring of your own actions and those of others that you could systematically gather data from observation, and also invite others to monitor what you do and how you do it. In this study I will make use of both a literature review and a document analysis. Although a document analysis is viewed as overlapping with a literature review, a distinction can be made between the two. As Whitehead and McNiff (2010) explain, whilst a literature review provides an overview of scholarship in a chosen discipline, a document analysis technique focuses on written communications that shed some light on your investigation. For this study a literature review will help to deepen my understanding of social justice, while an analysis of the *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) in conjunction with the *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) documents should assist in the contextualisation of my teaching practice. In this study reference is made to the NCS document because the two modules used for my action research were designed at the time when the school curriculum was still informed by this document. However, to contextualise my study in terms of the latest curriculum document, reference will also be made to CAPS.

### 1.7.2 My participants

To help me gather data and generate evidence, I keep a journal, which I use to record daily classroom interaction sessions for continued reflection. The journal is also used to note any particular discussions or questions that may arise whilst engaging with my students. The latter is of importance as it will enable me to identify spaces that I can use to engage my students in, namely issues of social justice and teaching for social justice. In this regard, I will be working with a group of B.Ed. and PGCE students in their final year of study, all of them registered for the *Economics and Management Education* (AEO) module and *Methods and Media in Accountancy* (REO) module. By means of both audio and video recordings of some of my lessons, I will reflect on possible areas of improvement in my own teaching. Although these students represent my chosen participants, they are not going to be

researched. Rather, they will be engaged in discussions on how they can effect positive change in my practice. Thus, as these students represent the people who I teach, they will form my focus group (Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

As indicated, my participants will be engaged in reflective sessions as part of a focus group. By involving my students in a focus group, a space will be created for them to not only make suggestions about how I can improve my practice, but also to engage in discussions on issues of social justice. According to Nieuwenhuis (2010), a focus group has the ability to activate forgotten details of experience and to release inhibitions through discussion on a particular focused topic. As such, through these discussions, debates can be encouraged and even conflicting and well-argued viewpoints may result in rich data that could help me to develop and improve my teaching practice. By means of the foregoing characteristic of action research, my study has the potential of becoming a transformational process. Through this process I will not only become more engaged as a teacher educator with my students (Rogers, Bolick, Gordon, Manfra, & Yow, 2007), but I will be able to contribute to realising the aim of education as a social interactive process aimed at social change.

My participants come from varying economic, cultural and racial backgrounds and include both males and females of different ages. This group of students is chosen because they are the English group for which I am responsible for teaching, whilst a colleague of mine teaches the Afrikaans group. In working with the group I teach, I am of the opinion that I will be able to gather appropriate and reliable data.

### 1.7.3 Validity and ethical considerations

For my study it is crucial to consider how I would be able to successfully show authenticity of the evidence I arrive at, and explain the standards of judgment I would use to see if I have successfully infused values of social justice in my teaching. To address the issue of validity, I plan to make use of a validation group. Whitehead and McNiff (2010: 259) define a validation group as

> A group convened specifically to scrutinize the researcher's knowledge claims and say whether a claim is reasonable or needs further work. The job of a validation group is to look carefully at the knowledge claim and its evidence base and agree

> that the claim appears reasonable, or quest the researcher to rethink aspects of the research, especially normative assumptions that have entered into the research.

I plan to approach some of my colleagues who are informed on issues of social justice to form part of a validation group that will assist me in the validation of my knowledge claims. Apart from a validation group who will help me to establish the validity of my study, I also wish to establish a relationship with a critical friend and reader who will listen to my account of my practice and critique my thinking behind such an account (Whitehead & McNiff, 2010).

Regarding issues of ethical concerns, I want to first reiterate that my study is not aimed at studying my students as subjects. However, as I will be making use of my students' inputs through *inter alia* focus group discussions, it is important to address ethical concerns. Whilst ethics can be viewed as demonstrating ethical behaviour towards my participants, it also commits me to mutual respect and not to do harm (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). By applying at the Faculty of Education of the University of the Free State for ethical clearance, I also commit myself to do no harm to anyone through conducting this study. To participate in this study, all participants are asked for informed consent. In this regard Strydom (2005: 59) explains that

> Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures which will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed as well as the credibility of the researcher, be rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives.

Thus, all students who participate in this study will have to sign a consent form, indicating their willingness to participate. Apart from having the option of opting out at any time, the participants will also be assured of anonymity in my report on this study.

## 1.8 Challenges and the value of my study

My study poses various challenges. My appointment at the University of the Free State (UFS) was only effective from the beginning of January 2011 and this was when I was introduced to the modules I would be teaching. Whilst I used January to orientate myself to the outcomes and content of the modules, I began to co-teach the module with a colleague from February. I was responsible for teaching the English group and my colleague taught

the Afrikaans cohort. The challenge with this arrangement is twofold: the first being that since I arrived at the beginning of the year I did not have an opportunity to contribute towards revising the design, outcomes and content of the module or make suggestions that could be implemented during the first semester. The second challenge was that even though the content of the module allowed for dialogue on issues around social justice, I could not fully exploit these since the Afrikaans and English students were expected to have similar experiences of the module for quality assurance purposes. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that the module is also offered on the Qwaqwa campus of the UFS by a different lecturer. These circumstances left very little room for me to engage my students in these issues as there would be a contradiction in the students' experiences of the module in the 3 different groups and this would impact on the pace of delivery for my group and the way I would have liked to assess my students. This challenge was both daunting and continued to contribute to divorce my teaching from my values. However, critical reflection is crucial for analysing these challenges and finding a way to infusing values of social justice in my teaching.

The value of my study started to become clearer as I interact with other lecturers in my institution who seem to be having difficulties with infusing social justice in their teaching. They also asked similar questions: *How do you bring these issues up in the classroom*? *With the planned curriculum, where do you make time to teach social justice?* The value of my study is therefore closely related to finding the answers to these pedagogical questions that concern most teachers and teacher educators who wish to teach for social justice. The above-mentioned challenges only act as areas of important reflective practice through which I can learn and grow in my practice, whilst simultaneously making a valuable contribution to my own professional development.

Perhaps another limitation to note at this stage is one identified by Nieuwenhuis (2010) with regard to the use of focus groups for any research. He argues that focus groups are typically small and may not be representative. This, coupled with the fact that the group has to meet at the same time, is often a very difficult logistic to manage. In the case of my research, the latter is true as my targeted group of students currently only represent English-speaking students and although they are representative in terms of race, gender,

age and culture, the Afrikaans group is excluded. This state of affairs is unfortunate since they also study the same module and their experiences would therefore be valuable if I taught them.

## 1.9 Summary

This chapter serves as a brief orientation in my quest to improve my professional practice through the teaching for social justice. In the first part of this chapter I outlined and discussed the causes for the concern that led to me engaging in the study. In addition to the rationale and purpose of my study, I explained action research as my chosen methodology. In alignment with this research methodology, a brief discussion was given of the methods I want to employ for data collection. Attention was also given as to how I plan on addressing issues of validity and ethics. In the next chapter a detailed discussion of my research methodology will be given.

# 2 CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> Action research is becoming increasingly known as an approach that encourages practitioners to be in control of their own lives and contexts. It began in the USA, came to prominence in the UK in the 1970s, and by the 1980s it was making a significant impact in many professional contexts, particularly in teacher professional education. Now its influence is world wide, and has spread to virtually all areas where personal and professional learning is undertaken (McNiff, 2002: 4)

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the planning process and decisions I make in my quest to improve my practice by infusing values of social justice. I identify the methodology of my study as qualitative whilst working within a transformative paradigm. Like Silverman (2005), I refer to methodology as a general approach to studying research topics and argue that one's research methodology should determine the methods that are used to collect data.

My study is a self-reflective action inquiry where I reflect on my own teaching with particular interest in improving my practice through teaching for social justice. Also, this action of sharing my lived theory and engaging in collaborative reflective practice has the objective of benefiting my students and my colleagues. For the purpose of my study, I view social justice as both my *objective* and *intended* outcome of my everyday teaching and also as the means that will make it possible for me to achieve my goal. To help me realise the objective of my study, I will subsequently employ a research approach that will enable me to engage in reflective practice aimed at improving it. It is my contention that by means of action research, I can position myself as being active in the pursuit of my professional development and in addressing primary concerns in my own practice. This is affirmed by Stenhouse (1975:143) who said that "[i]t is not enough that teachers' work should be studied but instead they need to study it themselves". In a similar manner, I research my own practice with the intention of developing myself.

This chapter seeks to explain living theory action research drawing from the work of Whitehead and McNiff (2010) to explain the motivation for choosing this methodology. I explain how as my research approach, I use action research to guide me through the scientific research process. Noting the reflective nature of my research, I will subsequently employ research methods that are consistent with action research and explain these in

detail. To begin my discussion on action research and in order to detail the value of my chosen methodology and its potential contribution to my own development as a teacher educator, I draw on grassroots authors of action research. I will also discuss the type of action research I have chosen for this study.

## 2.2 What is action research?

According to Evans (1995), the term *action research* was coined in the UK by Stenhouse who advocated for an active role for educators in researching their daily practice. This was in contrast with other research practices at the time that often encouraged researchers to be outsiders who observed from a distance and drew conclusions from their observations. Thus, instead of being subjects observed by researchers, it was proposed that educators could become researchers of their own practices. In this regard Stenhouse (in Evans 1995: np) talked about educators "bettering their teaching by studying their classrooms, to increase understanding of their own work". Action research is subsequently about increasing the understanding of the situation and context in which the researcher finds him/herself, and also involves a concern with a particular problem and the people within the problem (Elliott, 1981). In short, Elliot (1981: 16) describes action research as reflection related to diagnosis and identifies some of the characteristics of action research as investigating

> human actions and social situations which are experienced by teachers as:
> a. Unacceptable in some respects (problematic);
> b. Susceptible to change (contingent);
> c. Requiring a practical response (prescriptive).

So how then, can action research be defined? Although many scholars will define action research in differing ways, there are commonalities in their definition of action research. Costello (2003) examines some of these definitions proposed by different scholars and sums up action research as

> a process of systematic reflection, enquiry and action carried out by individuals about their own professional practice.

However, since my choice of research methodology was informed by my aim to improve my own practice, I will use a living theory approach in reflecting on *how* I engage with my practice, *why* I engage in that manner and *how* I can improve. According to Whitehead and

McNiff (2010), a living theory approach is one of the approaches that specifically enable a researcher to engage in reflection through the journaling of experiences as a means to improve.

### 2.2.1 Towards a living theory approach

Bassey (1998) (in Costello, 2003) explains that educational action research is an inquiry which is carried out to both understand and evaluate practice with the objective to change and improve educational practice. Critical to action research and perhaps what constitutes the difference between action research and empirical research is how action research places the idea of self-reflection as central to improving practice (McNiff, 2002). The idea that teachers should be reflective practitioners or should engage in reflective practice has gained popularity (Costello, 2003) and according to McNiff and Whitehead (2002), this would allow educators to engage in the study of their own practice and develop their own educational theories deriving from that practice. This view, which I share with McNiff and Whitehead, is the reason why I have chosen to work with a living theory action research approach. According to Whitehead (2009), a living theory approach is characterised by dissatisfaction with practice and a desire to improve the practice. As such, the researcher creates his/her own educational living theory through investigating his/her own practice. Whitehead (2009: 104) further explains a living theory as

> an explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they live and work.

Dick (1997) (in Costello, 2003:17-18) further sheds some light on the living theory approach by looking at the role the researcher and supervisor play when conducting the study. He argues that living theory inquiries involve learning from a questioning inquiry where the role of the supervisor is to act as a mentor and not a teacher, and where the researcher leads his/her own inquiry process.

The objective of a living theory is that teachers can focus on classroom-based practice and from there on, develop a hypothesis about their own teaching. Various researchers (cf. Bognar & Zovko, 2008; Jackson, 2009; Wood, 2010; Delong, 2013) concerned with improving or aligning their values with their practice, have used a living theory approach to improve

their practice by asking the question: *How*? For example, Li (2009), who was concerned with developing learner autonomy amongst her students, engaged in a living theory study: by asking the question: *How can I help my students promote learner autonomy in English language learning*? In a different doctoral study, Renowden (2009) used a living theory approach to improve his practice by asking the question: *How do I create my living theory of accountability as a lecturer in teacher education?* By sharing their hypothesis, researchers can make a positive contribution to their fellow colleagues' practices (Whitehead & Mc Niff, 2010). I align my study with such an approach due to its reflective nature and the embedded self-enquiry nature thereof. To begin my living theory, I critically reflect on my early childhood upbringing and early schooling experiences, especially on why these experiences occurred and what lessons I learned. Reflecting on my experiences in my teens up until my final year of schooling, I will ask the same questions about these experiences. A similar reflection will be undertaken about the time before enrolling for a bachelor's degree to become an educator. In this regard I will reflect on what sort of notions of myself these experiences had resulted in, and what was my student teacher identity going to be like? This reflection will be extended to my teacher training experiences and how I experienced the curriculum and what this resulted in. Another important issue is the role of my teacher training in challenging the identity that I entered my teacher education with as a first year student because surely I had learnt a number of lessons about my multiple identities. I will also question my approach to teaching after graduating, and how I can improve my practice through teaching for social justice.

My living theory becomes true as I use the cycle of socialisation (cf. Figure 6: 20) to map out how my identity as an educator was shaped by a number of various experiences, observations, the hidden curriculum and the silent messages I encountered and am still encountering in my life. *Educator identity* is important to me, as I believe that each educator has an individual identity, not only shaped by his or her personal upbringing and life experiences, but also by his/her training or lack thereof. This reflection process forms part of deconstructing my socialisation or conditioning in order for me to heighten my awareness of my practice and to be able to everytime identify spaces to teach for social justice.

## 2.3 Improving my practice through the use of an action cycle

As indicated in Chapter 1, my study seeks to follow the same characteristics described above by employing the use of an action cycle. Before I give a diagrammatic representation of my action cycle, it is important to understand what an action cycle involves.

Different terminology is used to name the cyclical nature of an action research study, ranging from reflective cycle to action research cycle. According to Costello (2003: 3) an action research cycle involves:

> Deciding on a particular focus for research, planning to implement an activity, series of activities, or other interventions, implementing these activities, observing the outcomes, reflecting on what has happened and then planning a further series of activities if necessary.

This is almost a continuous and never ending cycle that seeks to improve practice through conscious reflective practice. In accordance with McNiff and Whitehead's (2010) advice, my study begins with the identification of something that concerns me about my teaching practice. As such, I have identified that my teaching practice is divorced from the values I cherish and wish for my students to also value, i.e. values of social justice. In addition to the identification of a concern, the next step will be to investigate why the problem or concern exists or what is the cause thereof. The next step will be to try a different way of engaging with my practice, followed by a reflection on the chosen plan of action. For a more descriptive manner in which to describe the action research process, one could draw on Bassey's (in Costello, 2003) 8 stages of action research:

Stage 1: Define the enquiry.

Stage 2: Describe the educational situation.

Stage 3: Collect and analyse evaluative data.

Stage 4: Review the data and look for contradictions.

Stage 5: Tackle a contradiction by introducing some aspect of change.

Stage 6: Monitor the change.

Stage 7: Analyse evaluative data concerning the change.

Stage 8: Review the change and deciding what to do next.

After completion of stage 8, the researcher then goes back to stage one, identifying either a new concern which may have arisen as a result of the implemented plan and then completes the second cycle. Although there are different action research models that

researchers may use, my study is based on the model suggested by McNiff and Whitehead (2010) and Figure 5 is a graphical representation of my action reflection cycle.

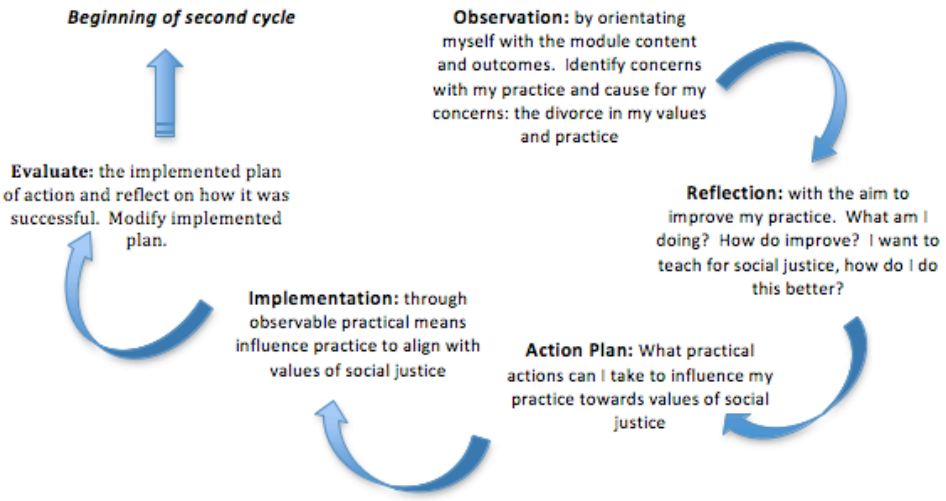


Figure 2.1: My action cycle

I would agree with the views of McNiff (2002) that action research begins with a set of values that motivate what drives your life and work. It is therefore important to clarify the kind of values and commitments one hold. Similarly, my study is motivated by the values of social justice that I view as important in advancing social transformation and challenging oppression. As a teacher educator, I therefore wish to infuse these values of social justice in my own practice and influence my students in ways that will enable them to also teach for social justice. To do this, I employ various methods of data collections in my study that make it possible for me to critically reflect on how I can teach for social justice through infusing these values in my own teaching.

## 2.4 Data collection methods

With the emergence of a more recent focus on a self-study approach to research, researchers now place themselves at the centre of their own enquiries and practices, asking questions such as *What influences my practice?* and *How can I improve it?*. Bearing this in my mind, innovative data collection methods need to be utilised to enable researchers to come to some hypothesis about what influences their practice. In most action research

studies, a number of emerging and innovative methods of data collection are employed to gather data, including the keeping of a journal, audio and video recordings of lessons, focus group interviews and many others (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). The next section will detail with the methods that I will employ to gather data for my reflective enquiry.

### 2.4.1 My narrative: who am I and how did I become?

I begin my inquiry by identifying a divorce in my practice and the values I hold and wish to infuse in my daily teaching and engagement with both my students and colleagues. However, I am of the notion that the reason for this divorce in my practice and values is strongly embedded in my socialisation as a child to an adult, and as a student teacher to an educator. Thus, my narrative of *how I came to be who I am* is important in deconstructing my identity and to reflect on how the shaping of this identity may be the cause of this divorce in practice and values. A narrative approach is therefore one of the best ways to not only deconstruct my socialisation and conditioning, but also to reflect on how such deconstruction can assist me to arrive at a new form of socialisation. It is my contention that this method will enable me to reflect on my experiences, to critique them and to re-shape my views of them in the hope of improving my practice. Clandin and Connelly (in Sikes & Gale, 2006) explain that:

> Stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell our experience. A story has a sense of being full; a sense of coming out of a personal and social history ... Experience ... is the stories people live. People live stories and in telling them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones.

I will apply this narrative approach by drawing on Bobby Harro's (2010) cycle of socialisation (see Figure 6). Through this cycle I should be able to narrate my experiences whilst simultaneously using the cycle to make meaning and reflect on how such experiences contributed to my identity. Using the cycle, I can be guided to focus only on the experiences that provide me with data that clearly indicates how my identity as a being and as an educator is shaped by the narrated experiences. I also foresee this identification as a crucial point in my socialisation where my early childhood socialisation and schooling were not only challenged, but created an opportunity for me to make a choice to either continue or challenge my socialisation by the different care givers in my life, including my parents, educators, priests and many others. The diagram (see Figure 6) below is a graphical

illustration of the cycle of socialisation, providing the opportunity to not only reflect on the results of one's own socialisation, but also of the choice that one is left with.

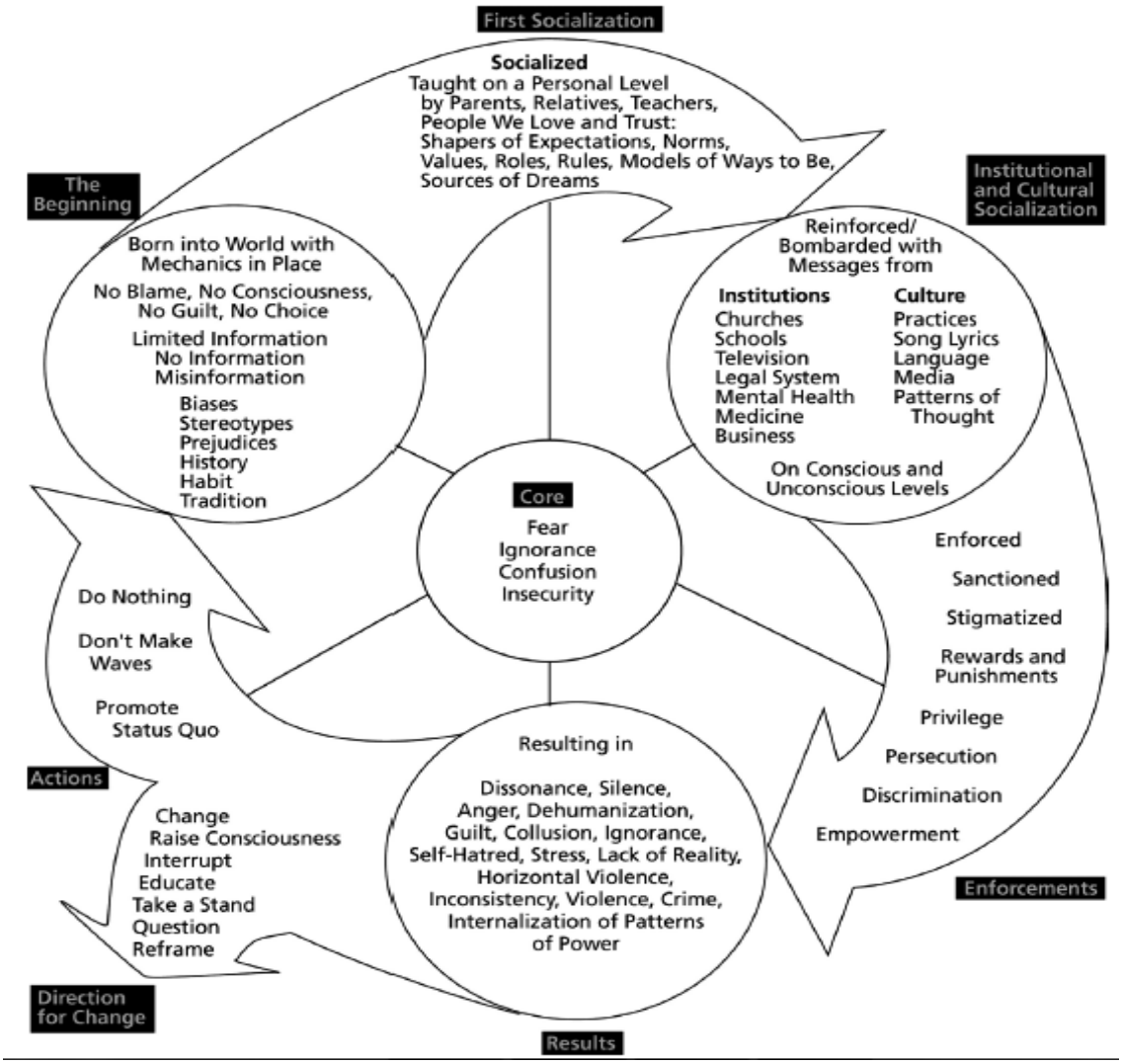


Figure 2.2: Cycle of socialisation (Harro, 2010)

In the next chapter the same diagram (adapted) will be used to summarise my own personal socialisation and what it resulted in. This personal narrative is important as it reveals that as teacher educators or educators we often have two sets of identities or values, i.e. an identity or set of values based on our upbringing (socialisation) which plays a major role in shaping our values as adults (Tatum, 2010). The other identity is our professional identity which is often shaped by our education and through this education we are able to practice education. However, often these two identities or sets of values may be in conflict with each other, and it is this conflict that I attribute as the cause of my dissatisfaction with my own teaching practice. In the following chapter, theories of oppression will be used to help

me make meaning of my own socialisation and elucidate lessons that may be important for those who practise education, especially for those who are in higher education and more specifically, for those who are teacher educators. To do this, I draw on Hardiman and Jackson (2007) for the conceptual framework that I use to deconstruct my socialisation using Harros' (2010) cycle of socialisation. My contention is that this narrative will indeed help me to understand why I might be experiencing dissatisfaction with my practice and provide me with an opportunity to engage in a process of inquiry to investigate how I can improve my practice through teaching for social justice. I also employ other methods of data collection to observe patterns within my own practice and some of those methods are audio and video recordings of my lessons.

### 2.4.2 Audio and video recordings

An action inquiry approach to research requires the researcher to be reflective about his or her practice, and it is therefore important to revisit previous experiences of practice and to critically look at them to make meaning of *What I am doing? Why I am doing it in this particular manner?* and *How can I improve on this?* My practice involves interacting with students in an academic space where learning takes place in a classroom setting. It is just as important for me as a teacher educator to reflect on my lessons with the intention of improving my practice and most importantly, to help me identify spaces to engage my students in issues of social justice. One of the recommended ways to go about achieving this is through the use of video and audio recordings of the lessons facilitated.

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010), video and audio recordings are becoming increasingly popular due to the fact that they can enable researchers to move beyond written accounts and show actions as they happen. This is a useful tool for the researcher not only to refer back to the recording to make notes, but also in providing evidence for the claims made about improved practice. The use of audio and video recordings can be beneficial in two ways: firstly they provide evidence for my claims to knowledge and improved practice; and secondly, they can also act as reflective tools for me to identify opportunities to grow and to further improve my practice. In addition to and alongside this data collection method, I will also use focus groups in order to engage my students in sharing their experiences of our lessons.

### 2.4.3 Focus groups

Focus groups are useful if you wish to engage a few participants in a dialogue on a particular and clearly specified topic with the objective of getting a clearer understanding thereof. The focus group interview strategy is based on the assumption that as the group interacts, more insight will be gained as the responses activate forgotten details of experiences and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). In this study, the students enrolled in the modules AEO and REO will form the participants for my focus groups. Participation in the focus group will be on a voluntary basis and all students are welcome to participate. The focus group method is recommended by Strydom (2005) who argues that this method is appropriate for a small selected group where 8 to 12 members are drawn together in a discussion. For this research I will be using approximately twelve students in the first phase of the study and a similar number in the next phase. Whilst the first phase is based on observation during my action cycle in the first year of the study, the second phase involves the implementation of my action plan and evaluation thereof. As the focus group will not be conducted as an interview, I also wish to take up the role of a participant. Instead of conducting interviews, the focus group will be engaged in open discussions guided by notions of how I can improve in my quest to teach for social justice. Simultaneously, however, these discussions will also serve as a form of assessment to gauge my success in this quest.

Whilst the focus group discussions will assist me in my inquiry process, it is also foreseen that it will create additional spaces where I can get to engage my students in a more in-depth discussion on issues of social justice. Although I will be using audio and video recordings of my lessons and will employ the use of the focus group method of data collection as reflective tools, I will also make use of a teaching journal as an additional reflection tool.

### 2.4.4 Keeping a journal

As part of the process of data collection, I also keep a teaching journal to document any reflections and thoughts about the lessons facilitated with my students. The keeping of a reflection journal or diary is not an uncommon practice amongst educators. The keeping of a journal can indeed assist educators to document events about their lessons that were

interesting, troubling, including those actions they may have taken that they think were effective during a particular lesson. As my role in the study is involved and action-based, I agree with Strydom (2010) that in qualitative research subjectivity cannot be eliminated. As such, it is imperative for me to record observations of my practice before, during and after the changes I introduce. It is also anticipated that the journal will contribute to and act as my step-by-step guide in the formulation of my action plan. In addition to journal keeping, I will also make use of document analysis to not only assist with the contextualisation of my research, but to make apparent the possible gap between my practice and the current curriculum design.

### 2.4.5 Document analysis

Although document analysis is not a commonly used method of data collection in qualitative research, it has the potential in providing researchers with rich data to work with (Strydom & Delport, 2005). However, a distinction needs to be made between document analysis and a literature review, as there is a slight difference that may not be very obvious to many researchers. Strydom and Delport (2005) explain that a document analysis refers to official and personal documents, rather than reviewing scholarship reading material with a specific focus on a particular discipline. This state of affairs is also emphasised by Nieuwenhuis (2010:82) who indicates that when using documents as a data gathering technique, the focus will be placed on all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon under discussion. Written data sources may include *inter alia* published and unpublished documents, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, letters, reports, email messages, faxes, newspaper articles, or any document that is connected to the investigation.

In order to validate my research and practice, it is important to collaborate with other colleagues in not only proving the value of my study, but also in ensuring validity. Through a collaborative effort I hope to arrive at a better understanding of the documents that inform practice by discussing some of these documents with my colleagues and get their understanding of their contents. I therefore also employ the use of a validation group as a method of data collection.

### 2.4.6 Validation group

Collaborative studies help those involved in the research to arrive at new forms of knowledge and ideas on how to improve practice through collaborative reflective practice. Katz and Martin (1995) reveal how over the years there has been an acknowledgement for collaborative work in research and how such collaborations are assumed to be a 'good thing'. The idea of being collaborative researchers is crucial in advancing and developing new practices that enhance learning and give value to the teaching and learning process. With this view in mind, I regard it as a valuable contribution to involve my colleagues in evaluating my practice and my study, especially with the hope of improving my practice but also influencing their practice through engaging with them and making them my validation group. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010: 259) a validation group is:

> A group convened specifically to scrutinize the researcher's knowledge claims and say whether a claim is reasonable or needs further work. Knowledge claims are usually contained in formative and summative accounts of practice.

Thus, through the formation of a validation group my colleagues and I will be in a position to share knowledge thus contributing to one another's growth and development.

In this study I consult with two of my colleagues with whom I teach the modules AEO and REO. The two colleagues are also new at the University of the Free State and like me, have had little teaching experience in higher education. During the sessions I intend to meet with them, I would explain my research, its purpose and its aims. I would also share with them the concerns that led to my study and then discuss my plan of action, and eventually my findings. After giving them the background to my study, I would then encourage them to offer their views on the value of my study, their own observation and experiences of teaching the module, and recommendations they may have on how I can improve my practice. Together, as a collaborative team of practitioners in the same discipline, I would facilitate a discussion on how perhaps we could teach for social justice in the Commerce discipline.

## 2.5 Summary

As educational practitioners, we have a responsibility to be reflective in our professional practice in order to always be growing and improving on what we are doing. We need to

always ask ourselves questions about *what we are doing*, *how we are doing it* and *how can we improve it*. Action research is one of the research methodologies that encourages and enables us to engage in a reflective process through creating our own living educational theories. We also need to acknowledge the two fold nature of our practice, i.e. advancing the academic (cognitive) development of our students *and* the human aspect (emotional/citizenship). To realise this, I argue that we need to deconstruct our own socialisation and identities to arrive at a new understanding of what it means to be teacher educators. Through exploring various methods of data collection such as focus groups, audio and video recordings of lessons, keeping of a journal, validation groups and many others, we can engage in research that advances and improves our practice.

In the following chapter my socialisation from early childhood to my training as an educator will be narrated. Specific attention will be given to my critical reflection on those experiences that shaped my identity. In this chapter I will also seek to understand how identities are shaped and how we learn things about our own identities and of others. The objective of this reflective exercise is to come to an understanding of how I, as a teacher educator, can teach in a way that does not reinforce oppression, but rather to challenge it through the teaching for social justice.

# 3 CHAPTER 3: UNPACKING MY SOCIALISATION

> What has my social context been? Was I surrounded by people like myself, or was I part of a minority in my community? Did I grow up speaking standard English at home or another language or dialect? Did I live in a rural county, an urban neighborhood, a sprawling suburb, or on a reservation? Who I am (or say I am) is a product of these and many other factors. (Tatum, 2003: 19)

## 3.1 Introduction

My decision to engage in research that explores how I can improve my own practice was pre-dominantly inspired by my passion for the values of social justice and to a large extent by my dissatisfaction with how I came to a realisation that although I believe in the values of social justice, this is not prominent in my own teaching. This dissatisfaction is a haunting feeling of disappointment and a feeling of having failed in my own personal goal of working towards building a more socially just society through my practice. Often there are times when I feel like there is no space for me to infuse these values in my daily practice. This feeling of dissatisfaction subsequently encourages me to engage in a process of critical reflection on my own socialisation and practice.

In Chapter 2 it was indicated that I would draw on Harro's (2010) *cycle of socialisation* (see Figure 2.2) to critically reflect on my own socialisation. According to Harro (2010: 45), we are socialised by powerful sources in our world to take up unequal roles and contribute towards maintaining different forms of oppression. These forces can be understood by drawing on what he describes as the *cycle of socialisation.* According to this perception, socialisation is seen as a process that occurs at different points in our lives and is re-enforced at various levels, all of which has an influence on our identities. Socialisation starts at birth when our primary caregivers play a vital role in shaping our identities. This is our first socialisation. Next we are socialised at an institutional or societal level where institutions such as, amongst others, the school and the media re-enforce our first socialisation or at times, challenge it. Harro (2010) mentions that when re-enforcement results into internalisation, we find ourselves in a position where we can make a choice. Either we choose not to challenge but to collude with what we learned through our socialisation, and consequently continue the cycle of oppression. Or the alternative is to change the cycle by challenging what we have learned and not to collude with oppression.

As such, our socialisation will normally result in us either acting on our internalised learned oppression, or the challenging of it thereof.

In trying to deconstruct my own living theory, I critically reflect in this chapter on my own cycle of socialisation and the factors that influenced my understanding of my multiple identities, for example, an able-bodied black South African. The question of *who am I* is a very complex one, and most probably the answer to this question does not lie with me, but rather with what society perceives me to be (Tatum 2010). It is important for me to deconstruct my own identity and socialisation in order for me to better understand how people learn oppressive and discriminatory behaviour and how we learn to internalise inequalities as the norm. If I can deconstruct my own socialisation I will be in a better position as a teacher educator not to perpetuate oppressive and discriminatory behaviour, but to challenge the multiple forms of oppression that exist in my teaching through infusing values of social justice. Through sharing my narrative I hope to elucidate valuable lessons from my own socialisation that will help me work towards improving my practice and teaching for social justice.

In this chapter the cycle of socialisation will be used to reflect on how I have been socialised as a person with multiple identities. After reflecting on my first socialisation and the influence of my caregivers, I will reflect on how my first socialisation was re-enforced at institutional level by the school and the church. Finally I will reflect on my under-graduate training as a student teacher and indicate how I identify this point as an intervention in my life that encouraged me to not only to question my own socialisation, but to a certain extent, break my own cycle of socialisation. To begin this process of deconstructing my socialisation, I start by providing a brief conceptual framework which acts as a lens through which I make meaning of my own socialisation.

## 3.2 Conceptual framework

To help provide a conceptual framework for this chapter I draw on Hardiman, Jackson and Griffin (2010) and their views and understanding of the theory of oppression. I support their

views by also drawing on scholars such as Zutlevics (2002) and Watts, Griffit and Abdul-Adul (1999).

Oppression is any form of inequality or injustice that privileges one social group and disadvantages another through social constructs. In defining oppression, Zutlevics (2002) makes a distinction between oppression and injustice, arguing that whilst all forms of oppression are unjust, not all instances of injustice are oppressive. Zultevics (2002) defines oppression as being denied the opportunity for resilient autonomy, which is when oppressed groups of people do not get to live their lives in accordance with their life plans. Often those who are oppressed live in a society where those belonging to a social group who enjoy more social power, dominate and dictate their life plans at the expense of the oppressed.

Adams (2010: 2) explains that social group differences are socially constructed in historic situations in which their social meanings justify inequality. Naidoo (2008) explains how throughout history socialisation has been concerned with equipping social groups or individuals with the necessary attributes to occupy unequal roles in society. A *social group* is any group of people bound together by a set of characteristics that distinguishes them from another group. Some of the examples of characteristics that could be used to group people into social groups include amongst others, race, culture, religion, gender, sex and HIV status. Examples of social groups include black people, Christians, females, HIV negative people, to name a few. Two groups are identified whose relationship can be viewed as hierarchical in nature where one group is the oppressed and the other is the oppressor. Hardiman, Jackson and Griffin (2010: 26) explain that

> [o]ppressed groups are variously referred to as *targets*, *the targeted, victims, disadvantaged, subordinates or the subordinated*. Oppressor groups are often referred to as *advantaged, dominants, agents and privileged.* The reason for choosing one term over another may vary depending on a number of theoretical, political, pedagogical and strategic considerations.

Our life experiences and first socialisation often teach us to accept oppression as normal and not to challenge inequalities (Harro, 2010). Internalisation takes place when both target and agent groups learn to accept cultural and societal meanings about each other, including their unequal roles in society.

The process of internalisation may occur in two ways, namely *internalised subordination* when a member of a target group colludes with his/her own oppression and *internalised domination* when an agent learns to internalise his/her domination by accepting that social power is deserved (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2010: 31). Whilst the behaviours, thoughts and feelings of disadvantaged groups collude with the oppressive ideology and social system, dominant groups think and act in ways that reveal a sense of entitlement to social power and privilege. However, it is not everyone who colludes with oppression; some people choose to interrupt the cycle of oppression and advocate for justice and equality.

Both target and agent groups have the potential to fight against oppression, fostering individual and social change as change agents or allies. Whilst target group refers to those identities that are oppressed, agent group refers to the oppressors, so for example when looking at sexism men are regarded as agents because of the privileges they have whilst females are the targets. Learning about these roles, roles that each and every one of us is capable of assuming, depends on our social identity status offering us new ways of behaving and a new source of hope for an equal society (Ayvazian, 2010: 625). As such, a *change ally* is any member of an agent or dominant group who stands up against a form of oppression from which they derive power and privilege (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2010). Through challenging oppression, allies such as a man who is committed towards disrupting the cycle of sexism or a white person who fights racism risk losing the privileges they enjoy as members of a dominant group. On the other hand, a *change agent* or an empowered targeted group member is a member of the target or subordinate group who stands up against oppression and refuses to internalise his or her subordination. An example of a change agent would be a Muslim who stands against religious oppression or a female who fights against sexism. Change allies and change agents are motivated by a desire to live in a socially just society where people embrace difference and do not discriminate (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2010: 33).

In addition to oppressive systems where both agents and targets internalise their roles and accept their role in a hierarchical relationship, reference is also made to *vertical* and *horizontal relationships* in which oppression is maintained (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin,

2010). A *vertical relationship of oppression* refers to a situation where members of the agent group act in a manner that is oppressive towards members of a target group, for example a heterosexual male raping a lesbian female because of her sexuality (corrective rape). A *horizontal relationship of oppression* refers to members of the same group keeping each other in check, for example a female parent scolding her daughter for playing active sport just because she believes that such sport is not for females. A further distinction can be made with regard to horizontal oppression. *Targeted-to-targeted oppression* "is the conscious and/or unconscious attitudes and behaviours exhibited in interactions among members of the same targeted group that support and stem from internalized subordination" (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2010: 46). On the other hand, *advantaged-to-advantaged horizontal oppression* refers to conscious and/or unconscious actions by agents who bestow on other agents who violate the ideology of oppression. The latter subsequently act in this manner to maintain the *status quo* and simultaneously ensure that the privileged groups keep enjoying the social benefits that come with being an agent. According to Bell (2010: 4), horizontal and vertical relationships of oppression exist due to the fact that oppressive beliefs are internalized by victims as well as well as perpetrators.

The foregoing conceptual framework will be used in conjunction with Harros' (2010) *cycle of socialisation* to deconstruct my own socialisation and to draw on the inter-connections of my social identities and the inter-connectedness of the different forms of oppression.

## 3.3 First socialisation

At birth and during early childhood we are unaware of the complex codes of appropriate behaviour for members of our ascribed social identities. We naively operate from our own needs, interests and curiosity about social group differences and break rules and push against the boundaries of social identity membership (Bell, 2010). Through this act of boundary violation, we begin to learn lessons about what it means to be a member of a particular ascribed social identity group. The role played by our immediate family members or caregivers becomes primary to school us to accept and act appropriately according to our identities, whether it is an agent or target identity.

This results in our internalisation of stereotypical socially constructed understanding of our identities. When it comes to gender socialisation during our early childhood, we are socialised into specific gender roles with socially constructed behavioural expectations of masculinity and femininity. These behavioural expectations are consistent with our physical bodies and gender identities (Griffin & Harro, 1997). Griffin and Harro (1997) state that from an early age we learn that boys are expected to be aggressive, rough, and physical. Girls on the other hand, are expected to be quiet, diffident, and pleasant. Similarly, these were the same gender role expectations that I was brought up with at home, and I had learned these through verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.

### 3.3.1 Gender socialisation

Growing up, my parents taught me my role as a boy in the family and at home. We had different roles for the different genders within my family and I was mostly expected to be my father's handy man, assisting him with any task he would be working with at home. These tasks included any painting that had to be done around the house, gardening, cleaning the roof and other outdoor tasks. My sister on the other hand, would help with all the indoor house chores including cooking, washing dishes and clothes and keeping the house clean at all times. Bell (2010) argues that oppression often signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted social identities.

The foregoing was affirmed in my socialisation through the assigning of home duties and responsibilities. My tasks of helping in the garden and painting were not daily activities and this meant that I enjoyed more playtimes. On the other hand, the duties or chores assigned to my sister were daily chores such as the washing of dishes and helping with the cleaning and were daily tasks, and she therefore enjoyed less playtime. This means that I unconsciously enjoyed a social benefit or privilege because of my membership to a dominant or agent social group as a male. This was not the only benefit I enjoyed becasue I also had the privilege of being allowed to play at a park that was a distance away from home, and my sister was not allowed this privilege as it was thought to be unsafe for girls to play away from home. Due to her female identity (target identity), she did not enjoy the same privilege as me. When it came to playing, we were encouraged to play separately as

boys and girls; this was something that was verbally communicated to us and something that we also observed. I remember a number of incidents when we would play together with the girls but the girls would be reprimanded for playing with the boys out of fear that we (boys) could accidently hurt them because we play rough. However, this roughness was an expectation from us and not the girls. Once again, the notion of gender difference was affirmed. Lorber (2010: 321) argues that

> [o]nce a child's gender is evident, others treat those in one gender differently from those in the other, and children respond to the different treatment by feeling different and behaving differently.

Whilst my collection of toys included sets of pellet and water guns, trucks and sports cars, soccer balls and spades, this was not the same for my sister and for most of the girls in the neighbourhood. Rather, their toy collection, included tea sets, Ken (male doll) and Barbie (female) dolls, dollhouses and make-up sets. This careful selection of toys by our parents was unconsciously aimed at inducting us into our gender roles and resulted in us boys internalising that we are superior while girls are inferior to us.

As a boy I was expected to be active, thus running and playing soccer was an expectation. On the other hand, my sister was expected to be more reserved and less active. She would be scolded for running, as my parents and other adults feared she could hurt herself. If it occurred that my sister would hurt herself in any way, crying was expected and acceptable. This was not what was expected of me and I would be told *indoda ayikhali*, meaning "a man does not cry". This was something that as young boys we internalised and if it happened that one of our male friends was to cry when we were playing, we would call him a *sissy*, meaning he was acting like a girl as crying was something we understood to be a feminine quality. The elders frowned upon reporting an injury or bullying amongst boys and we often would be told to toughen up. Girls on the other hand, would be comforted. Despite the fact that there were times you would fall and hurt yourself and would have tears almost falling, you would fight back the tears as crying would be seen as a sign of weakness.

There were also stereotypical messages about sexuality that were unconsciously being communicated that positioned heterosexuality as the norm. We were expected to accept heterosexuality as a norm and it was made out as if no other sexuality identity existed.

When visiting my grandmothers and all my cousins, the elders were very strict about sleeping arrangements for the boys and the girls - boys were to sleep in a bedroom away from the girls, as there was a fear that we would engage in sexual play. This sent a clear message that sexual attraction was natural towards the opposite sex. There was no fear that the girls or the boys sleeping together would get involved in any sexual play. I can recall an incident where a young boy and girl from the township were caught playing with each other and how the elders in the community were shocked and condemned their behaviour. I can only but imagine what their reaction would have been if those were two kids of the same sex. Harro (2010) argues that those with agent status relatively enjoy more social power; this is underscored by the mere fact that Barbie had a boyfriend (Ken) and the subsequent message that heterosexual relationships are the norm. Same sex relationships were "muted" and a taboo to even talk about. By merely denying the existence of any other sexual orientation other than that of being heterosexual, it privileged heterosexual people to enjoy being accepted as "normal". Blumenfeld (2010) attributes the "muting" of gay and lesbian identities to people's discomfort and uncertainty when approaching discussions around homosexuality. This discomfort and uncertainty reflect people's socialisation into a society where lesbians, gays and bisexual people have been stigmatised and made invisible. Although I gained very little knowledge during my early socialisation about homosexuality, I just knew that heterosexuality was the norm. I also had not come across anyone whom I knew to be gay or lesbian. The discourse of heterosexuality was dominant and although nobody spoke about it, homosexuality was indeed a subordinate discourse and any conversations around it were frowned upon.

### 3.3.2 Racial socialisation

According to Tatum (2010), the impact of racism begins early. Even in our pre-school years, we are exposed to misinformation about people different from ourselves. We internalise prejudices of those who take care of us when we are young. We also learn stereotypes and prejudices about our own racial identities and other racial identities, and subsequently internalise such stereotypes. The prejudice and stereotypical messages we learn are often based on what Tatum (2010) terms as limited information which is often attributed to how we are constantly exposed to misinformation about those who share a different identity than ours. My early socialisation as a black child was also based on the prejudices and

experiences that the elders in my family had had with people of our own race and with people who shared a different race than ours. Through conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, I learned a great deal about the inequalities that exist between black, Indian, coloured and white people.

Due to the history of apartheid and its concomitant racial inequalities, it is not alarming that most South Africans grew up in communities that are racially segregated. Tatum (2010) affirms that most of us grew up in neighbourhoods where we had limited opportunities to interact with people different from our own families. This also applies to my early childhood and first socialisation as I grew up in a township where only black people lived. Next to our township was a suburban area where all the white people lived. Although black people from the township would go into the suburbs, whether it was in search of jobs or walking to town, the white people from the suburbs would never be seen walking in the township. The township was stereotypically viewed as a very unsafe place and there was a great fear from the white people when they would see black people walking in their suburban areas. We would often hear stories over dinner and on the streets of people who had been either stopped or victimised by the police whilst walking in these "white areas". As a young boy growing up I had a slight fear of the police as I thought of them as people who were there to protect the white people in the suburbs from the black people in the townships. Embedded within my fear for the police was the internalisation I developed, a fear of black people. This gave me a disturbing notion that white people were actually more important than black people. The type of houses they lived in, the cleanliness of their neighbourhoods and the constant police patrols in these areas affirmed this notion. These were often white male policemen and I had hardly come across a white / black policewoman. These thought patterns of viewing white people as better than black people reveal how from that young age I had internalised a limiting definition of my racial identity.

Added to the above was how the elders would refer to white people whenever they spoke about them. Often the relationship between black and white people for most African people in the township was of white employer and black employee. This was the same with my grandmother who worked for a white family; it was interesting that she would never mention any of the members of the family she worked for by their first names. For the

husband she would refer to as “Bass” (boss), and for the wife she would refer to as the “Mrs”. For oppression to exist there needs to be an agent and target where the agent will use social power and privilege to ensure that the target internalises his/her own oppression. As such, the agent enjoys social benefits that go unchallenged (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2010: 29). The use of the word “baas” was powerful in instilling in the mind of the black person the notion that the white person is superior to a black person. This I can support because even in interactions that were not of employer and employee, black people would refer to white people as “baas” and “Mrs”. This was an expectation from the white employer and here the vertical relationship of oppression is evident as the term “baas” gave status to the white employer. I do not remember the lady who was asked to work at our home with the cleaning ever referring to my mom as “Boss” or “Mrs”. Note how I use the word “help”. It is interesting to note that in the township if you have someone who works as a maid, you do not refer to them as a maid, rather you will refer to “u anti osizayo” (an aunty who helps). This goes back to internalised racism where as a black person you do not see yourself fit enough to have a maid. Rather, white people have maids and they are the ones who create jobs, whilst black people are paid by someone to “help” you around the house. This is despite the similarities in the duties that the “u anti osizayo” and the maid would have to fulfil to earn a wage. In this example we can observe a pattern of inter-relationships of the forms of oppressions about how we learn to internalise racism. Tatum (2010: 67) explains:

> People of colour as well as whites develop these categorizations. Even a member of the stereotyped group may internalise the stereotypical categories about his or her own group to some degree. In fact, this process happens so frequently that it has a name, internalized oppression.

Through my internalisation of racism during my early socialisation it had become apparent that black people have to rely on an income earned from a white person in order to make a living and support their families. Most of the people who were fortunate to get jobs in the township worked for people who were white in colour. A white person was subsequently associated to job opportunity; hence you would find people from the township walking about in the white suburbs begging for jobs while they would never beg for jobs in the townships. The inter-relationships of oppression emerge when I reflect on how the African women would always seek jobs as housekeepers and babysitters and the African men would

seek jobs as gardeners, builders or painters. In reflection on who looked for what job in my community I can now identify the reinforcement of my gender socialisation as a boy when jobs like gardening, painting and helping my father at home was assigned to me as a boy. Other stereotypes that I had learned included the misguided perception that white people are the ones with all the wealth. This stereotype was supported by the mere fact that black people always looked to white people for employment and that meant they (whites) were the ones with wealth. Hardiman, Jackson and Griffin (2007: 62) explain that

> [e]ven though we may focus on one manifestation of oppression, how we experience disadvantage or privilege is related to our other social group membership.

Within this lived experience, the relationship between race, gender and class becomes apparent - the more target identities one has, the fewer social benefits and privileges one enjoys and to an extent, it dictates your standard of living. An African man living in the township who does not have a job enjoys fewer social benefits compared to a white middle class woman living in the suburb area. Similarly an African working class female enjoys fewer benefits in comparison to a working class African male in terms of gender.

My first socialisation was no doubt intended to provide me with a foundation on how to make sense of the world. It taught me about my multiple identities, how to act accordingly in a manner that is in line with societal norms. My first socialisation would therefore be a lens with which I would make sense of my schooling experience, make meaning of the messages I came across from the media and other institutions such as the church. The next section of this chapter is a reflection that considers my socialisation at different institutions such as the school and the church. I also reflect on the role of the media in my socialisation.

## 3.4 Institutional and cultural socialisation

Although my first socialisation was a powerful tool in teaching me about my multiple identities, there was another level of socialisation which was just as instrumental in affirming my early socialisation, i.e. the institutional and cultural level. Harro (2010: 48) explains that at this level

> [m]ost of the messages we received about how to be, whom to "look up to" and "look down on", what rules to follow, what roles to play, what assumptions to make,

> what to believe, and what to think will probably reinforce or contradict what we have learned at home.

On this level the media, language patterns, lyrics of songs, cultural practices, the school, the church and many other institutions play a role in shaping our perceptions about identity (Harro, 2010).

### 3.4.1 Pre-primary school

One of my earliest experiences of difference at an institutional level was when I enrolled at an all-white pre-primary school in a white suburban area. Part of my registration was a 2-day trial to see if I would "fit in" with the other pupils. Although at the time I could not understand why and did not see anything wrong with it, I was constantly monitored a little more in comparison to the other kids. When I was picked up after school, my school bag would be searched to see if I had not stolen any toys that belonged to the school. I remember my mother being really upset about this but I also remember how she never took this up with the teachers. This was another message that I learned about my identity as a black person, namely how a white person was in a way superior to me as a black person. Although my mother never said this to me, I noticed her behaviour from the interaction she had with my white teacher. Such a non-questioning and passive reaction is common with members of a subordinate or target group who find it easier not to challenge mistreatment and resort to colluding with oppression (Bell, 2010). People who have been socialised in an oppressive environment and who accept the dominant group's ideology about their group, learn to accept definitions of themselves that are hurtful and limiting (Bell, 2010). Similarly, the decision by my mother not to challenge what she felt was mistreatment on the basis of race was symbolic of her submission and collusion and to the extent to which she had internalised racism. However, when one takes into account the context at the time, it can be argued that black people had little space to act or challenge such mistreatment on the basis of race. At the time our country provided very little protection for the rights of people of colour.

My early socialisation of difference was very powerful in shaping my own identity and how I perceived others and how I had no role to play in shaping myself to challenge the multiple forms of oppression that I would encounter as a young adult. Through this socialisation I

learned how to collude with oppression and my own agency was silenced and discouraged through both the conscious and unconscious messages I picked up from those close to me.

### 3.4.2 Primary school

My first socialisation as a child had taught me respect for others and to an extent it had tried to teach me about tolerance for others. However, silent messages had taught me about my identities in a way that only helped in making me internalise difference and inequalities. By the time I had to attend school, I had learned a lot about what it meant to be a boy. I knew that my role at home was to perform more labour intensive tasks and I had to an extent internalised my superiority over girls. I had also learned that as a boy I was stronger and had to be tougher. However, I had also learned that I was somewhat inferior to a white person, and that in comparison, white people had better opportunities in life due to their economic standing. I had not learned that this is not true, rather I just accepted this stereotype about race. I had also learned a lot about heterosexuality as the norm and gay and lesbian identities as taboos. The school seemed to reinforce all that I had learned throughout my early socialisation.

#### 3.4.2.1 Sexuality and gender socialisation

At school the educators seemed to treat boys and girl differently. Boys had responsibilities like the carrying of chairs, lifting of heavy objects and were encouraged to play active sport. The girls on the one hand, were expected to sweep the classrooms and mop the floors and they would always be the ones chosen for tasks such as fetching water for the teacher or writing on the board. Here it becomes clear that the educators were acting in accordance to their own internalised gender prejudices. The norm is that gender roles are inextricably tied to one's biological sex and therefore really inherent and natural (Hackman, 2010). Experiencing the different treatment of boys and girls at school was just a reinforcement of what was happening at home and what seemed to be happening in many families in my community. The girls would clean, cook and do all the indoor chores. The boys would help each other doing the gardening and when visiting my grandparents we would be expected to fetch water as it was regarded not safe to send a girl to the shop, so this was another task for boys (we were expected to be strong). This became what I had accepted as a norm.

Lober (2010: 321) attributes this to the fact that gender signals are so ubiquitous that we usually fail to notice them, unless they are missing.

I can now identify similarities about my early socialisation and what I had learned as part of the school curriculum and the hidden curriculum. This also included how in one of the primary schools I attended in a township, all my teachers were female, but the principal. This sent a strong message that as a male my role is to lead. This message was reinforced because even in the township, the men seemed to be the heads of households. This was true about the church as well where females had absolutely no leadership role and when they were given a role it would be to prepare meals for the male leaders, a task they took very seriously. Through the way the school was structured, it also seemed that it was a woman's duty to mind the children, and this even seemed to have impacted on the sort of career choices males and females would make. According to Lorber (2010: 321)

> [p]arenting is gendered. With different expectations for mothers and fathers, and people of different genders work at different kinds of jobs. The work adults do as mothers and fathers ... shapes women's and men's life experiences and these experiences produce different feelings, consciousness, relationships, skills – ways of being we call feminine or masculine.

At school, although we were taught in the same classes with the white learners, interactions outside the classroom seemed to be very segregated. The white learners would sit in different groups and play together during break time and so would the black learners. Furthermore, these groups were divided by gender: the white boys would play together whilst the white girls would play together in groups; this was also the same for black learners. To a certain extent this was encouraged by some teachers for when a girl was to be injured whilst playing with the boys, she would be asked: *Why were you playing with the boys in the first place?* This was probably because difference is one of the major ways that human beings use to organise their lives (Lorber, 2010). The way we played at school was not something new to me as back home and in the community the same thing was happening. The girls would play "house" with their dolls and teacups indoors or in the gardens, and the boys would play soccer, play with guns and cars in the road. The perception that girls play with their dolls because their role is to care for the children was further re-enforced by the fact during my entire primary school the teachers were all

female. Also, the notion that boys would play with cars and guns, not only send the message that boys are tougher, but also this was probably why I had not come across a female police woman at that age.

School sports and extra-mural activities included soccer, swimming, netball, gymnastics, singing, participating in school plays and music. Within sport it was school policy that girls would play netball and would be allowed swimming and gymnastics. There was no room for girls to participate in soccer, just like there was no room for boys to participate in sports like gymnastics and netball as these were considered to be feminine activities. The separation in the school and in the community of how boys and girls played was powerful in making it impossible for the two young genders to play and interact with each other. If as a boy you were to make a habit of playing with the girls, you would be labelled as a "sissy boy", and this was something that was very insulting. This implied that there was certainly something socially constructed as being a deficit about being female or having female qualities that bordered along the lines of being inferior and not being so competent. This reinforcement was all achieved through everyday gendered practices that reproduce the society's view of how women and men should act (Lorber, 2010: 323).

#### 3.4.2.2 Socialisation

In the primary school I also learned lessons that shaped my identity as a black child that reinforced my first socialisation. I remember clearly when my parents made a decision to remove me from a primary school in township one year after my registration with that school. They felt that my former primary school and other township schools offered a lower quality of education and decided they would be enrolling me in a predominantly white school in a white neighbourhood. The message here was clear that white people provide a much better education and once again the message that white people were superior to people of colour was reinforced. Through the internalisation of racism, my parents had come to a stereotyped conclusion about their own identities and that of white identities. Despite the fact that my father was a teacher teaching in a township school at the time, he was of the opinion that township schools cannot offer education of good quality. According to Bell (2010), oppressive behaviours are internalised by victims of oppression and those who enjoy social power and privilege. Through the internalisation of oppression, we accept

false social constructions of our identities and make decisions based on these socially constructed identities without questioning their origin. Similarly, my parents had acted according to their own internalised racism and subsequently socialised my own impressionable identity as young black child.

At this new school there was no African teacher except the one Zulu female teacher and this also raised questions: *Why this was the case? Was it because black people were not seen as intelligent and competent enough to teach more complex subjects?* This could arguably be linked to Young's (2010) argument that oppression operates in a way that marginalises a whole category of people from participating in social life and institutions on the basis of their social identity. My school did the same by excluding people of colour from teaching at the school. However, the school did more than that, it also sent the message that black people were not capable. Of course, the cleaners were all African female cleaners and male gardeners. This state of affairs confirmed my early childhood and first socialisation where I observed men the men in my community would seek work as gardeners whilst the females would seek work as domestic workers.

#### 3.4.2.3 Class socialisation

My parent's choice of school also made me aware of other forms of inequalities that I had not really been aware of. Within my own community it was not all the families that could afford to send their kids to ex-model C schools[9], and soon all the children who went to these schools would be friends with each other as they had some common shared experiences. Mostly those kids who go to township schools would typically befriend each other. Although we were all black kids growing up together in a township, another form of difference was created by *where* we attended school. Former model C schools were more expensive in terms of tuition fees and offered more extracurricular programmes and teaching resources. They also made use of English as the medium of instruction. On the other hand, township schools had fewer resources and some had no extracurricular activities at all and

[9] Ex-model C schools refer to those schools that were previously reserved for white learners under the apartheid government

mostly made use of isiZulu as the medium of instruction. The mere language of instruction one received also appeared to be a determinant of a person's economic status and class.

Speaking fluent English was associated with better opportunities and "whiteness", and most of the learners who attended township schools were not fluent when it came to speaking English. They subsequently avoided using English when playing. Those of us who attended ex-model C schools used English, even when we were playing and this made us appear "white", or better than others. At this point the concept of multiple identities and the relationship between multiple forms of oppression is evident and this adds another level of complexity to our attempt to understand the dynamics of oppression, particularly as it is influenced by the behaviours and attitudes in each role (Bell, 2010). Issues of race and class were intertwined and complexities, which challenged what I had learned growing up, became a part of me growing up. I had learned that through my early socialisation white people were associated with wealth and middle-class status that could afford to have their children educated at ex-model C schools. On the other hand, I learned that as part of the working class, people of colour are associated with lower economic status that could not afford schooling at ex-model C schools. Thus, when a number of families, including my parents chose ex-model C schools for their children, tension was caused amongst the children within the community. Those kids who attended ex-model C schools were viewed as having a diluted black identity as they have adopted a "white" identity. Depending on the schools that you attended, the relationship between children in the township deteriorated and it was almost as if two new social groups had been formed. There was a strong view from those of us who attended ex-model C schools that we were better than the other children who attended township schools. Whilst we internalised a feeling of superiority, the township kids seemed to have internalised that they were inferior to us. This could also be viewed as a form of horizontal relationship of oppression (Bell, 2010) where members of the oppressed direct rage at being oppressed inward and back on each other, rather than directing it onward toward the more dangerous and powerful victimiser (Pharr, 1988). Another form of discrimination I can recall has to do with people with disabilities, namely ableism.

#### 3.4.2.4 Socialisation: ableism

It is not so surprising to note that during my primary school there were no physically challenged learners who attended our school. The one boy from my community who was disabled attended a special school for learners with disabilities. Once again, marginalisation becomes evident as learners with physical challenges were marginalised from mainstream schools. The assumption was that mainstream schools would not be able to cope with physically challenged learners. However, I recall how even though his disability was a physical one, we associated disability and especially learners who attended the special school with mental illness and we used to tease him about being mentally ill. Wendell (2010) argues that this is due to cultural stereotyping of people with disabilities, the selective stigmatisation of physical and mental limitations that lead to a false definition of disabled people. An older man who was disabled in the community had no job and no wife and this was primarily attributed to his disability as he was in a wheel chair. The community had very little expectation of him and mostly defined him by his disability. Messages such as these and others already mentioned were also experienced during high school and this made us to conform to what society perceives to be the norm.

### 3.4.3 High School

#### 3.4.3.1 The interconnections of racism, gender, classism and religious oppression

The socialisation at primary school was crucial as it paved the way to high school as another level of reinforcement of all the messages about my multiple identities. Once again, when it came to a choice of high school, my parents were certain that it would not be a township or African school, but a multi-racial high school. The school I attended was pre-dominantly coloured and Indian with a few white and African learners. Except for one Zulu teacher, there were no African teachers in the school. Unlike primary school where I think I was still mostly learning about my identities, struggling to realise who I was, at high school we were acting out what we had learned from our early socialisation. It seemed any deviation from what we had learned would be met with severe punishment from both peers and the elders (educators and parents). From as early as grade 7, African pupils associated with Africans, coloured pupils with coloureds, Indian pupils with Indians, the racial divide was evident in the manner that we socialised. It is interesting to notice how the dynamics becomes more

complex as other identities are taken into account. Whilst boys would congregate together during break time in their respective racial groups, girls would do the same. This gendered social interaction was what was seen to be the norm, so much so that if a learner of a different race would make a habit of hanging around learners from outside his/her own group, they would be labelled. I remember an African learner who lived in the area near the school, he knew most of the coloured learners in the school, he would hang around them during break, and so he was called a "*coconut*". The implication was that he thought he was better than the rest of us black learners in the school by associating with learners from another race. I recall colluding with teasing him by calling him a *coconut.* Teasing him was a way of ridding myself of the anger that back home we were all referred to as *coconuts* for attending a multi-racial school and most of the kids thought we were better than them and to a large extent this was true as we had come to internalise this. The notion of thinking I was better than the children who went to township schools was clearly communicated by my parents' decision to refuse township education. Because they viewed township schools as inferior we thought we were getting a better education than the children who went to township schools. This had gotten so bad that we would wear our school ties with pride in the bus and in town, whilst the learners from township schools would opt not to wear their ties out of a feeling of shame.

During my high school I chose subjects in Commerce as my study field. In reflecting on the textbooks and the messages that these books carried, it became clear that stereotypical messages colluded with various forms of oppression. One example would be where in our Accounting textbooks white males owned all the examples of businesses we studied. Females would appear as secretaries and bookkeepers, yet when they refer to an accountant it would be a name of a white male. The message was clear that black people and white females had little or no role to play in business, not to mention black women. There was almost no reference to Indians and coloured people in our textbooks, despite our then Minister of Finance and our Governor of the Reserve Bank being black males. The teachers never questioned this and as we never had any discussion about this, I subsequently internalised the role of white males as the norm. Lemmer (1993: 9) also notes the role the school plays as a formal agent of gender role socialisation as the means whereby culture, including notions of appropriate gender roles is transmitted. The silencing

or marginalisation of people of colour in our textbooks could be viewed as having a negative effect in most African learners at the school. There was also a great school dropout rate amongst African learners in the school as the view was that the school could change very little in their lives. You would often find most African learners working as taxi conductors after dropping out of school and at times they would mock us for continuing with school. Harro (2010: 49-50) explains that

> [b]y participating in our roles as agents, and remaining unconscious of or being unwilling to interrupt the cycle, we perpetuate the system of oppression. These results are often cited as the problems facing our society today: high school drop-out rates, crime, poverty, drugs and so on.

I also remember during my schooling career how the school cleaners, the gardeners and the security guards were all African. In the high school the cleaner was an African female named Sarah[10], the gardeners were two African males named Sihle and Patrick and the security guard was also an African male named Stanley. Going back to my first socialisation where in our community males would seek employment as gardeners and females would seek employment as domestic workers, this state of affairs was just a reinforcement of what I had already learned as a young child (cf. 3.3). Although the situation at the time with the cleaners at the school was not very clear and confusing for me, I realised that there was a difference between the treatment of the cleaners, the school guard and the educators in the school. I also realised that this sort of treatment was also expected from us as learners at the school. At the beginning of each year we would have an assembly where all the staff members would be introduced to all the learners. The cleaners, however, were never part of this assembly and were never introduced to us. Only the educators and the school management would be introduced as “Mrs”, “Miss” or “Mr”. Whenever an educator would send us to ask for something from another educator, they would for example say: *Go ask for some chalk from Mrs. Dunking* or *Please go borrow some brooms from Mr. Stuart*. However, when we were sent to ask for anything from either the cleaner or one of the gardeners, they would use their first names: *Percy could you please go and ask Sarah for a dish cloth* or *Go and ask Sihle for an extra desk*. We were never to refer to any of the other educators by their first names; in fact they made sure we never knew what their first names were. When it came to the cleaners, we knew their first names and often we never knew their surnames.

[10] All the names of the cleaners and the educators have been changed for ethical considerations

Being referred to as “Miss/Mrs” or “Mr/Sir” resembled status that was according to our educators, only meant for educators and not the cleaners, despite the fact that the cleaners were older than the pupils and older than some of the teachers. Also interesting to note is how the cleaners and the guards would refer to all the other educators as “Mr” or “Miss/Mrs”, despite the fact that the educators never used titles to refer to them. This was the norm, something that needed no questioning as it was the way “life” was done. Also, the staffroom was for the use of the educators only and no learners were allowed to use the staffroom. The cleaners and the security guard, however, were also not allowed to use the staffroom. Whilst the staffroom was equipped with two air-conditioning systems and had comfortable couches for the teachers, the cleaners and the security guard were allocated an old unused classroom filled with broken desks and chairs, and had no air-conditioning. This sent a clear message about who was valued and who was not valued.

Recalling how group socialisation was determined by our social identities, I also observed the same with the educators at school. During breaks the male educators all used to sit at the back of the staffroom as a group of men, while the female educators occupied the front of the staff room. The one African female educator who taught Zulu used to sit with the cleaners and the security guard in the old classroom. It appeared she was uncomfortable sitting in the staff room with the other teachers. The one male educator Mr Smith who sat with the female educators and hardly really seemed to be close with the other male educators, we regarded as sexually “suspect”. The term “suspect” we used to label someone who was confusing and did not conform to what we thought to be the “gender norm”. As issues of sexuality started to become to the fore at the high school and informed by the belief that heterosexual identities are the norm, we suspected the teacher to be gay.

Before I entered high school, I learned in church and in passing that homosexuality was a sin and that people who were homosexual were disobeying God and needed to be prayed for to change “their ways”. I had not actually been aware of the existence of people who were homosexual that much but knew that if they did exist they were sinners according to the Bible. It is imperative to note the role of the church as an institution in shaping values. According to the youth culture, being homosexual was the lowest form a human being could

assume and it is something that was made extreme fun of and was frowned upon. The consequences of being homosexual are absolute isolation, at times emotional abuse and violent attacks. Even television at that time, never showed homosexual couples and it was as if they were forced into non-existence. However, during high school we were all acting our masculine and feminine identities which we have been taught (doing gender); some boys in school would deviate from the accepted norm of gender roles by hanging around with girls most of the time. They would always have their shirts tucked in and have long plaited hair, that is whilst boys were expected to disobey school rules by un-tucking shirts and generally have short hair. This was against our learned behaviour, and they failed to adhere to what we had been taught. As a result they would be called degrading names and be ostracised. Also, every boy would avoid being seen with and talking to them to avoid being labelled as a homosexual. They would be made fun of in class and laughed at in the corridors, despite the fact that these boys had not really admitted that they were homosexual. Rather, the assumption about their sexuality was arrived at by a check list against what our early socialisation had taught us about what it means to be male, and how a male should act. The teachers must have really agreed that homosexuality was immoral as the school did not take any steps in disciplining our mistreatment towards those who were perceived to be gay; instead, at times teachers would laugh at the jokes made in class when teasing boys who were thought to be gay. Although I really never liked colluding with this form of oppression, it was easier to collude than to be also labelled as gay. Young (2010) identifies 5 faces of oppression and argues that in order for oppression there needs to be exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. In my high school experience, their peers often marginalised those who were perceived to be homosexual. Cases of violence between those who claimed to be heterosexual against those who were perceived to be homosexual can be viewed as an attempt of especially young males to affirm their own masculine identities. Often those perceived to be homosexual would appear to have feelings of powerlessness, a lack of authority and status feeding into a low self-worth when it was easier not to challenge homophobic slurs and jokes made about them.

Another form of oppression that my school and its management grappled with was in terms of religion. The school had assumed a Christian identity, regardless of the fact that there

were a number of learners who were Shembe[11], Muslim and I as a Jehovah Witness. During assemblies we would gather in the school hall or main quadrangle and the teacher conducting the assembly would read from a Christian book of prayers and then we would be asked to pray "Our Father". Assemblies and the singing of Christian gospel musical pieces were compulsory for all learners in the school, regardless of our multi-religious beliefs. The thinking was that majority of the learners were Christian, and thus Christianity assumed the status of the norm. Even in all classrooms the school management would hand out the "Our father prayer" printed out to paste on the wall. On the days we did not have assembly, the teachers would make us pray in our individual classes before starting the day. Another interesting issue was the school rule that only girls would be allowed to have long hair as long as it was tied up. Boys were expected to have short hair. When I reflect on this now it is difficult to understand how the school defined short hair. For all African learners the expectation for boys was to have our hair really short, but Indian, coloured and white learners had longer hair then us, but it was still regarded as short. However the school enforced the rule and I remember a friend of mine in the school was Shembe and according to his religion they are not allowed to cut their hair. When his hair started growing to what the school deemed as breaking the school rules and when he refused to cut his hair, he was suspended. Muslim learners who had to attend prayer on Friday afternoons were also forced to stay until the end of the school day during the days when we were writing tests. No special arrangements would be made for them. These experiences affirmed the identities of the learners that were from Christian homes and marginalised learners from homes that practised different religions. The agent identities entrusted with our schooling who were also Christian had the power to decide what our religious experience at school would be as they exercised their social power and privilege as belonging to a dominant social group identity in society.

As much as my lived school experience may not appear like explicit forms of oppression through an eye that is not critical, my socialisation was nothing out of the ordinary and should rather be seen as the norm that no one really ever questioned. As it was expected from us to collude with the various forms of oppression, my role during my socialisation was

[11] African religion which believes that males should not cut their hair or shave

limited to the internalisation of the messages about *who I was* and *what was meant to be,* and to be colluding with them. My socialisation about the different social groups had become very entrenched into my own life and what my perceptions of other people were. The next section of this chapter reflects on what my socialisation resulted in.

## 3.5 What did my socialisation result in?

After having spent a total of 13 years in formal schooling (5 in high school, 7 in primary and 1 in pre-primary), I finished school at the age of 17. During this time I had also been exposed to the media, advertising, song lyrics and movies. I'd been brought up in a very staunch Christian family with very strict values that I needed to hold and abide by. My religion also gave prescriptions about the role of man and woman in society. It had made it clear that Christianity was the only true religion; it had taught me that heterosexuality is the only acceptable sexual identity and that homosexuality was immoral. I also learned and accepted all these lessons about society and had accepted them as the norm, as the *status quo*. I had also observed certain things about how homes were structured. Who took the leadership role or who was the head of the family at home and the different roles that we had as boys and girls. I'd also observed without querying, the differences between blacks and whites and accepted these differences as the norm. Harro (2010) explains that

> [w]hen we arrive at the result of this terrible cycle, we face the decision of what to do next. It is easier to do nothing and simply to allow the perpetuation of the status quo. We may choose not to make waves, to stay in our familiar patterns.

And so after my 13 years in school and my first socialisation, I will admit to the fact that I had internalised racism as the norm; I had a false sense of superiority over women as I had internalised sexism and male domination; I was extremely homophobic and I had some limiting perceptions about disabled people. This can all be attributed to my socialisation or rather this was a result of my socialisation. When I registered for my first year at university to study education, this was the identity that I carried with me to every lecture hall. This was the identity that I used to decide who my friends were going to be, whom I appreciated and valued and those whom I felt had little value. I used all the values and teachings from my early socialisation as the one way to judge right from wrong, to distinguish between what is acceptable and what was not acceptable. I also used these values and teachings to

formulate my expectations of others I encountered. I had particular expectations from male students and lecturers I met just like I did from female students.

And so I sailed through my first semester at university with these values that I had been brought up with and I hardly remember that any of my classes challenged these teaching from my socialisation. It was during my second semester when I registered for an elective module called *Diversity and Learning,* that I felt like most of what I had thought to be the norm and my socialisation were being challenged.

## 3.6 My socialisation contested

Registering for the *Diversity and Learning* module was a critical learning point in challenging my own socialisation. This is the point in my life that I identify as a crucial and critical moment where I felt I had a choice to make. The choice was to either continue thinking in the ways that I was brought up, i.e. with what I had learned from the media and from church, from the observations of how the elders in my family, community and society carried themselves in general, or to go against all of it and challenge it.

The module specifically looked at 3 forms of oppression, namely *sexism*, *racism* and *classism*, and touched on the others, such as *ableism*, *xenophobia*, *homophobia*, *religious oppression* and others. The aim of the module was to explain how race, gender and class and their respective forms of oppression are constructed and maintained using the *Theory of Oppression* (Adams, 2010). The module further aimed at raising awareness about the existence of oppression with the intention of preparing us as pre-service teachers to respond to diversity in a more informed light. The classes were facilitated by a group of lecturers and student assistants who engaged in a very informal and student-centred approach that was embedded in compassion (Adams 2007). We drew on the *Cycle of Socialisation* (Harro, 2010) to help us understand how we learn oppressive attitudes and behaviours and we often shared experiences in the classes just like the facilitators who also shared lived experience about difference, inequality, and socialisation. As I attended more and more lectures, I started to re-think some of the values that I cherished up to that point in my life. I realised that I did not have to agree with the lessons I learned from my

socialisation; I did not have to collude with oppression. I realised that I could decide to end the cycle and change the cycle to become a change agent. This of course was easier said than done, but I was motivated to interrupt my cycle of socialisation, especially when bearing in mind Harro's (2010) explanation that we become participants in oppression by just doing nothing.

Through the lectures I had learned that challenging or going against any form of oppression was not an easy task and that it could result in a backlash from those who did not feel society needs to change. I realised that parents, friends and fellow students could act with contempt towards those that challenge what is perceived to be the norm. After completing my undergraduate studies and despite having knowledge about oppression and how crippling it is to those who are affected by it, I still had great difficulty in challenging it in public spaces. Through further studies and gaining more insight about oppression, including observing lecturers who cherished values of social justice, I was inspired to learn from them and to also infuse these values in my own practice. However, when I started practising as an educator, infusing values of social justice in my practice was not an easy task. This study is therefore my journey in the quest to improve my own practice by teaching for social justice.

## 3.7 Summary

From the time we are born we are exposed to already existing structures of inequalities and societal norms. Our parents and caregivers play a vital role in inducting us to these norms in many ways and as we grow up. We are further exposed to institutions that often reinforce what we have learned at home. Institutions such as the schools and the church are places where we often learn what society regards as the norm. Through play, observation, the media and what we are told by those who have authority over us, we learn to accept rather than to challenge inequalities that perpetuate oppression. We do not challenge oppression often out of our own internalisation of it, or out of fear of going against what society regards as the norm. This is equally true about my own socialisation and it is important for me as an educator to be aware of what influences my values in my daily practice when I use these values to make judgement about good or bad, about right or wrong.

# 4 CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUALISING MY PRACTICE

> In education, Lynch and Baker (2005) argue, "[E]qual respect and recognition is not just about the liberal idea that every individual is entitled to equal rights and the privileges of citizenship in the country in which they live … It is also about appreciating or accepting differences rather than merely tolerating them" (pp. 132-133). A seeking of sameness in the name of equality too often does not explicitly challenge harmful group stereotypes (North, 2006: 517)

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I seek to position social justice within higher education and to comment on the implications thereof for my practice as a teacher educator. I begin this chapter by giving a brief exposition of the state of education in South Africa, with specific focus on higher education and teacher training. In the following section, I motivate why it is important for me to be concerned with locating social justice in my teaching practice. The latter is done by means of a reflection on the strategic plan of my own institution and our *Teaching and Learning Policy* (2008). Thereafter, I make meaning of social justice education and how to teach for social justice. In the summary of this chapter, I conclude by arguing that teaching is a conscious act that prepares students for their role in society as expert professionals and as individuals who have to actively challenge oppression in their professions and in all other parts of their lives.

## 4.2 Higher education and teacher education in South Africa

The *Council on Higher Education* (CHE) (2010: 6; Wolhuter, 2006) reveals that during the era of apartheid, education was strongly driven by racial segregation. As a consequence, universities and teacher training colleges were established to cater for different race groups. Whilst segregated universities and teacher training colleges offered teacher education, these institutions had differing views on teacher training. On the one hand, universities emphasised academic knowledge and prepared teachers who could teach with a strong knowledge base, while on the other hand, teacher training colleges believed in preparing educators through sustained practice (CHE, 2010). However, regardless of the distinction between teacher education offered by universities and by teacher training colleges, education was not only used by the apartheid government as a tool to maintain an unequal social order that favoured the white middle class, but also that teacher education equally contributed to the perpetuation of a racialised South African society. Furthermore Francis

and Hemson (2007, 40) reveal how Fundamental Pedagogics as the dominant educational philosophy at the time emphasised an education characterised by values of Christianity:

> Unlike approaches that fail to acknowledge diversity, Fundamental Pedagogics delineated and emphasised diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, within an unquestioned Christian commitment, while ignoring other social difference such as class or sexual orientation.

However, in 1994 the transition from the apartheid government to the new democratic led government required new educational policies aimed at the achievement of equity and efficiency within education (Wolhuter, 2006). With regard to educational transformation, Jansen and Taylor (2003) note that the emphasis has often been placed on restructuring and achieving efficiency, quality, effectiveness and equity in the representation of staff and student enrolments within higher education. Education, however, required something far more than equity in staff representation. Rather, new education policies had implications for curriculum development as the latter needed to be aligned with values of a newly-adopted Constitution (1996) such as, *inter alia,* non-discrimination, Ubuntu, non-racism and non-sexism, social justice and equality (Enslin, 2003). One of the ways in which education would be able to start addressing inequalities and oppression, was to realise the significance of having an education system which values social justice. It is because of this realisation of the significance of social justice within education, that I conduct this study. My understanding of social justice is that it does not only concern the distribution of resources, rather social justice is both a process and a goal (Bell, 2010) that aims to challenge the ways in which oppression manifests and is maintained in society (1.5).

The significance of social justice within institutions of higher education is captured by the CHE (2004: 14) in the report *Higher Education in the first decade of democracy*:

> In many parts of the world, the case for higher education's social and public value is founded on recognising that countries which have managed to sustain high levels of economic growth with significant improvements in the living standards of the masses of their populations are those which have given priority to excellent education and training, and to higher education and training in particular as an agent of socio-economic change and development.

Most universities in South Africa have taken heed of this call and made issues of social transformation and social justice part of their agenda. In their strategic plans, the University

of Johannesburg (www.uj.ac.za), the University of Cape Town (www.uct.ac.za) and the University of KwaZulu Natal (www.ukzn.ac.za) make reference to the need to address inequalities, imbalances of the past, values of respect and tolerance. In a similar vein, the University of the Free State (UFS) (www.ufs.ac.za), which is my employer, also aligns its role as an institute of higher learning with its mission to be "[a] university recognised across the world for excellence in academic achievement and in human reconciliation". In this regard, it appears that the UFS values both the academic project and the human project. Whilst the academic project is concerned with producing graduates who have sound specialist knowledge in their chosen field of study, the human project is concerned with producing graduates who are agents of change who challenge inequalities in their professions and communities (Martin, 2012; Le Roux & Mdunge, 2012; Nieto & Bode, 2008). Besides having human embrace as one of the UFS's values, the mission statement also speaks about advancing social justice by means of creating multiple opportunities for disadvantaged students to access the university, whilst also demonstrating in everyday practice the value of human togetherness and solidarity across social and historical divides (www.ufs.ac.za). Having a mission statement that recognises the value of social justice within higher education decreases the risk of undue focus on the labour-market and economic responsiveness at the expense of the wider social and cultural contributions of higher education (CHE, 2004: 14).

Keeping in line with the UFS's broader strategic plan and the call by the CHE (2004), the UFS Faculty of Education also strives towards being

> a Faculty that affirms the dignity of its students, its staff and the community with which it engages, and draws on their diversity as a source of strength. It is recognised nationally and internationally for its scholarship and for its contextualised understanding of education. The Faculty visibly contributes to the social transformation of the broader society (www.ufs.ac.za).

Our Faculty of Education subsequently not only acknowledges that our society is diverse in many ways, but also considers such diversity as a space to work towards social transformation. Informed by the UFS's *Teaching and Learning Policy* (2008: 2), teaching and learning within the faculty is regarded as being endorsed by

> the underlying principles of a just society, founded on human dignity, freedom, equity, respect for religious freedom, freedom of speech and expression, and tolerance for the ideas of others.

When considering the strategic plan of the UFS, its *Teaching and Learning Policy* and the vision of the UFS Faculty of Education, it seems as if the institution positions itself to prepare students who are critical and who will work towards social transformation. This state of affairs foregrounds some questions for me as a teacher educator: *How can I, as a practitioner within teacher education, teach to the values of the UFS's Teaching and Learning Policy? How do I translate the faculty's vision into my daily practice? How do I teach for social justice?* The implication for me as a practitioner is that I have to take up the responsibility to continuously and critically reflect on what I am doing to contribute towards the realisation of the foregoing. In this regard, my study not only forms part of such a reflection, but it is also informed by my understanding of *social justice* (1.5).

Amongst other documents and policies that have informed teacher education in South Africa were, *inter alia,* the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE) (DoE, 2000) which was the first formal policy in terms of qualifications for educators, and the (*Revised) National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) (DoE, 2002). Although these documents have been replaced by *The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification* (DHET, 2011) and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) (2011) respectively, they need to be considered in terms of setting a trend for teacher education that resonates with the values enshrined in the South African Constitution (1996). The NSE policy upholds constitutional values by envisioning educators who have an understanding of the impact of class, race, gender and other identity-forming forces on learning, whilst showing an appreciation and respect for people with different values, beliefs, practices and culture (DoE, 2000: 19; Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson and Pillay, 2000: 219). As the NSE (DoE, 2000; DHET, 2011) introduced seven interrelated roles for educators as key criteria for the development of educators, teacher education is subsequently expected to capacitate pre-service teachers to take up their roles as learning mediators; interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials; leaders, administrators and managers; scholars, researchers and lifelong learners; community, citizenship and pastoral roles; assessors; and learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialists (DoE, 2000: 13-14). The seven roles envision educators as being both grounded in their subject knowledge through keeping up with new research in their fields, and, at the same time, educators who embrace a commitment to their citizenship responsibility. Similarly, the NCS (DoE, 2002: 3) envisions learners who will

embrace values that show a commitment to building a new South Africa, free from its segregated past:

> The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The kind of learner that is envisaged is on who will be inspired by these values, and who will act in the interests of society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice.

Within the context of the education policy landscape, curriculum in the South African school context, but also for teacher education appears to be shaped by the embracement of values of humanity, dignity and social justice, whilst pursuing academic excellence. This also holds water for the newly implemented CAPS (DoE, 2011) that seems to continue in a similar vein in preparing learners based on the principle of social transformation and a critical approach to the teaching and learning process. According to the CAPS (DoE, 2011: 5), education at school level is based on a number of principles which include "[h]uman rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa". The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (DoE, 2011: 5) also underscores sensitivity to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors.

The purpose and aim of education becomes clearer to me when I reflect on the CHE's justification of the significance of social justice within institutions of higher education, the vision and mission statements of UFS and the UFS Faculty of Education. Drawing finally on the NSE, the NCS and CAPS, I also agree that education should cater for both the cognitive development of students and learners as specialists in their fields of study, whilst also preparing them, through SJE, to be agents of change in society. As a teacher educator and in order to ensure that I prepare educators who will be able to work towards meeting the requirements and objectives stipulated in our school curriculum and education policies, my own practice needs to be informed by the same values as the policy documents that inform school curriculum. Whilst I pursue teaching for social justice, I take heed of North's (2008: 506) caution about practitioners who employ "teaching for social justice" as a catchphrase

without a deeper understanding of what it means. It is therefore important to first unpack my understanding of social justice education.

## 4.3 Social justice education: teaching for social justice

In this section and in an attempt to unpack my own understanding of *social justice education*, I draw on the scholarly works of, *inter alia,* Bell (2007), Adams (2007) and Hackman (2005) Francis and Hemson (2007). Having made meaning of what social justice means for my practice (1.5), I also consider it important to ask the question: *What is social justice education*? It is important for me to make meaning of what is social justice education because it informs my reflective cycle in my next chapter. To reflect on my practice I draw on the frameworks and components for social justice education discussed in the following section.

### 4.3.1 Frameworks for social justice education

It has been suggested that social justice draws from various disciplines to help us to understand how society is structured, how we learn particular messages about our identities and those of others, and to also understand how oppression is structured (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Bell, 2007). Thus, in order to work towards education that helps students to understand the meaning of social difference and how to challenge oppression and subsequently work towards changing students and society (Kumashiro, 2002), we need to have frameworks that can help us to move towards change. In this regard, Adams (2007: 15) suggests the following core frameworks of social justice education

1. Establish equilibrium between the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process.
2. Acknowledge and support the personal and individual dimensions of experience, while making connections to and illuminating the systemic dimensions of social group interactions.
3. Pay attention to social relations within the classroom.
4. Make conscious use of reflection and experience as tools for student-centred learning.
5. Reward changes in awareness, personal growth, and efforts to work toward change, understood as outcomes of the learning process.

Adams's (2007: 32) first point in the framework relates to the balancing of the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process. Discussion on issues of difference and

oppression often requires both students and educator to engage with certain emotions and feelings (Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007; also Bell, Love & Roberts, 2007; Cosier, 2009; Griffin, d'Errico, Harro & Schiff, 2007). For example, discussions on race and racism may come with a feeling of guilt for white students as they may feel personally blamed for the continued existence of racism; and discussions on issues of heterosexism, may involve feelings of hurt for students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered because of their lived experiences. In this regard, Adams (2007: 32) states that educators need to "pay attention to personal safety, classroom norms, and guidelines for group behaviour". By establishing an inviting and open space for students through using classroom guidelines, students feel more comfortable to participate during class discussions. Brookfield and Preskill (2005: 53) suggest that facilitators spend time at the beginning of a discussion to ask students questions such as *How would they like to be spoken to by their peers? What are their feelings about good manners, respect, or courtesy in discussion, and what do these things look like?* Allowing students to set their own guidelines for class discussion also encourages them to take responsibility to adhere to the guidelines. I am cautioned, however, by Davis and Steyn (2012) that in a quest of creating a space that is inviting for students to engage in dialogue, I should not inadvertently end up not pushing students to engage with the difficult emotions and issues that come with learning about oppression. In this regard, Davis and Steyn (2012: 35) argue for classroom spaces that foster functional discomfort within students, whilst educators challenge and support them in a firm, yet tender manner. Reflecting on their experiences in teaching in a module on Social Justice Education at an Honours and Master's level Francis and Hemson (2007: 105) concluded that the process of learning to change deeply held attitudes, assumptions and practices is difficult for students. Therefore if this process is difficult for the students it must be equally difficult for those facilitating the learning process. In the following chapter I report on this difficult process of challenging deeply held attitudes, assumptions and practices from my own teaching experience.

In terms of the second point in the framework of social justice education, Adams (2007: 32) states that educators need to "[a]cknowledge and support the personal (the individual student's experience) while illuminating the systemic (the interactions among social groups)". The personal lived experiences that students bring into our classrooms play a vital

role in getting them to learn from each other, but also to make connections with how institutions, society and individuals maintain or challenge oppression (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005: 29). Francis and Hemson (2007: 100) reveal for example how in a Social Justice Education module amongst educators

> who had in various ways expressed their commitment to a just society, there was a sudden eruption of oppressive comments and interactions.

The tensions that my arise in a classroom with the aim of teaching for social justice cannot be viewed in a negative light as such tensions allow for a space for students to reflect on, amongst other things, what they think are the underlying factors that lead to such tensions. Johnson (1981: 6) acknowledges how the interaction between students "contribute to the socialisation of values, attitudes, and ways of perceiving the world', while Griffin and Ouellett (2007: 89) indicate that it can lead to a "deeper understanding of and commitment to social justice". The interaction and sharing of the experiences amongst students is possible if the first principle is established from the onset. In other words, when an uncomfortable space has been created for students to interact with each other where the educator challenges and supports students in a firm yet tender manner, learning begins to make more meaning for students.

The third point in the framework is to attend to social relations within the classroom. According to Adams (2007: 33), by being constantly aware of the group dynamics in the classroom, facilitators can assist students in improving interpersonal communication without blaming or judging each other. Students should be encouraged to listen to their peers, even if they may not agree with them because by listening to each other without judging or blaming, they may begin to see things from a different perspective. A shift in perspective could lead to new knowledge or a change in behaviour or perceptions. Griffin and Ouellett (2007: 95) explain that if facilitators are aware of the relations within the classroom, they will be in a position to ally "student fears and self-consciousness" by creating a safe space for those students who feel vulnerable to also share experiences and thoughts with their peers.

The fourth framework is referred to as the utilisation of reflection and experience as a tool for student-centred learning (Adams, 2007: 33). By being able to reflect, students can start

to engage with the knowledge they bring into the classroom and position it against what they are learning from their peers and the educator. Students should also reflect continuously about their actions, choices and what and whom they value. Such reflections create a space for students to confront some of their own biases and prejudices. This framework applies to students even after they graduate and begin practising as professionals in their respective fields (Loughran, 2002).

Adams (2007: 33) refers to the fifth framework as valuing awareness, personal growth and change as outcomes of the learning process. Facilitators need to take into consideration the different learning styles of their students and the pace at which students learn. Teaching styles should subsequently complement the different learning styles of the students in the classroom (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). Awareness of the different learning styles of our students shows that we are concerned for our students and could motivate students to work towards desired learning outcomes.

Drawing on the five points listed in the framework for social justice education as discussed above, there is a need for practical means in which they can be realised through educational practice. In other words, I need to consider what components enable me as a practitioner to provide students with tools they can apply in their own practice and personal lives. In the next section of this chapter I will not only discuss Hackman's (2005) five components for social justice education, but will also extend my discussion by suggesting an additional component.

### 4.3.2 Components of social justice education

The components of social justice education (SJE) that inform my study are drawn from those proposed by Hackman (2005). In this regard, Hackman (2005: 103) proposes five components of SJE, namely *content mastery*, *critical thinking*, *action skills*, *self-reflection* and *awareness* of multicultural group dynamics. Although she acknowledges that the components of SJE cannot be restricted to these five only, she states that they should be viewed as a starting point in discussions about SJE. Although I regard all five of the components as crucial and significant for my understanding of SJE, I wish to extend the five components to include *classroom discussions*. Whilst I intend these components to inform

my reflection on my own teaching and the different lessons that I have had with my students (cf. Chapter 5), I ask myself questions such as: *Are the components for SJE evident in my teaching? If they are not present, what are some of the reasons for me not being able to employ them? If these components are evident in my lessons, how do they help to improve my practice?* By asking these questions, I am able to critique my practice in order for me to teach for social justice.

In Figure 4.1 below, I present a graphic representation adapted from Hackman (2005: 104) that I propose to use in my action plan. This presentation includes all five components for social justice education as proposed by Hackman, but in addition, I have also included a sixth component, namely *class discussions*. Although these components will be used in my report on my reflective cycle in the next chapter, this graphical presentation is first followed by an exposition of each component of SJE. Such an exposition is regarded as important and of utmost significance for my reflection on my cycle of action in Chapter 5.

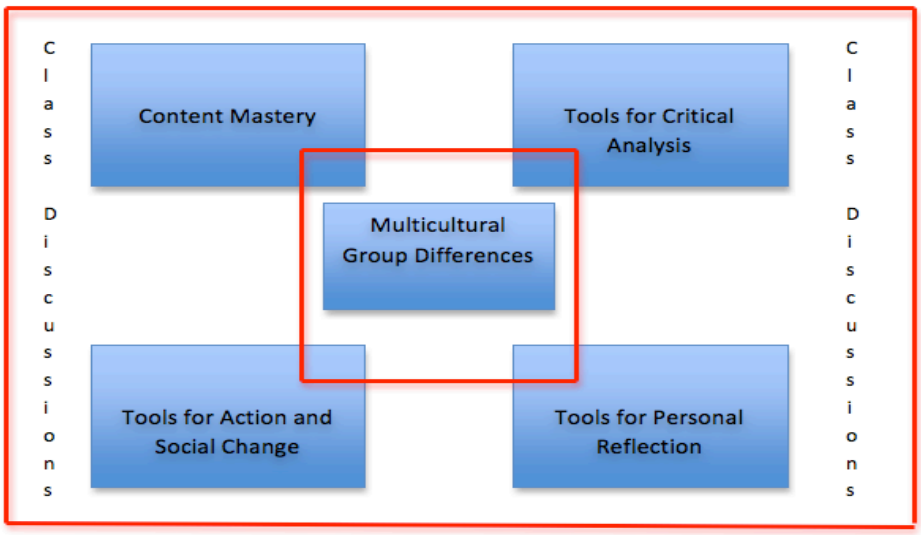


Figure 4.1: The six components of social justice education (adapted from Hackman, 2005: 104)

As the first component of SJE, Hackman (2005: 104) argues that students should be equipped to *master content* in a manner that goes beyond the mere reproduction of dominant and hegemonic ideologies. Rather, the mastering of content should include a range of ideas and information that goes beyond those usually presented in mainstream media or educational materials (Adams, 2007: 33). In terms of my own practice, the

implication is that my teaching should not be based on teaching content as is; rather, students should be critical of the information and content presented to them. In my next chapter, which reflects on my cycle of action (5.2), I reveal how I realise getting my students to master content whilst being critical through the use of interactive activities that encourage discussion and dialogue. I also discuss the challenges that emerge when infusing social justice in a module that is not purely about social justice, the tension of making time to teach for and about social justice in an Accounting education module for example. Students should be able to make meaning of content presented to them by making it applicable to their own contexts and to other contexts (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007: 89).

However, getting students to master content alone is not sufficient enough to work towards SJE and therefore, the second component of social justice education is *critical thinking and the analysis of oppression.* According to Hackman (2005: 105),

> content alone is insufficient to create democratic, empowering classroom settings, or to adequately prepare students to become active agents of change and social justice in their lives and communities.

Whilst most South Africans and most of our students are aware of our past that promoted inequalities, our real lived experiences still reveal the existence of inequalities. However, there is often a strong feeling that since apartheid is a thing of the past and we are now a democracy, there should be no need to engage with the past (Le Roux & Mdunge, 2012). I argue that if such perceptions are not interrogated within educational settings through critical thinking, students will have difficulty in becoming active agents of change. Students need to be engaged in critical reflective discussions about the past, the present and the envisaged future (Hinett, 2002), and to do this; they need to develop critical thinking skills. By posing questions that encourages classroom discussion such as: *If we should forget about the past because now we are in a democracy, why then do we still have such few females, disabled people and black people who are qualified Chartered Accountants in South Africa?* By asking students in my Commerce class this question, I can open up a space for reflection and the development of critical thinking skills through listening to their peers and sharing their thoughts. In this way, students may begin to see their original arguments in a different way; students begin a process of imagining the role they can play as Commerce educators in challenging the structural nature of oppression and not see themselves as being incapable of challenging oppression.

Hackman (2005: 106) affirms the above argument by arguing that since most students are often taught to feel disempowered,

> ("I can't change anything: I am just one person"), complacent ("I don't have time to change anything"), or hopeless ("nothing will ever change anyway")

it is important to intentionally equip them with tools on how to work towards *action and social change* (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007; Bell & Griffin, 2007). Thus, if I am truly working towards preparing students to be active change agents, I need to equip them with tools for action and social change, hence *action and social change* as the third component for SJE. Preparing my students for action and social change subsequently requires me to disrupt silence and to motivate them to take up their responsibility to participate actively in the challenging of oppression. This also requires engaging students in classroom discussions where they share ideas on how for example in their own Accounting or Economics classrooms, they can challenge sexism or racism, and other forms of oppression. Through classroom discussions, students may begin to overcome feelings of hopelessness, being disempowered or being complacent about actively fighting oppression as they exchange ideas with their fellow peers (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005: 21).

The fourth component of SJE is *personal reflection* which is aimed at encouraging students to reflect critically on themselves and the personal qualities that inform their practice (Hackman, 2005: 106). This component has in particular, a bearing on my study as I am specifically interested in reflecting on my own teaching practice by asking questions such as: *What informs my teaching?* and *How can I improve my practice?* Students also need to be provided with spaces to engage in personal reflection about themselves and their own practices in order to improve. In this regard, Hackman (2005) proposes the use of reflective writing exercises and assignments that connect content to their lives and the building of such reflective practice into students' educational repertoire. Personal self-reflections for students should not be viewed as having a beginning and an end. Rather, self-reflection should be seen as an on-going transformational process (Hinett, 2002). Incorporating action research projects for students during their teaching practice is, for example, one way of getting students to engage in critical self-reflection (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002; Costello, 2003). Whilst I agree that students should be encouraged and given spaces to reflect, this needs to often happen under short academic semesters or terms with, students who are

often already overloaded with academic, social and personal responsibilities. I thus also reflect on this tension in my next chapter and its implication for my practice.

Finally, Hackman (2005: 108) proposes a fifth component of SJE, i.e. an *awareness of multicultural group dynamics*. Awareness of multicultural group dynamics requires from educators a constant consciousness of the identity of their students as this will often inform teaching practice and affect classroom discussions. Hackman (2005: 108) argues that if educators are not aware of the multicultural identities of their students, they will not address adequately the needs of the students, and will subsequently miss an important opportunity for SJE (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). In my following chapter I reflect, for example, on how, discussions on race and racism with a class of all white female students on the Bloemfontein campus are often very different to the discussions I have with African, Indian, coloured and white students all seated in one class. Discussions around racism are considerably different when I teach on the Qwaqwa campus, which is located in a rural area with only African students. In order for me to use these discussions effectively to engage students in meaningful learning, I need to be aware of the racial dynamics at play. This is perhaps affirmed by Francis, Hemson, Mphambukile and Quin (2003) from their own practice and how they realised that in order to be effective in teaching in the area of racism required confronting their own racialised professional identities. However, Hackman (2005: 108) states that

> [a]ttention to student identities or multicultural group dynamics should not be used as an excuse for avoiding such conversations but instead should be a reminder that who is in the room has an effect on content and process.

As already mentioned, a sixth component for social justice education that I would like to add to Hackman's components is *classroom discussions*. I view this component as the link that brings all five of Hackman's components together because the process of mastering content in a reflective multicultural environment which is aimed at bringing about social change, needs to embody the spirit of dialogue. Classroom discussion involves students in a process of sharing experiences, thoughts, and ideas, whilst also engaging students in a process of listening to their peers (Larrivee, 2000). However, whilst classroom discussions cannot be viewed as a component on its own, it is forever present as a space for the process of students mastering content, engaging in critical thinking, developing action skills and

engaging in self-reflection in a multicultural diverse situation (cf. Figure 4.1). Brookfield and Preskill (2005: 13) not only recognise classroom discussions as the fostering of a democratic environment where many different participants advance different points of views, but also list the following benefits:

1. It helps students explore a diversity of perspectives.
2. It increases students' awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity or complexity.
3. It helps students recognize and investigate their assumptions.
4. It encourages attentive, respectful listening.
5. It develops new appreciation for continuing differences.
6. It increases intellectual agility.
7. It helps students become connected to a topic.
8. It shows respect for students' voices and experiences.
9. It helps students learn the processes and habits of democratic discourse.
10. It affirms students as co-creators of knowledge.
11. It develops the capacity for the clear communication of ides and meaning.
12. It develops habits of collaborative learning.
13. It increases breadth and makes students more empathic.
14. It helps students develop skills of synthesis and integration.
15. It leads to transformation.

In order to realise the above-mentioned benefits of classroom discussions in our practice, it is important to be conscious at all times that discussions about diversity, privilege and social justice are often sources of discomfort for facilitators and students (Watt, 2007: 116). For example, teaching in a course that dealt with heterosexism and homophobia Francis and Msibi (2011: 163, 164) reflect on how students would challenge the idea that people who are lesbian, gay and bisexual constitute an oppressed group because of a number of factors inter alia religious beliefs, confusion amongst students regarding the relationship between homosexuality and biology. However the authors (2011: 163) reveal why:

> Allowing space for such discussions is a useful way to gauge common sense assumptions and to enable students to see the structural and systemic aspects of heterosexism. In this way, the students' own history is treated as valuable; this is a critical part of the data that is reflected on in the course.

However, if poorly facilitated, classroom discussions have the potential to force students into a position of retreat where they distance themselves from the discussion due to a number of reasons including not feeling safe enough to participate. Holley and Steiner (2005: 49) found in their study with a group of 121 students that the majority of the students reported that being in a safe classroom changed both what and how much they

learned. However, it is perhaps important to consider what a safe classroom is and how one creates a classroom that is safe for students to engage in classroom discussions. In this regard, Holley and Steiner (2005: 50) describe a safe classroom climate as one

> that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. Safety in this sense does not refer to physical safety. Instead, classroom safe space refers to protection from psychological or emotional harm.

In safe classroom spaces, discussions are guided by a principle of respect and the willingness to learn from others and acknowledging that it is not always possible for individuals to agree all the time (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). As a teacher educator, I also need to keep in mind that classroom discussions, even in a safe space, will create discomfort and struggle, and at times, pain (Holley & Steiner, 2005; also Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). How I prepare my students to engage with the discomfort, struggle or pain is important to ensure that I engage my students in classroom discussions that encourage learning and to challenge their own prejudices whilst I also engage with my own learning and prejudices as a facilitator. Establishing a set of guidelines at the beginning of each module, for example, is one way that I can make my classrooms safe for my students (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007:55; also Brookfield & Preskill, 2005; 52). Latting (1990: 43) explains that "a prime consideration is ensuring that students are as free as possible to voice potentially unpopular options and feelings". As a facilitator, I should always try and maintain a demeanour of non-judgemental acceptance with my students. It is my contention that by incorporating classroom discussions as a component of social justice education, the latter could not only enrich the teaching and learning experience, but also encourage students to be able to discuss even the most difficult topics.

## 4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that one of the aims of SJE is to bring about change, i.e. individual change, but also change in the lives of the students by providing them with knowledge that does not perpetuate the dominant ideology but rather knowledge that fosters a sense of agency to challenge oppressive practices. By considering social justice as one of the broad aims of teacher education, I positioned the curriculum as central in challenging personal, societal and institutionalised forms oppression. The call for social justice in education was emphasised in this chapter through the review of the various

documents, including the strategic plans of the UFS and the UFS Faculty of Education, the NSE, the NCS, and CAPS. Having reviewed the various documents that speak to education and social justice in the South African context, I discussed various frameworks that inform social justice education, followed by the 6 components of social justice education. I conclude this chapter with a realisation that teaching is a conscious act that engages students in learning that equips them with content knowledge that encourages them to be specialists in their chosen field of study, whilst enabling them to realise their citizenry responsibility to become active agents of change. In the learning process, both the student and the educator need to engage in on-going reflective practice to continuously seek ways in which they can improve their practice and challenge oppression in all parts of life.

In the following chapter, I reflect on my own process of inquiry by presenting my action cycle.

# 5 CHAPTER 5: MY LIVING THEORY

> Social justice education requires awareness of content and process, and ability to simultaneously participate in the process and step outside of it to assess and mediate interactions in the group. Such skills are learned through experience, trail and error, and on going experimentation. (Griffin and Ouellett, 2007: 90)

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I wish to reflect on my living theory in seeking to answer the question *how do I improve my professional practice by infusing values of social justice as a teacher educator?* My living theory began in 2011 and comprises of one action cycle, which is to be followed up with another cycle that aims to implement some of the recommendations I make in this chapter. I will, however, not report on the second cycle in this particular study. Rather, I wish to reflect on the knowledge that I have gained and to share how I have improved my practice through engaging in action research by using a living theory approach. In reporting on my action cycle, I will subsequently refer to the conventions of a living theory methodology explained by Whitehead (2008: 110) as a:

> process of expressing concerns when values are not being lived as fully as they could be, imagining possible improvements, choosing a possibility to act on, acting and gathering data and evaluating the influence of actions, the energy flowing values used to distinguish what counts as an improvement are clarified and evolved.

In this chapter I will therefore provide a critical reflection on the actions I took in order to influence my practice not to be a living contradiction where values of social justice are divorced from my practice. In this chapter, I also wish to share some of my own challenges in engaging in this study and the lessons that I have learned.

In the first chapter of my study, I revealed how I believe education should be concerned with moving social formation in the direction of values that carry hope for the future of humanity (McNiff, 2010). I also argued that that in order for us to work towards an anti-oppressive society, we need to centre education as the primary tool for social transformation to challenge oppression in both our professional and personal lives. Although I had the aforementioned thoughts about education and its purpose in mind, I was aware that my own practice as a teacher educator was not working towards preparing educators who would be in a position to challenge oppression in their own practices. The divorce between the values of social justice I cherish and regard as an important component of education, and my own practice led me to investigate how I could infuse social justice

into my own practice. The divorce between the values I cherish and my practice is similar to the one explained by Francis and Hemson (2007: 100) about the postgraduate students who had registered for a module in social justice. These students expressed a commitment to a just society, yet they seemed to have acted and interacted in oppressive ways with each other. In Chapter 1, I mapped out the cause for my concern that led to me engaging in this study (1.2) and I explained my rational (1.3). I then identified 4 questions (1.4) that would guide my study to investigate how to infuse values of social justice into my practice as a teacher educator:

- What is my own understanding of social justice and its values?
- Why is it important for me to influence my practice not to be a living contradiction?
- How do I improve my own professional practice as a social justice educator for the benefit of my professional growth and development, and that of my students and colleagues?
- How can I open up spaces for my students and colleagues to engage in issues of social justice?

Through the action research cycle that I have engaged with, I have been able to grapple with all these questions and wish to share some of my experiences and thoughts. Whilst I do not regard my thoughts as absolute truths and my experiences as applicable to all teaching contexts, I see such sharing rather as a way to create dialogue about some of the ways social justice could be infused into our practice as teacher educators. I, therefore, begin this chapter by reflecting on my action cycle as presented in the first and second chapters (1.6 and 2.3) reporting on my observation of my own teaching and my teaching context, and identifying some of the challenges in my attempt to infuse social justice in my practice. Secondly, I reflect on the number of actions I intend to take in order to try and address the concerns I identified in my observation and implement these actions as part of my practice. I conclude my report on my first cycle by drawing attention to some implications my study has for my own practice, for curriculum development within teacher education, for staff development, and for schooling.

## 5.2 My reflective cycle

### 5.2.1 Early observations, identifying concerns and implications for my practice

A very important part of my cycle included observing and journaling my experiences of teaching whilst still engaging in the process of deepening my understanding of social justice (1.5) and deconstructing my socialisation (3.1) as an influence on my practice. During this observation period, I needed to identify concerns with my practice that acted as barriers in my aim to infuse social justice in my teaching and the implications these concerns had for my practice. Amongst the concerns that I identified, were the absence of a foundational module on social justice, the language policy of UFS and how it is often interpreted, the design of module outcomes, and a realisation that teaching for social justice is not a spontaneous act. In this section I wish to report on each of the aforementioned concerns in a more detailed manner as they helped to inform my plan of action.

#### 5.2.1.1 The absence of a foundational module on social justice

My appointment at the University of the Free State was in 2011 as a junior lecturer in *Social Justice Education* in the Faculty of Education on the Bloemfontein campus. Since my employment and up to now (2014), the faculty does not have a department or a discipline for Social Justice Education. I was subsequently situated in the Philosophy and Policy Studies discipline within the School of Education Studies. There has been no module on social justice education and part of my appointment was to assist with the development of a module that would address issues of social justice and the challenging of oppression. Having majored in Business Studies and Accounting in my undergraduate degree, I was allocated to teach 4 modules in the Commerce discipline. These modules were: *Curriculum cycle and a process approach* (AEO 112); *Situation analysis, aims and objectives* (AEO 132) for students majoring in Economics Management Sciences (EMS); *Methods and Media in Accounting Education* (REO 122); and *Assessment; Year planning and homework in Accounting Education* (REO 142). My concern for not having a foundational module on social justice was that it had impeding implications for my practice, as often there would not be enough time to engage students in specific subject content and to simultaneously also lay the foundations of social justice in the modules. In my practical teaching experience, my

contact sessions with the students were scheduled into 50 minutes lectures, twice a week, for one term. In one of my reflections I reflected on the modules in the Commerce discipline and how I experienced teaching them:

> I see the modules as a stand-alone, there is a foundation to issues of transformation, equality and social justice that is missing and so my teaching is faced with the challenge that for some of the students this is the first time that they are confronted with issues of social justice. The hope I have for the new curriculum is that it will provide this foundation to issues of social justice and that this will help stimulate discussions about Accounting classroom practice and social justice.

By not having a module on the foundations of social justice meant that I did not have enough time during my contact sessions to engage students in meaningful dialogues on how they themselves, could teach for social justice. For example, students in their final year of training as educators, in one of my AEO lectures, could not give me an answer when I asked them what social justice is about. I argue that a deeper understanding of what social justice is about cannot be achieved within a 50 minutes lecture in a module that is designed to teach about the teaching strategies for EMS or Accounting. Due to the absence of the foundation of social justice education in the current B.Ed. curriculum, time often constrained my aim of developing students' academic and pedagogical knowledge by embedding it with values of social justice.

#### 5.2.1.2 The language policy of the UFS

In addition to the absence of a module on Social Justice Education and its concomitant implications for my practice, I also observed the language policy of the UFS as being problematic for my classroom practice. As *The Language Policy of the University of the Free State* (2003: 1) pertains to language diversity and the strategy to promote multilingualism, every student has the right to be taught in either English or Afrikaans. In my observation, whilst this contributes greatly towards building a multilingual society and respects the right of students to be taught in their chosen language of learning, it often limited my classroom into a space in which there was very little diversity in terms of *inter alia,* race, class, nationality and religion. At the beginning of 2011, I co-taught the above-mentioned modules with Dr Green[12] who resigned at the end of the first semester in 2011. I taught the

[12] The name has been changed

English group of students on the Bloemfontein campus and he taught the Afrikaans group of students. Whilst this teaching arrangement, through an uncritical eye, may appear to be that of two colleagues co-teaching, this practice itself, was actually deeply rooted in the parallel medium language policy of the university. In all the modules I taught during the course of this study, my experience was that often the Afrikaans class would comprise of mainly white Afrikaans speaking South Africans and the English class of African and coloured South Africans, with a few international students from Lesotho. The implication of this arrangement was that students in the Afrikaans classrooms hardly ever engaged in dialogue with students from my English classes. As a consequence, neither the Afrikaans nor the English group of students were given the opportunity to listen to different life experiences that could have helped them to deepen their own understanding of their own learning experience. Consider for example the fact that the majority of the students in my English classroom lived in the township and that majority of the students in the Afrikaans class came from suburban areas. The reality of where my students lived is that they brought to class different experiences of different types of business organisations they had encountered in their home communities. Although learning needs to be contextualised and students need to dialogue about their different contexts (Adam, 2007), sharing experiences of different types of business organisations amongst students from different communities in my classroom was consequently not possible. Students in my English classroom often came from the same or a similar community. Due to the language policy of the UFS that is often interpreted as meaning students who study in Afrikaans and those who study in English should be in separate classrooms, my students also often missed the opportunity to engage in dialogues that could have enhanced their learning experiences. Although in its broader conception and aims for a multilingual society, the language policy and how it is often interpreted within the university context, students' opportunity to engage in dialogues in a diverse classroom, is often limited.

#### 5.2.1.3 The design of module outcomes

In my third observation, I identified 2 concerns. The one concern was related to the module outcomes for all the modules I was teaching, whilst the second concern is linked with my own relationship with Dr Green. During my time of teaching the modules at the beginning

of 2011, Dr Green was the module coordinator who was responsible for setting all tests, assignments and examination papers. He also shared his PowerPoint presentations for the modules with me to use them for the English class while he had the same PowerPoints for the Afrikaans class. I was indeed aware of the fact that the learning experiences of the Afrikaans group and the English group were expected to be similar for quality assurance purposes. It was, however, when I started teaching the first module, AEO112, that a daunting feeling of dissatisfaction with my practice became apparent when, with each lesson I taught, I could feel how there was a distance between values of social justice and my practice.

I spent most of 2011 orientating myself to my new work environment and the new modules I was teaching. I dedicated the first term doing observation of my surroundings and classroom experiences and in the second semester, I began journaling my experiences of the classroom and began to reflect on the lessons that I had taught. In one of my early journal entries after meeting my students for the module REO132 for the first time, I reflected:

> Today I met for the first time with my students [English class] registered for REO122. There are only 3 black female students. The first thing I had difficulty getting my head around [with regards to planning for this module] was the module outcomes. They make no mention of how the students should learn how to teach for social justice/diverse contexts.

I had noted a similar concern with the module AEO at the beginning of the year. Both the AEO and REO modules were designed with the aim to familiarise students with the nature and scope of the curriculum cycle with reference to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DoE: 2002) and later on as the curriculum changed, with the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (DoE: 2010). In reviewing the module outcomes for both these modules, I got a sense that the modules were aimed at equipping students with technical skills and strategies to implement the curriculum. Although I agree that students need to be prepared to implement the curriculum and that they need to be taught skills that will enable them to do this, I argue that this should be framed within the broader curriculum plans and objectives. According to the RNCS for Economics Management and Sciences (2002: 2):

> Issues such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, age, disability and challenges such as HIV/AIDS all influence the degree and way in which learners can participate in schooling. The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 (Schools) adopts

> an inclusive approach by specifying the minimum requirements for all learners. All the Learning Area Statements try to create an awareness of the relationship between social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity. Learners are also encouraged to develop knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of this country, including the cultural, religious and ethnic components of this diversity.

My concern was thus with the apparent lack of an alignment between the module outcomes and the goals and objectives of the UFS, the UFS Faculty of Education, and the kind of educator envisioned by the Department of Education.

My second concern had to do with my work relationship with Dr Green, or to be more exact, how I had positioned myself as a junior lecturer working with a senior colleague. A self-inflicted feeling of some sort of inferiority was often the reason why I had not felt confident enough to have a discussion on how I thought the module outcomes needed to be geared towards addressing what the UFS refers to as the human project. I argue that as a teacher educator, I constantly need to be aware of the power dynamics that may emerge in a professional relationship where a colleague assumes a senior position as this may come in the way of my achieving certain teaching goals. The implication of this self-inflicted feeling of being inferior to Dr Green, is that the modules continued being taught as they were originally designed, i.e. equipping students with technical skills of implementing the curriculum and not addressing the human project the UFS aspires to. I was not confident to engage with my colleague, especially on how we should teach students to teach for social justice. I was not sure if this was something that he considered being important, and if he had, why it had not come through in the design of the modules? The lesson for me through this observation of my relationship with Dr Green, is to be aware of the dynamics that may play out in a professional relationship with my colleagues that may impede my aim to teach for social justice.

#### 5.2.1.4 Teaching for social justice is not a spontaneous act

My fourth observation relates to being blind to opportunities that would have engaged students in discussions on issues of social justice in my Commerce lectures. After a lesson with a group of English students in my REO class, I reflected:

> I reflect on a question asked by Miss Oliphant during the lesson: "How do you make teaching Accounting more fun?" My immediate response was to pass the question onto the other two students to answer. In my response, I mention how you need to make it "practical". I was satisfied with this response until I reflected on my lesson as I sat in the taxi on my way home.
>
> Miss Oliphant's question was an eye-opening opportunity for me to exploit in teaching for social justice. For example, learners come from different economic backgrounds, teaching of Accounting should make use of the learners' different backgrounds to help learning make more meaning and more practical. I now plan on revisiting Miss Oliphant's question during our next lesson. What I learned from this is how aware one has to be in teaching if one wishes to teach for social justice.

The lesson I learned from the above reflection is that teaching for social justice is not a spontaneous act; rather, it has to be carefully planned and embedded in every lesson. Furthermore, there is an extra level of awareness that has to be applied when infusing social justice in other disciplines so as to ensure that I do not get trapped in the teaching of subject specific content at the expense of social justice. In the next section of this chapter I discuss how, in my teaching, I began to teach (5.4.2.1) with the mentioned level of awareness after having realised the need to be always aware when teaching for social justice.

My observations at the beginning of my cycle also led me to the realisation that I had a limited understanding of what it really means to teach for social justice. Chapter 4 on the contextualisation of my study is an attempt to deepen my understanding of teaching for social justice and answers one of my research questions: *What is my own understanding of social justice and its value*s? By drawing on frameworks for social justice that are proposed by Adams (2007) and the components for social justice education proposed by Hackman (2005), I was able to learn more about how to teach for social justice. Although the frameworks helped me to deepen my understanding of teaching for social justice and helped make meaning of my data, I wish to problematise them as they are framed within a social justice classroom. The frameworks for social justice as proposed by Adams (2007) do not refer to the infusing or integrating of social justice in other disciplines such as in Commerce education as in the case of my study. So what was the implication of using a social justice framework in Commerce education for me? Often when infusing social justice within my lessons, factors such as time conflicted with my goals, as I had short periods during short terms with a large amount of content to teach. However, this is not to say that

it is not possible to infuse social justice in other disciplines, but it needs to be carefully planned and stipulated as an outcome from the onset.

All of the above-mentioned concerns that came to the fore during the observation part of my cycle, helped to inform my plan of action that I later implemented. The figure below gives a visual illustration of my action cycle up to the observation stage whilst the following part of this chapter reflects on the process of planning for action:

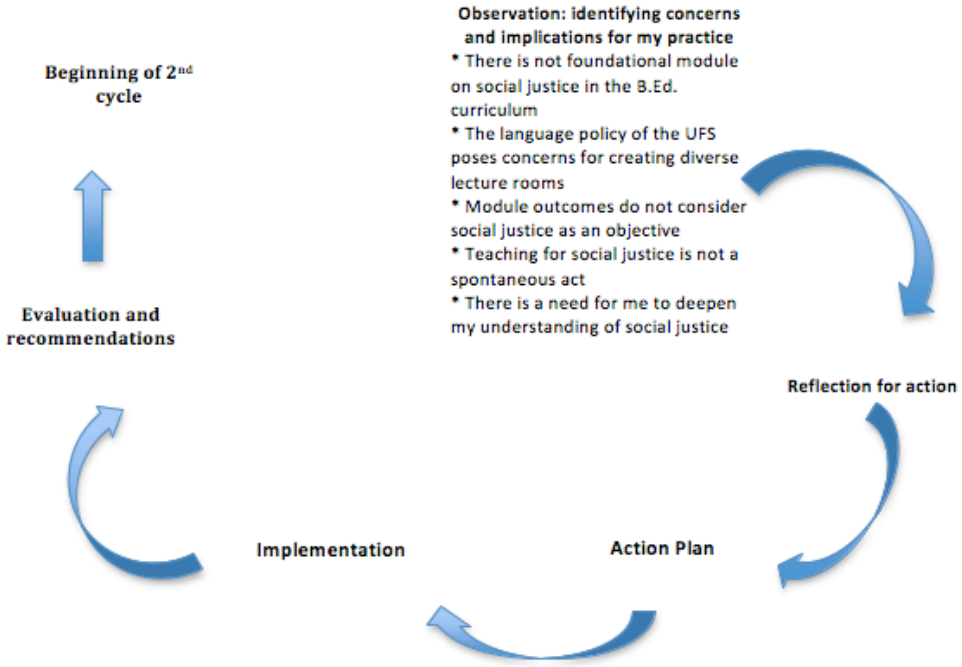


Figure 5.1: Action cycle - observation

## 5.3 Reflection for action

Having identified the need to align my practice with the aims and vision of the UFS, the Faculty of Education, the CHE and the DoE (4.2), I needed to come up with some practical strategies in which I would be able to improve my practice by infusing values of social justice. There was not only a need for me to attempt to address the concerns and implications identified in the previous section (5.2.1) through engaged practice, but also to draw on the frameworks for social justice (4.3.1) and practice that embrace the components of social justice (4.3.2.). This state of affairs led me to reflect on how I could improve my practice by implementing changes in the way that I teach. Thus, in addition to the concerns that emerged during my earlier observation (5.2.1), I realised that to improve my practice, I have to deepen my reflection so as to identify specific challenges from my practice. I

therefore decided that to improve my practice, I first need to ask myself the question: *What am I doing?* This section of my study reflects on this question after which, I then proceed to reflect on my plan of action and the process of its implementation.

### 5.3.1 What was I doing?

As mentioned, during the first year when I began with my study in 2011, I spent a lot of time getting to familiarise myself with my new work environment and the modules that I was allocated to teach. It was also during this time that I started to ask myself the question of how to improve my teaching practice. In order to answer this question, I first needed to reflect on what I was doing. During this process of reflection, a number of issues began to emerge, namely, my classroom does not fully embrace the notion of engaging students in deep meaningful discussions; I still struggle with embedding social justice within Commerce education at most times; assessment does not reflect the need for students to reflect on how they can infuse social justice within their own practice as Commerce educators; and I am not always aware of who my audience is. However, I also began to realise a change in my practice with regards to how I planned, from the onset, each of my lessons with the intention to infuse social justice. I wish to reflect on each of the above-mentioned in more detail.

#### 5.3.1.1 My classrooms did not embrace the notion of deep meaningful discussions

When listening to some of my recorded classrooms lessons and watching some of the videos I recorded (a process that was very uncomfortable), I began to realise how, in my teaching, I have a tendency to dominate classroom discussions. This observation was a crucial concern for me, especially in the light of how I extended on Hackman's (2005) proposed components of social justice by arguing that discussions should bind the 5 components (4.3.2.). By failing to create a space that allows for discussions, I also limited the potential of my students to begin to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. After watching my AEO lesson recording of an introductory lesson on the topic "Situational or Contextual Analysis", I realised how I often interrupt students when they give their responses and at times, students do not get a chance to share their thoughts with the class. After showing a video

on some of the conditions under which schooling occurs in some parts of rural South Africa, I began a question led discussion with my students:

**Percy**: Right, that's just one example of the context that you might find yourselves when you start teaching. Can you tell me anything about the situation that that learner is in? *(I pause for a short while and there were no responses from the students)*. Anything that comes to mind as you watched that video? *(There was further silence from the students)*. What did you see what did you notice? Is that a viable environment to have education take place? What are your thoughts? What are some of the factors that you noticed that could hinder or promote education to take place in that place?

**Female student 6**: I've noted that the situation in that school is not conducive to the learners and due to their … like everything is a mess … *(I interrupted the student at this point)*

**Percy**: Right so you say the situation is not conducive for education and their health?

**Female student 6**: Yes

**Percy**: What things showed you that the environment is not conducive for education to take place? *(At this point I moved away from the female student who had given me the answer and looked for another student who had their hand up)*

**Female student 7**: There are no tables and chairs and furniture …

**Percy**: Furniture, the school is poorly furnished, right other factors?

**Female students**: The books …

**Percy**: the books he [referring to a school child who was being interviewed in the video] said something about the fact that there are not enough books. Uhuh? Is the government doing anything in that school particularly according to what the child said?

**Female student 8**: Since he complained about the books … it seems that the government is not doing enough.

**Percy**: So we are assuming that the government is not being very supportive. Can you see how you as an educator it's easy to find yourself teaching in that school? We agree about this. Nonetheless you need to plan a lesson because education has to take place regardless of the factors that we identified, the poor sanitation and those toilets that the learners are exposed to learners could easily get ill and I would be surprised if learners don't get ill. When learners get ill they get absent from school and when learners get absent from school they miss out on school and when that happens they fail. Can you see these factors and how they would affect education? What would be the opposite of that situation that you saw there? Is there an opposite of a situation that you could find yourself in in terms of school when you start practicing? We have identified this situation, as not being conducive for learning is there a situation that is better than this that you could find yourself in?

With regard to facilitating classroom discussions that could help students to explore a diversity of perspectives, and to recognise and investigate their assumption whilst also increasing their intellectual agility (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005; 4.3.2), the above lesson

transcript was indeed problematic and evoked various concerns for my practice. The first concern was about how I was uncomfortable with silence. Whenever I asked a question and there was silence, I often tend to keep talking or to just rephrase the question until I get a student who will respond to the question. Whilst I agree with the notion that the rephrasing of a question is important when students do not understand the original question, in my observation of my own teaching, I found that this rephrasing often came from an uncomfortable feeling within me, when there was silence in the classroom. After watching my lesson again, I reflected on how I had started the discussion with the students after showing them the video:

> At this time there are no hands going up, I keep talking and asking the question in different ways because the silence from the students is frightening me and making me uncomfortable. Why am I not giving them time to process the video in silence? Why am I rushing them to answer?

A second concern was that when students volunteered to share with the class their thoughts or points of view, I often interrupted them before they finished sharing their full thoughts. As a consequence, the other students were deprived from hearing fully articulated diverse perspectives by their peers. Larrivee (2000) regards the sharing of diverse and fully articulated perspectives as an important aspect of classroom discussions. In the above transcript, female students 6 and 7 were interrupted before they could finish articulating their thoughts. This is an observation I had noted many other times during lessons when I facilitated classroom discussions. In some instances, I failed to get students to think deeper and critically about their responses when they shared their thoughts in class. This was the case when I asked the students to share their thoughts with their peers on: *What does it mean to be an educator in South Africa? What are the responsibilities or qualities that you should have as an educator?* In response to these questions, a female student in the class responded by saying "to guide them to the right path". Immediately after the student had given her response, I continued with the lesson by sharing with them some of my thoughts on what it means to be an educator. In my reflection, after listening to the lesson recording, I reflected:

> I could have asked the student to further explain this. *What is the right path? Who decides on what is the right path?* By asking such questions, I would get the student to think critically about her response and deepen her thinking and she learns to articulate her thoughts in clear and more expressive and thoughtful process.

#### 5.3.1.2 I struggled to embed social justice within Commerce education at times

Through engaging in this study, I also became aware that I was too pre-occupied with the teaching of content knowledge at the expense of embedding social justice in my teaching:

> My being to pre-occupied with the teaching of prescribed content is increasingly becoming evident and problematic in my set objective of teaching for social justice. It is this preoccupation that I blame for my lack of awareness of spaces/opportunities that I can use for interacting with my students on issues of social justice.

Perhaps Chapter 3 of my study helps to explain why I seemed to be struggling to infuse social justice in my Commerce classroom. During my training as an educator, social justice education was often seen as separate from other disciplines, especially in my majors in Commerce education. Issues of social justice did not come up in our Accounting or Business Economics lectures. Rather, it appeared what we had learned in the *Diversity and Learning* module (3.6) in my first year, was seen as not having the potential to inform classroom discussions in other modules. In the same way, I often struggled with infusing social justice in my Commerce education classrooms. In one of my journal entries I reflected:

> As I'm busy writing up my chapter two I discover how many opportunities I have missed to engage my students in "social justice Commerce education". For example, I always complain about sexist television advertisements but which students are actually responsible for the making of these advertisements? Is it not people who did Economics Management Sciences, Accounting or Business Studies at school? Who teaches these people?

In the above extract, I clearly began the process of thinking about ways in which social justice should inform my practice; especially how social justice can be infused within a Commerce education classroom. The above example is just one of the many ways that supports infusing social justice in Commerce education. As Commerce educators prepare learners to become business managers, to work in the advertising industry, in human resources, in government and many other fields, there is a need at school level to begin dialogues on issues of power and privilege, including common stereotypes within the business sector. By preparing educators to be able to begin to teach for social justice within Commerce education, they find themselves in a better position to challenge the structural nature of oppression in different business related institutions. In order for such conversations to take place, educators need to be prepared, through their training, to be able to firstly know about the systemic nature of oppression, how it is maintained, and possible ways in which they can challenge oppression in their own teaching. There was a

need for me to improve my teaching by thinking of practical strategies to get my students to begin thinking of ways they, as Commerce educators, can challenge oppression through their practice.

Furthermore, because at times I failed to infuse social justice in most of my lessons, the implication was that often assessment tasks did not require students to reflect on issues of social justice. Nor were they required to contemplate ways on how they could challenge the systemic nature of oppression in their own practice. Assessment tasks would often be aligned with the module outcomes that, as previously explained (5.2.1.3), did not talk to issues of social justice. The challenge for me with regard to assessment, had to do with thinking of creative ways in which students could challenge oppression in their Commerce classrooms.

#### 5.3.1.3 Not being aware of classroom dynamics

Adams (2007) identifies *being aware of the group dynamics in the classroom* as one of the frameworks for social justice education that could help students to improve interpersonal communication (4.3.1). In my understanding, this also means to be aware of who is visible and who is not visible in the classroom, and to be also aware of who is talking, who is not talking, and asking myself questions like: *Why are some people visible and talking in the classroom, whilst there are those who seem invisible and not participating?* While listening to and watching some of my recorded lessons, I became aware that at times I seem to be unaware of the dynamics in my classroom. For example, after watching one of my video recorded lessons, I noticed how I stood in front of the lecture room for most of my lesson and hardly moved to the back. Furthermore, when going through the video, I also realised that most of the students who participated in my lesson, were females, with only a very few males participating in the discussions. I am also often restricted to stand in front of the class and not move around because I need to operate the computer to change slides. As a consequence, I tend to focus more on the students who are in the front of the class and as I saw in the video recording, these students were female and the males sat at the back of the class. Figure 5.2 is a visual summary that indicates where in my action cycle I was after having identified my concerns with regards to my practice and my reflection for action.

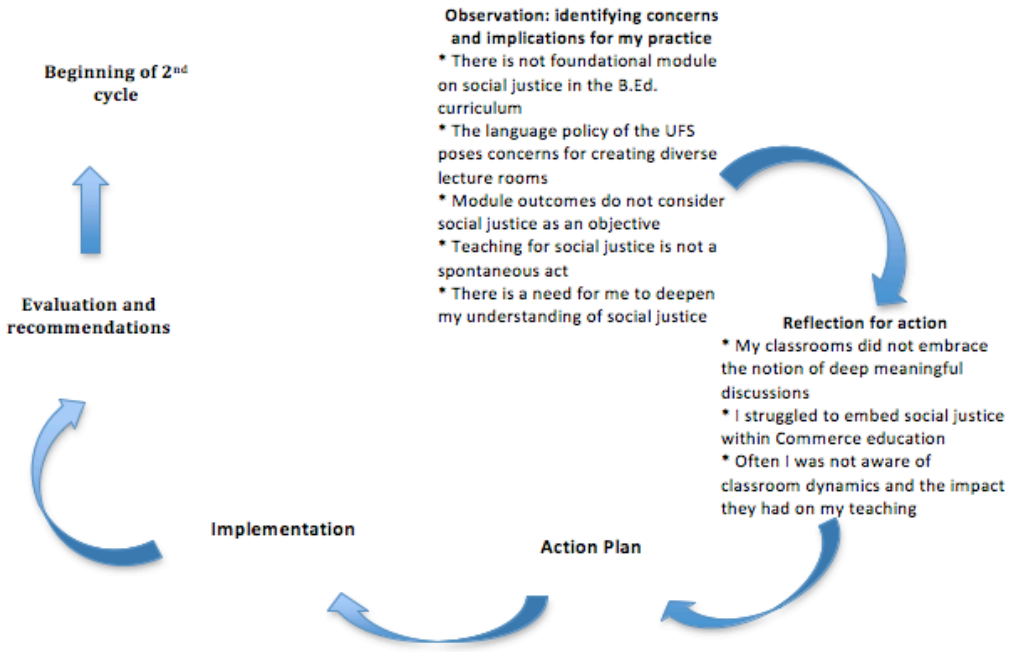


Figure 5.2: Action cycle - reflection for action

## 5.4 Improving my practice through a living theory approach

Having observed and identified concerns and their implications for my practice (5.2.1), and by highlighting some specific challenges for my practice (5.3.1), I had to start to think of new and creative ways in which I would be able to improve my practice. In sum, my concerns and challenges included:

- the need for a foundational module on social justice;
- working with the language policy of the UFS;
- the re-design of module outcomes;
- work against being blind to opportunities that could be used to engage students in issues of social justice and Commerce education;
- my classrooms do not embrace the notion of deep meaningful discussions;
- the need for me to become more aware of the classroom dynamics;
- to be attentive to the patterns that tend to occur during discussions or dialogues;
- take note of assessment tasks that do not push students to start thinking about ways in which they could teach for social justice in their Commerce classrooms; and
- assisting students to develop critical and analytical thinking skills through classroom activities and assessment tasks.

I realised that it is important for me to address these concerns and challenges in order to influence my practice through the infusion of values of social justice. The latter is imperative since the original design of the modules I was teaching, had not taken into account preparing Commerce educators for both the academic and the human project (4.2). Through engaging with my living theory, I noticed how my practice began to change from as early as during the observation stages. I now wish to reflect on how I planned to improve my practice by infusing social justice.

### 5.4.1 My plan of action to influence my practice

Having identified my concerns and challenges, I asked myself: *What actions could I take to address them*? This is the question that guided me in planning the ways in which I could influence my practice by infusing values of social justice. I needed to ask myself the question about what actions could I take to change my practice every time I identified a new concern or a challenge. I also had to acknowledge that some of the concerns and challenges I had identified, I did not have any influence over. However, although I could not address all concerns, I did identify the implications of such concerns and thus make recommendations as to how they can be dealt with. This section of my study details my plan of action to address the concerns and challenges that emerged from my observation of my practice.

#### 5.4.1.1 Designing a module that addresses issues on social justice

My first concern had to do with the fact that the UFS Faculty of Education did not have a foundational module on social justice (5.2.1.1). However, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, my employment with the university also entailed designing a module that would help provide a foundation to education that draws on social justice. The idea of such a module was to encourage students to begin to question and challenge their socialisation and the continued existence of oppression in society, in different institutions and in their own personal lives. This envisaged module and my involvement in its design coincided with the Faculty's reconceptualisation of the B.Ed. curriculum in 2011. The aim of the reconseptualisation was to not only align our initial teacher education programme with the vision and mission of UFS, but in particular, to find alignment with the minimum requirements set by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2011) for

teacher education qualifications. Through an engaged process of deliberations with members of staff from the faculty, a new exit level outcome for the B.Ed. programme was conceptualised as:

> On completion of the Bachelor of Education degree the graduate will possess a well-rounded education consisting of integrated
> - subject content knowledge,
> - knowledge of the learners and the education context, and
> - pedagogical content knowledge
>
> that will enable them to demonstrate applied competence, commitment and responsibility as academically and professionally qualified teachers for diverse education contexts.

The conceptualisation of the new exit level outcome for the B.Ed. programme had implications for how the new curriculum would be designed. The new B.Ed. programme envisions student educators who would become experts in their understanding of content knowledge whilst demonstrating the ability to critically facilitate the teaching and learning process in diverse educational contexts. The need for a module that would help students to practise in diverse educational contexts subsequently became a responsibility that the process of reconceptualising the B.Ed. curriculum could not ignore. In collaboration with two other colleagues, we accepted the responsibility of conceptualising and designing this module. The designing of a module on foundations for social justice thus fell into plan as a result of my concern for the lack of the aforementioned module within the B.Ed. programme.

Although this module will only be introduced to first year pre-service teachers in 2015, I would like to comment on this module as part of my action plan. Entitled *The individual in the education context,* the module will address four major themes with the overall vision that students should be able to challenge their identities in a diverse world by imagining the possibilities that exist for social responsiveness as future change agents. Below is an extract from the module framework that shows the subthemes to be covered under each of the four major themes:

| | |
|---|---|
| Module Outcome(s) | After completion of this module, the students should be able to challenge their identities in a diverse world by imagining the possibilities that exist for social responsiveness as agents of change. |
| Content<br>(Per Learning Unit) | ***Learning Unit 1: Demonstrate by relating knowledge from various areas and understanding the nature of identity.***<br>• Students work on identity de-construction and grapple with their multiple identity<br>• The theory of oppression is used to provide a tool for students to understand how identity is constructed.<br>• Introduce students to the conceptual framework for the module<br>***Learning Unit 2: Critique oppressive practices and trouble inequitable social relations.***<br>• Students develop a greater understanding of the personal and societal impact of oppression<br>• Present students with some of the forms of oppression that exist, how they operate and how they are socially structured.<br>***Learning Unit 3: Managing Diversity in the learning context***<br>• Students engaging with the challenges that come with becoming an agent of change and propose plans that could be implemented in the classroom to bring about equality.<br>***Learning Unit 4: Critically examine Inclusive Education***<br>• The theoretical perspective offered by a Transformative Inclusive Education framework<br>• South Africa's implementation of Inclusive Education compared to other countries |

The aforementioned module fits in with my plan of action as it addresses the need for a foundational module on issues of social justice. Although the module has not been implemented yet, and therefore played no role in the implementation of my action plan, the conceptualisation thereof, helped to inform the reconceptualisation of the modules I was teaching in the Commerce discipline. It is anticipated that the inclusion of this module in the new curriculum will assist lecturers in, *inter alia*, the Commerce discipline to infuse their practice with values of social justice. Furthermore it will, in particular, contribute towards students' own understanding of how they can employ values of social justice in their future classrooms. Whilst the conceptualisation of this module influenced, by implication, the implementation of my action plan, it is only during the second cycle of my living theory that I will really be able to reflect on the effectiveness of having a foundational module on social justice in my Commerce lecture rooms.

#### 5.4.1.2 The challenges of planning to work with the language policy

I indicated that the parallel medium language policy of the UFS posed certain problems for my classroom practice (5.2.1.2). However, since this policy lies at institutional level, I could not change the policy itself and had little leverage of working around the policy. I was totally dependent on the timetable that was scheduled in alignment with the language policy, thus separate periods for Afrikaans and English classes. I subsequently had to work with the different allocated time slots for the two language groups. Although an alternative to this arrangement could have been to combine the two language groups into a single time slot, this was basically impossible as such arrangement caused time clashes for the students. Furthermore, the interpretation of the policy as meaning that Afrikaans and English students should sit in separate lecture rooms, meant that within the department under which the Commerce discipline was situated, an ad-hoc staff member was employed to teach the Afrikaans group as I am not proficient in the language. As a consequence, I was not able to include in my action plan, a culturally and linguistically diverse group of students, and my frustration with a lack of diverse perspectives in my classroom subsequently remained.

#### 5.4.1.3 Redesigning module outcomes

Having identified a concern regarding the module outcomes (5.2.1.3), I realised that the latter needed to be aligned with the vision of the UFS, that of the Faculty, and the kind of educator envisioned by the DoE. To address this concern, I started to engage in dialogue with the colleagues I was teaching with in the Commerce discipline about how we could revise the modules for such an alignment. I considered engaging in dialogue as an important immediate first step in beginning to infuse social justice in the teaching of Commerce related subjects. Furthermore, in the light of the reconceptualising of our B.Ed. curriculum and the designing of a framework for a foundational module on issues of social justice, my long-term plan was to develop module frameworks that align with the new exit level outcomes of our initial teacher education programme. In this section, I reflect on the revisions I made to modules AEO and REO.

### a) Revising the module AEO112

The first action I took after my reflection on what I was doing, was to have a conversation with the colleagues I was teaching the modules with in the Commerce discipline. Two colleagues were newly appointed in 2012 in the Commerce discipline, namely Mr P. Mtshali who was to teach the AEO[13] modules on the Bloemfontein campus and Mr S. Thabathe who was responsible for teaching all the Commerce modules on the Qwaqwa campus. Mr Mtshali's appointment followed Dr Green's resignation in 2011 and Mr Thabathe was appointed at the Qwaqwa campus because there was no permanent staff member to teach in the Commerce discipline. I must note that although the responsibility of teaching the modules that I used as part of my study had shifted and became the responsibility of the two colleagues, I had made an arrangement to still give some lectures in all the modules for the sake of my data collection process. Of the two colleagues, I had more experience teaching in the discipline as I had taught the modules during 2011.

Both the colleagues mentioned above had shared a desire to revise the AEO modules and to also align them with CAPS (2011). At the time, I wished to share with them some of the concerns I had with the design of the modules and how the modules neglected to address the human project in the presentation of the content it covered. Although the modules now became the responsibility of Mr Thabathe and Mr Msthali, they were more than willing to include me in the revision of the modules. As a result, we set a day aside to revise the AEO modules. It was during this session that I was able to discuss with my colleagues and to explain the importance of addressing issues of social justice in the modules. The inclusion of social justice was important if we were to reflect the academic and human project that drives the UFS and the UFS Faculty of Education. I also recommended that there should be a section in the module guide that specifically speaks to issues of social transformation or the challenging of oppression. I accepted the task of writing up this section for the new study guide and below is an extract that can now be found in the study guide (AEO112: 2012 & 2013). This section was informed by my observations made for this study:

**1.3. Curriculum as principal force for social transformation**

[13] I still had the responsibility of teaching the REO modules, but the AEO modules became Mr. Mtshali's responsibility.

Education is one of the tools that could be used to facilitate transformation and provides a platform to address the imbalances of the past through teaching for social justice and responsible citizenship. As educators we need always to be aware of our responsibility to provide our learners with quality education that will develop critical thinkers and responsible citizens. We need to share a similar view as Whitehead and McNiff (2010) that education is a transformational activity that regulates social organisations and moves social formation in the direction of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. We need to understand our roles as educators in order for us to work towards a less oppressive society. We need to centre education as the primary tool for social transformation.

Let us reflect on the following edited extract from a Master's study:

> In 2009 South Africa was horrified at the reporting of a racist incident that occurred in one of the institutions of learning in the country, all in the midst of attempts to make amends with an apartheid regime which dominated the country for a number of years until its demise in 1994. The Reitz incident saw four former students enrolled at the University of the Free State humiliating black employees of the university by video recording them as they made a comical protest against the newly implemented multiracial residence living arrangements (Smith, 2011). This incident invoked a number of concerns about our country and the transformation process and it was eloquently stated by Fourie (2008: 1) that
>
> > Indeed the video incident has highlighted the existence of a wide range of differing perspectives, especially among our students, about race relations and transformation. Racial fault lines and stereotyping, perhaps dormant or invisible for some time, have come to the surface again.
>
> This was a critical incident in our infant democratic South African history as it opened up discussions about the pace at which the transformation process was moving and got us to ask questions such as *How are we suppose to engage with our racist past as individuals*? As I reflected on the incident I asked myself a number of questions, not placing blame on the four students for their actions, but asking questions such as: *Where had they learned these notions about themselves and people of colour?* ***After spending 12 years in formal schooling had these notions about themselves and people of colour not been challenged?*** *What other negative notions about their identities had they internalised that had not been challenged through* ***formal schooling****, for example as males?* ***Do school curriculums provide spaces through their curriculums where their students can engage in matters that are of most concern for the transformation goals to be realised?*** *How many other students have such biased notions of their identities?* This process of enquiry encouraged me to reflect on my own lived experiences and personal socialisation that had taught me a number of societal normalised views of what it means to be a male or female, white or person of colour, disabled or able bodied, rich or poor.

The Reitz incident is one example of incidents in our country that is evidence of the fact that perhaps there is still a long way to go for the advancing of social cohesion in our country. We read in newspapers of politicians and businessmen and women who are corrupt and become wealthy at the expense of the less privileged. We constantly watch advertisements that show women advertising washing detergents, home cleaning and cooking appliances, and men are mostly used to sell products such as alcohol, cars and sports equipment. What do you think are the consequences of such advertisements? What sort of messages do they send about the different genders? Who is responsible for educating people who go into advertising, business or politics? Is it not us as educators? Thus, our responsibility as educators includes challenging stereotypes that harm some and privilege others.

Therefore, the curriculum should be designed having taken into account the need to promote a just society, learners who do not collude with unjust practices such as teasing and taunting learners labelled with low status identities such as poor, disabled, female, lesbian or gay, not Christian, etc. The educator needs to be conscious of his/her teaching and strive towards refraining from perpetuating stereotypes. Especially within the Commerce discipline where textbooks tend to use stereotypical examples and case studies where the

> men often are potrayed as the entrepreneurs and the females are often given secretarial characters. As an EMS educator you should always strive to be critical of all these silent messages to contribute towards an unequal society by carefully designing your curriculum in a way that will challenge oppression.
>
> As additional reading, you are expected to read a chapter from the book *Teaching for Social Justice,* entitled Knowing Ourselves as Social Justice Educators by Bell *et al*. (2010).

With the above module extract, students can begin a process of connecting the relationship between social justice and the Commerce discipline. The extract helps to answer questions such as the one asked by one of my students, Mpho:

> What does social justice have to do with Accounting? And when do we get time to teach it when we have so much work to go through in a year?

The purpose of adding the foregoing section in the module guide was to assist students to locate social justice within the discipline of Commerce by questioning common Accounting and Business practices and how we learn these practices. Furthermore, the extract can challenge students to become critical of the role different institutions play in maintaining the structural nature of oppression through unchallenged daily practices that are regarded as the norm. Mpho for example, after reading this section in his module guide, could now begin to ask questions about the sort of knowledge his learners bring with them to the classroom and where they have learned these messages. After asking these questions, Mpho would have to think about how the knowledge that his learners bring to his Accounting classroom, could be used to inform learning and how he could challenge the kinds of knowledge that perpetuate an unequal society from a personal, institutional and societal level. As this process goes on, Mpho would have to eventually ask himself the same questions about what influences his practice and what he needs to change about his practice for the benefit of his learners.

However, as I was no longer responsible for the teaching of the AEO modules in 2012, I needed to develop a professional relationship with my colleague based on opening myself to critique from them and *vice versa.* I had to ensure my own boundaries as a person who was merely making a contribution as far as the revising of the modules was concerned. Thus, whilst the final say regarding the module outcomes and content remained that of my colleagues, I noticed that regardless of our discussion and my recommendations, in the final revised version, AEO module outcomes did not reflect both the academic and the human

project. I considered possible reasons as to why this was the case and realised that perhaps my colleagues did not fully understand what social justice is all about, and that they might not fully comprehend how it can be infused in various disciplines. Mr Thabethe, who formed part of my validation group (2.4.6) offered another possible reason:

> From my experience I will argue that the practice is not common but there is a common agreement that teaching across different disciplines should be guided and be in line with the issues of social justice. However, some people believe that teaching for social justice is a stand-alone and once-off practice. In that way I can say that talking about it is a common practice but there remains a huge gap between practice and theory.

Mr Thabethe subsequently raised similar concerns that had led me to engage in this study - practice is often seen as divorced from social justice, or social justice is frequently regarded as a discipline on its own. Through this process of engaging in dialogue with my two colleagues, we were able to infuse social justice in the content of the module, but the inclusion of teaching for social justice as an outcome of the module was still neglected.

In the following section of this chapter (5.4.2.1), I reflect on my experiences of teaching the AEO module after having revised it. The next task was to revise the REO modules by aligning them with the new curriculum plan for the B.Ed. programme with the aim of implementation during my second action cycle in 2015.

### b) Revising the module REO122

In light of the reconceptualisation of our B.Ed. programme (5.4.1) and designing the REO module frameworks, I have revised the module outcomes to address both the academic and human project. Below is an extract from the module framework for the new module *Accounting Teaching 1* that replaced REO 122. The framework indicates the overall module outcome, the various themes to be covered and the various types of the assessment tasks:

| Name of the module | **ACCOUNTING TEACHING 1: FET PHASE** |
|---|---|
| Module Outcome(s) | ***On completion of this module students should, have comprehensive knowledge of methods and media in education and demonstrate that they can implement it effectively in presenting Accounting in a meaningful way at school level through carefully planned lesson plans whilst using creative ways in which they challenge common business practices that perpetuate oppression.*** |
| Content – distributed amongst the 3 units | **Learning Unit 1: Accounting Curriculum planning**<br>• Accounting learning programme, work schedule, subject framework<br>• Review of CAPS document<br>**Learning Unit 2: Accounting lesson planning**<br>• Situation analysis<br>• Lesson planning skills and steps<br>**Learning Unit 4: ICTs and creative Accounting teaching methods**<br>• Integrating ICTs in the teaching of Accounting<br>• Mobile learning theory : Overview<br>• Creative teaching methods |
| Assessment<br>*Assessment activities as well as % weight of each summative assessment activity in brackets* | The following assessment activities will be chosen from:<br>• Presentations (25%)<br>• Case studies (10)<br>• Assignments (25%)<br>• Simulated classroom setting lesson presentations (15)<br>• Student portfolio (25%)<br>Exam:CASS = 50:50 |

The revised outcome of the module is critical in that from the onset, it clearly states the outcome as equipping students with various methods and skills they can use to teach Accounting whilst also being conscious of the responsibility they have as educators in challenging oppression through their practice. I argue that a clearly stated intention to infuse values of social justice as an outcome for any module is crucial, as it will, to a certain extent, enforce the infusing of values in the teaching process. Consider for example the previous outcome for this module that seems to lean more towards preparing students with technical skills, whilst omitting issues of social justice:

> The main aim of this module is that learners will, by own research, have a comprehensive knowledge of methods and media in education and demonstrate that they can implement it effectively in presenting Accounting (depending on modules they registered for) in [a] meaningful way at school level. The reason why you must master this knowledge and skills by own research is to empower you to master other methods and media on your own after you behave started you teaching career.

When comparing the two module outcomes, the different expectations come to the fore. As a consequence and in order to find alignment with the module outcome, the content or themes of the module had to change with the revision of the module. Whilst the previous module begins with different strategies that students could use to introduce Accounting in their classroom, in the revised module I wish for students to understand the scope of the subject itself and to review the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* first. The foregoing is important because it is in the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* that they can begin to learn about the kind of educator envisioned by the DoE and the kind of learner that they need to prepare as a responsible citizen (4.2). Furthermore, the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (DoE, 2011) is also very clear with regard to the principles underpinning the school curriculum:

- Social transformation: ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of the population;
- Active and critical learning: encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths;
- High knowledge and high skills: the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade are specified and set high, achievable standards in all subjects;
- Progression: content and context of each grade shows progression from simple to complex;
- Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors;
- Valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution; and
- Credibility, quality and efficiency: providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries.

I regard the review of the *National Curriculum Statement* and the above-mentioned principles as a tool for critical analysis. This is in line with what Hackman (2005) refers to as a component for social justice (4.3.2) as the students begin to engage with the content to be taught in the subject Accounting. After providing the students with this tool for analysis, I

then introduce a theme on lesson planning which is informed by the principles that underpin the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*. Before students begin to learn about different lesson planning skills, they need to brainstorm a number of variables which may impede on the success of their planned lesson such as;

- the learners;
- their personal attributes as educators including their own prejudices and biases;
- the community where the school is located;
- the physical space of the classroom and the resources available at their disposal; and
- various teaching methods.

Assessment therefore for the new design of the module takes into account that students need to demonstrate an ability to apply their understanding of the *National Curriculum Statement* and the principles that inform the statement, demonstrate skills and the ability to apply various teaching methods in different learning contexts. Thus, with the new design of the module, students will be expected to, amongst other forms of assessment, do simulated classroom lesson presentations which will be based on different school contexts, from rural, disadvantaged and ex-model C school settings. The aim of such assessment tasks is to encourage students to begin developing skills to teach Accounting in different contexts and to draw from their own contexts to enhance effective learning.

By revising the AEO and REO modules, I had been able to address my second concern regarding the neglect of infusing social justice in the module outcomes and to subsequently ensure that the module content speaks to such values, thus preparing educators who would become change agents.

#### 5.4.1.4 Plans to change my classroom practice

I needed to develop strategies that would ensure that I would always be aware of the opportunities that created space for dialogues on issues of social justice framed within the discipline of Commerce education. As my plan of action, I accepted a new responsibility to influence my practice by rethinking the way I planned for each of my lessons by starting the lesson planning process and asking myself the question *how do I infuse social justice in this*

*lesson?* To improve my skills when it comes to facilitating classroom discussions there was a need for me to learn to be patient and to value silence in class as an opportunity or space for students to engage in quick in class reflections.

I also had to revise my assessment strategies and to establish ways in which the kinds of assessment tasks my students engaged in encouraged critical thinking skills whilst also encouraging them to think of practical ways in which they could challenge oppression and unquestioned common Accounting and business practices. In order to achieve this, I had to think of and employ creative assessment strategies that would push students to begin to engage with issues of power, privilege and the challenging of stereotypes. Figure 5.3 provides a graphic illustration of my cycle just before the implementation of my plans of action, whilst the following section reflects on the process of implementing the above mentioned plans of action.

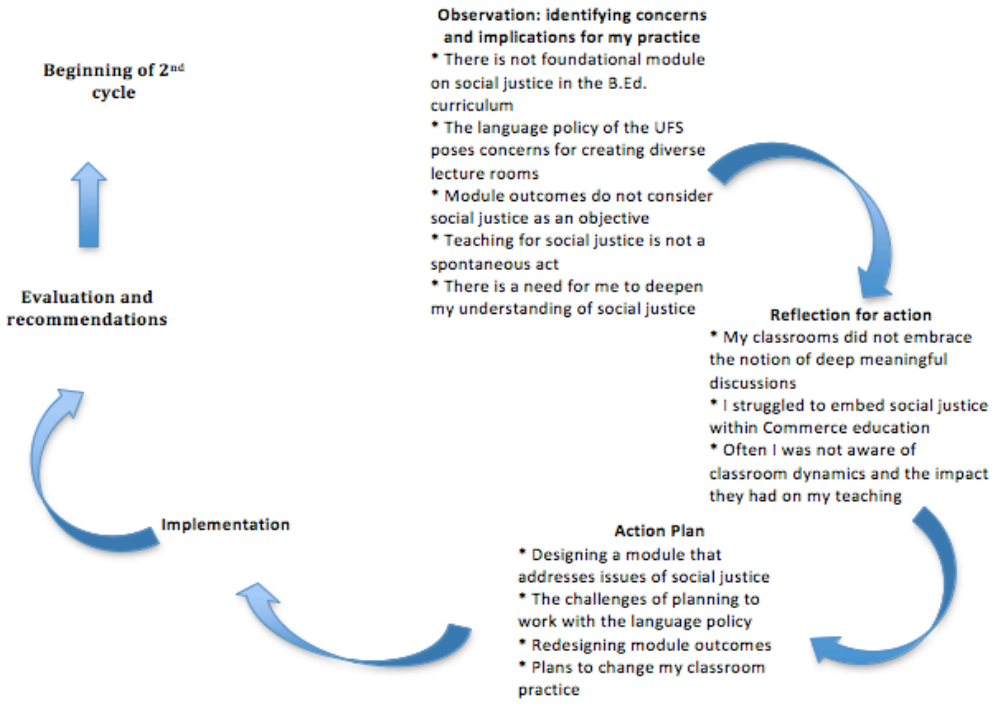


Figure 5.3: Action cycle - plan of action

## 5.4.2 Implementing my plan for action

Having identified the different plans for action to address the concerns and challenges that negatively influenced my practice to infuse social justice, I implemented my plan of action

and changed my classroom practice. The following section subsequently reflects on the implementation of my action plan.

#### 5.4.2.1 Embedding the frameworks and components for social justice in my classroom

My early observations led me to the realisation that often when I planned for my lectures, I would neglect to plan on how social justice fits in with the theme or topic I would be teaching. I tended to focus more on the teaching of the pedagogical content knowledge. There was subsequently a need for me to rethink the way in which I planned for each of my lessons so that it would be possible to embed the frameworks and components of social justice within the Commerce discipline. Within the very few weeks of the observation part of my study, the disjuncture between social justice and my Commerce lectures had motivated me to ask myself the question: *How do I infuse social justice in this lesson?* By asking this question when planning for each lesson, I was able to begin to think of creative ways in which I could embed social justice in my practice. Having revised the AEO modules to include a section that speaks to social justice, it was possible to plan each lesson with a more focused intention to teach to the academic and human project. In my quest to infuse social justice to influence my practice, I had to find ways in which I would be able to employ the frameworks and components of social justice as discussed in Chapter 4 (4.3.1 & 4.3.2). I herewith reflect on my attempt to infuse the aforementioned.

I wanted to encourage my students to be able to establish a balance between the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process by making use of reflection and experience as tools for student-centred learning (Adams, 2007: 15). Encouraging my students to create a balance between the emotional and cognitive development was of vital importance when teaching for social justice, as often students had to critically reflect on their own assumptions and the patterns of thinking they used to make value judgements. The content I taught embraced a classroom space that fostered functional discomfort whilst challenging my students and supporting them in a firm, yet tender manner (Davis & Steyn, 2012: 35). I challenged students to begin to attempt to create a balance between emotional and cognitive development by adapting to a new way of planning for my lessons. The foregoing helped me to address the concern I had with regard to ensuring that teaching for

social justice was not a spontaneous act in my classroom. I realised it should be seen as a well thought out and planned process. Below are two examples from my classroom practice of how I influenced my practice to embed the frameworks and components for social justice.

**a) Example one**

In the process of planning a lesson under the theme *Situation Analysis and Outcomes* for the module AEO122, I asked myself the question: *How do I infuse social justice in this lesson*? I had realised the need to state social justice as an objective for each of my lessons; thus, I formulated three outcomes for the aforementioned lesson theme:

- discuss contextual analysis
- explain why and how different teachers organise learning experiences for optimal participation and involvement of learners
- give a broad outline of other contextual factors;
- describe the interrelation between different contextual factors;
- critically discuss how you would create a classroom for equity and social justice; and
- discuss strategies on how you would manage diversity in a multicultural classroom environment.

By ensuring that from the planning stages I had spelled out an intention to address both pedagogical content knowledge and managing diversity as outcomes, I had made it easy for myself to ensure that in my planning for the lesson I did not neglect either of the aforementioned outcomes. The lesson was first taught over three 50 minutes lectures on the Bloemfontein campus and was also taught at the Qwaqwa campus. Appendix 1 contains the slides that give more details about the content covered in the lesson design. The content covered under the theme *Contextual analysis,* embodies the framework for social justice that aims to establish a balance between the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process by engaging students in dialogue on issues such as *inter alia,* class, gender and race (see Appendix 1). Discussions on the aforementioned issues often involved different emotions that students had to confront and engage with in order to understand

how their views on such issues may influence their practice. Furthermore, by beginning to establish a balance between the emotional and cognitive components in the content I taught, I was able to address the component for social justice that Hackman (2005) identifies as *content mastery*. As discussed in the previous chapter (4.3.2), Hackman argues that students should not just only be engaged in the process of consuming knowledge. Rather, they should be presented with a range of ideas that could help them make meaning of that knowledge.

Furthermore, in teaching this lesson, I employed the second framework for social justice, which refers to acknowledging the personal and individual experiences my students bring to the classroom, whilst I simultaneously challenge them to make connections and illuminate the systemic dimensions of social group interactions. In Appendix 1, slides 9 and 10 contain a class activity where students had to draw from their pre-acquired knowledge and their experiences to begin a process of questioning their own assumptions about social identities framed within the teaching of EMS. In the first part of this classroom activity, students were asked to provide a name they would give to a character in a case study to teach about different types of businesses in a Grade 9 classroom. This activity required students to give a title, name and surname to a number of characters inside a bank situation:

1. Truck driver
2. Entrepreneur investing
3. Accountant
4. Bank manager
5. Personal assistant to the bank manager
6. Priest at the bank
7. Doctor
8. Domestic worker depositing a cheque
9. Person applying for a loan to open up a hair salon
10. Primary school teacher enquiring about an overdraft
11. The bank manager
12. Client borrowing money to start a welding business

After students completed the first task[14], I then asked them to share with their peers the title, name and surname they gave to each of the characters. After going through the different characters and the names, I noted a disturbing concern. The following abridged summary of responses from 11 students on the Bloemfontein campus, indicates how gender identities were assigned in their case studies:

[14] Appendix 2 contains examples of the responses students gave for this activity. For ethical reasons, students were not required to fill in their names when completing the written task.

| Character | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| Truck driver | 11 | 0 |
| Entrepreneur | 6 | 5 |
| Accountant | 5 | 6 |
| Bank teller | 2 | 9 |
| Personal Assistant to the bank manager | 4 | 7 |
| Priest | 10 | 1 |
| Doctor | 10 | 1 |
| Domestic worker | 10 | |
| Primary school teacher | 4 | 7 |
| Bank manager | 7 | 4 |

This activity revealed how the students tend to think about gender roles and identities in a very sexist stereotypical manner based on their real-life experiences. Also, very interesting to note was how this diverse group of 2 males and 9 females students, with different racial backgrounds, had similar ways of thinking in this regard. Furthermore, when analysing the data, patterns around how students think about racial identities had emerged. Although the students seemed to have challenged some of the racial stereotypes during this activity, however, when it came to giving a name to the domestic worker, nine of the students had suggested it would be an African female. Through engaging in this activity, the students also began to confront the realisation that what they had regarded as the norm was not the norm for everyone.

The important part of this particular activity thus, was the debriefing process in which I asked my students to comment on the patterns they had noticed when they shared the names, and to think about what implications this particular activity has for their own practice as Commerce educators. Through a facilitated classroom discussion, students were able to recognise common covert ways in which, through the teaching of Accounting, one can perpetuate racial and gendered stereotypes. This process of getting students to engage with each other on issues of gender and race had been uncomfortable for both male and female students as they had differing views. The views expressed in class differed and at times, challenged the values students cherished based on their religious background and upbringing. I therefore had succeeded in moving students to an initial uncomfortable space in which they started to establish an equilibrium between the emotional and the cognitive

components of learning (Adams, 2007). The following extract[15] that followed the activity with students on the Qwaqwa campus, reveals how some of the students' patterns of thought were challenged:

> **Percy**: Let's debrief this exercise, what are you noting here? Are you finding anything troublesome or are you finding everything is fine the way it is? Are you finding anything concerning you or are you finding we did all right with this exercise?
>
> **Mr. Thabethe**[16]: What I've noticed about what I [thought] and what they (students) thought is that all those good things are associated with men and the jobs like domestic work is associated with women and a few of us have associated it with men.
>
> **Female student 1**: I was very worried with the fact that most people chose a priest to be a male, why can't the priest be a female?
>
> **Percy**: Right so she was worried about the fact that most people chose the priest to be a male and she is concerned as to why does it have to be a man why can't it be a female?
>
> **Male student 1**: The other thing is just that most of us think some jobs are only for males.
>
> [*I asked the student to clarify what he means*]
>
> **Male Student 1**: I just think... some of the jobs can be done better by men.
>
> **Female student 2**: As we were checking our answers, most of us chose jobs as African name like bo mofokeng, mokoena, we didn't use Bosman and other names.

Female student 1 was shocked at how most students had chosen to use a male for the priest character and asked her peers why the priest can't be female. The tension came in when male student 1 offered his personal view that some jobs can be done better by men. Within this brief discussion, the students were placed in a space in which they now began to evaluate each other's logic and reasoning on how they had selected characters for the case study. Also, by means of the question asked by female student 1, they became aware that the task of designing classroom activities needs to be well thought through to take note of silent messages that perpetuate dominant ways of thinking. I continued the class discussion towards understanding how we learn our ways of thinking:

> **Percy**: That's the other thing I wanted to talk about, because for example when it was the domestic worker … how many of you the domestic worker was a black person? Or a person of colour?

[15] An extract of the lesson transcript is available in Appendix 3.
[16] Mr Thabethe sat in during this lesson as part of my validation group.

Lets look at another example how many of you the bank manager was a black person? How many of you the bank manager was a white person? The truck driver how many of you had the truck driver as a white person.
So what are you noticing now? You can tell me before I tell you what I'm noticing.

**Male student 2**: I'm noticing the mind-set.
**Percy**: The mind set? The mind-set is correct?
**Male student 2**: No it's similar.
**Percy**: Excellent. And that's a very interesting observation because we tend to think the same way. But does it mean we think the same way that it's correct?
***[Students respond "No]"***
**Female student 3**: I think we are used to think the way we do.
**Percy**: We are used to think the way we do. Why? Where is this coming from?
**Female student 3**: From our great-great parents. We grew up knowing that domestic workers are female.
**Percy**: From who?
**A group of female students**: From the environment
**Female student 4**: The impact of apartheid
**Percy**: You are all on the right track and I like the fact that you are confused or you are finding difficulty in articulating where we got this from. And let me try and break it down to you to say where we actually get to learn [not very clear]

By engaging in the above discussion with my students, I began to give them an opportunity to engage with content knowledge in a manner that went beyond the mere reproduction of dominant and hegemonic ideologies (Hackman, 2005). In other words, students reflected on where and how they had learned what should be considered as the norm. However, the discussion with my students as quoted in the above extracts, also gives an indication of where the students are in their cognitive level of engaging in dialogue on issues of social justice. Taking into consideration that these were students in their final year of teacher education, it revealed how they have had very little engagement in such discussions. This, once again, underscored the need for a foundational module on social justice in our initial teacher education programme. Acknowledging the fact that at the time there was no module to provide a foundation for social justice, I then provided students with tools for critical analysis. They could use these tools to make meaning of how we had learnt about our multiple identities thus infusing the component of social justice as proposed by Hackman (2005).

The follow-up activity aimed to foster reflective skills and embodied the notion of students learning from their lived experiences in understanding identity construction. This process of getting students to reflect on their identity construction I identified as a tool for critical analysis that students could use to challenge their own ways of thinking and hopefully to improve their practice. With this activity students were asked to recall, when they were very young, the kinds of sports they enjoyed, their favourite athletes, teachers, toys and best friend. After completing this task, students shared with the class some of their responses and again identify patterns of sameness and being different in their narratives. The data from this activity had revealed that from an early age, the majority of the female students in the class had played with dolls and had pink as their favourite colour as young girls, whilst the male students both noted blue as their favourite colour. Thus, this activity helped me to facilitate a process of learning about how our socialisation helps construct our identities and the values we use to judge what is right from wrong. With regard to racial identity and socialisation, the activity revealed how students possibly grew up in communities where they had very limited opportunities to interact with people different from their own families. Tatum (2010) explains how such an observation is an indication of the great deal of segregation that continues to exist in our society. After getting students to understand and critique the role our socialisation plays in identity construction, slides 11- 15 in Appendix 1 explain the possible influence that our socialisation could have on our educational practice.

The lesson planning process and execution of the plan for this particular lesson is an example of how I was able to address my concern of the divorce between my practice and social justice. By drawing on some of the frameworks and components of social justice, the lesson enabled me to engage students in pedagogical content knowledge, whilst infusing a social justice framework. This example is characteristic of the different ways in which I started to plan and teach my lessons by drawing on the different frameworks and components of social justice.

**b) Example two**

To further illustrate how I influenced my practice by infusing values of social justice, I use an example of a classroom activity I did with a different group of students at the Qwaqwa

campus. In this lesson I got my students to draw on one of the frameworks for social justice for their own learning. The activity employed the framework that encourages making conscious use of reflection and experience as a tool for student-centred learning. In the activity the students were asked to respond to the following question:

> Reflect on your recent teaching practice experience, were you able in any of your lessons that you presented to engage your learners in a discussion about diversity and education or social justice? Give an example of how you did this.

Students' responses revealed that they did not seem to have a clear understanding of (a) what social justice is; (b) how they could infuse social justice in the classroom and; (c) what social justice has to do with the discipline of Commerce. Their responses had vague explanations of their attempts of engaging learners in discussions of diversity or social justice and most of these occurred in informal discussions, often not making connections with the subject content they were teaching. However, a few of the students' reflections revealed that they do have to navigate their multiple identities in the different teaching contexts as they engage with diversity. In one of the reflections a student wrote:

> Yes, I have, yet not as much as I wanted to. Being in a school socially dominated by Sotho's' I wanted to find out how will they react if they were to be taught in English and a teacher's mother language for their lesson [sic], as a way of improving their other use of languages amongst the officialised. The response was that they would rather dropout than learning other languages, yet the main point was to enable them to tackle other things or issues around them by unleashing the potential they have, because I felt they are suppressed by the use of Sotho all the time, they cannot even respond in a sentence speaking English. So there is still so much that needs to be done in rural schools like schools around Phuthaditjhaba, even though this was not part of a lesson.

The above response revealed a similar concern raised by another student in response to this activity. Firstly, it underscores how students' own identities, when placed in a context where they are different to others, make them feel anxious about how they will be received or how the diversity they are faced with will impact on their practice. Secondly, the response from the student has implications for my own practice as I have to reflect on the realities of the different educational context that my students practise in. I need to ask the question for example, *have I prepared my students to be able to teach Accounting in a context where English is not the home language*? So one of the lessons for me that has implications for my practice is to dialogue with my students about the challenges that they face whilst teaching at schools. Thus, my second cycle will have to employ the reflective

framework for social justice in which students are given the opportunity to reflect on the challenges that they face during their teaching practice with regards to teaching for social justice.

#### 5.4.2.2 Assessment activities that reflect a commitment to social justice

Another concern that I had to address with regard to my practice was the designing of assessment tasks that would encourage students to think of creative ways in which they could challenge oppression through their own practice. By ensuring that assessment tasks also encouraged students to think of ways they could challenge oppression in their own practice, I was aligning assessment to address both the academic and human project.

While working with the REO modules, I changed the assessment tasks to be aligned with my objective of preparing Accounting educators who would also teach for social justice. Previously, assessment tasks in the REO modules were in written form where students would do research on a particular topic or written tasks in which they could 'demonstrate' particular skills with regard to the teaching of Accounting. My concern with the previous methods of assessment used in the aforementioned modules was that they did not necessarily equip students with tools for personal reflection, tools for content mastery and tools for action and social change (Hackman, 2005). In the process of designing assessment tasks, I needed to bear in mind that my students lacked an important foundation in understanding social justice. Thus, assessment tasks would be one of the ways I could begin to get them to think of practical examples of how they could influence their practice with the aim of teaching for social justice. Using two examples below, I show how I influenced the way in which I used assessment to engage students in issues of social justice in the modules REO122 and REO142.

**a) REO122**

As a first step, I revised the assessment tasks for the module REO122 and used presentations as a form of assessment. Presentations as a form of assessment made more meaning as this module focused on *teaching methods* and the *different media* that students

could use in the teaching of Accounting. Students were asked to prepare a lesson on their chosen Grade 10 Accounting topic and present how they would go about teaching that lesson in the classroom in front of their peers. As one of the assessment criteria, in preparing and presenting their lessons, students were allocated marks for demonstrating how they have taken issues of inclusive education and diversity into consideration during their lesson preparation. Furthermore, after their presentations, students were asked to submit a written reflection on their presentation that also formed part of their assessment criteria. Students were also given a rubric[17] with the criteria on how they were assessed for their lesson plans and presentations beforehand. Through these two assessment criteria, students were given an opportunity to engage with two components for social justice (Hackman, 2005). Firstly, by asking students to engage with issues of diversity and inclusive education in their lesson preparation, I was able to engage them in the process of thinking about tools for action and social change (4.3.2). Students hence planned ahead how they would manage diversity in their classroom, thus making the process of lesson planning a conscious act that does not neglect planning for social change. Secondly, I had offered the students a tool for personal reflection by including a written reflection on their presentations as part of the assessment criteria. Through such reflections, students reflected on the strengths of their lessons, areas where they thought they could improve and finally, on the critical feedback they had received from their peers. For example, after his presentation, one of the students reflected:

> **What has worked?**
>
> What seemed to be my area of strength was how comfortable I was in presenting my case to fellow students and I feel the message that I was trying to get across came out strongly – to propose different ways that can employed in teaching bookkeeping in Grade 10 students. Given how interactive we are in the class and how this could be a potential threat for the underprepared students, one was adequately prepared for any questions that may be posed by the audience in attendance. We cannot talk of any sustainable learning environments which Mahlomaholo (2009: 314) cites are the space, process and experiences through which students are brought together to create a network of opportunities to participate in sharing and form relationship and support one another in becoming different people if we do not constructively criticize each other's work. I was encouraged by how willing my colleagues were in sharing their thoughts on my work and where they think it could be improved. For instance, Mr Mdunge highlighted the fact that I only had to play parts of the video,

[17] A copy of this assignment task along with the rubric is available as Appendix 4.

> which would stipulate the intended lesson outcomes. In addition, it was particularly encouraging, despite our tough test week, to see how adequately prepared were my other colleagues.
>
> **What could be improved?**
>
> I personally feel our presentation would have been a lot more meaningful had there been an audience in attendance. The latter would work on our nerves a bit more thus improve the level of confidence and ability to speak in public. It could be argued that presentations were part of the modules course work, but just to add excitement and high level of anticipation a few unfamiliar faces would have been interesting.

The above reflection highlights a number of learning opportunities that students were engaged in through the process of preparing and presenting their lessons in front of their peers. Firstly, students were placed in a space in which they could engage in discussion with their peers in which they could evaluate each other's work, whilst also learning from each other. Debriefing each presentation in class with all the other students consequently assisted me in creating a community of reflective practice and encouraged students to engage in careful planning for their presentations. Like Eckert and Mc Connel- Ginet (2007), I consider communities of practice as important amongst a group of people working together towards a common endeavor, in this case, influencing practice to teach for social justice. By creating a space in which students could critique each other's work, I was embedding class discussions as another component I had identified for social justice (4.3.2).

Secondly, through their presentations, students were also given an opportunity to develop their communication skills and ability to construct solid arguments to explain why they had selected a particular approach and media to teach their lessons. The latter meant that students had to be critical of the different teaching methods presented to them and to make informed decisions about the method they chose to use in their lessons. However, the above reflection also raised a concern that goes back to the language policy of the university. The student's remark about how he would have wanted to have more people present during the presentations, meant more opportunities to give constructive feedback on how he could improve his lesson. Due to the language policy of the university, the students had to do their presentations in separate English and Afrikaans groups.

Consequently, students could not have a diverse audience to present their lessons to and to give and receive constructive feedback. This I note as a challenge that I will have to consider and find a creative way to address with the implementation of the new B.Ed. curriculum in my second cycle.

**b) REO142**

In the module REO142, which deals with *year-planning*, *homework* and *assessment* in Accounting, there was also a need to ensure that assessment tasks would assist me in my objective of preparing Accounting educators who would be capable to teach for social justice. Because this module also dealt with assessment, I then designed an assignment task in which I asked students to set a test and an assignment based on a case study. Below is an extract from the assignment with instructions on what was expected from the students:

> You are employed as a Grade 11 educator at Boitemoho Secondary School. The school is located in Qwaqwa in the rural part of the Free State. It is the beginning of the new school year and you are preparing your assessment activities for the year, to complete this task, you will have to consult your Accounting Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement. Amongst the assessment activities, you are required to:

1. Design a case study that you will use to assess learners on the topic "Ethics" during the first term. Your case study needs to be original and your learners should be able to identify with it taking into consideration where the school is situated. In designing your case study you should pay particular attention to how you do not perpetuate stereotyping, rather challenge exist societal stereotypes especially those that relate to the business sector.
2. Set a test to assess learners on the topic "Budgeting" during the third term.

   *Both sets of assessment activities should be accompanied by a memorandum that includes a marking rubric where required *

Following the criteria on how this task would be assessed, students demonstrated an awareness of their teaching context by preparing a case study that their learners would be able to identify with. Furthermore, by asking students to design case studies that were relevant to their learner's contexts, I had encouraged them to use their learner's individual dimensions of experience in the teaching of Accounting. Whilst the students' assignments indicated how students had been able to work creatively in challenging common patterns of thought regarded as the norm within the business sector, they often struggled with bringing

about a balance between content knowledge and the challenging of dominant discourses. In other words, students often designed case studies that would address content knowledge at the expense of challenging dominant discourses in Accounting or *vice versa*. This I identified as a challenge similar to the one I had encountered (5.3.1.2) when trying to infuse social justice into my practice where often I would neglect social justice and place more emphasis on the teaching of pedagogical content knowledge.

## 5.5 Evaluation and implications

In this three-year journey of seeking to improve my practice by infusing values of social justice as a teacher educator, I have been able to document a part of my professional life through a carefully planned reflective process that culminates into my living educational theory. A living theory approach towards influencing my practice enabled me to change those aspects of my practice over which I had direct influence – it subsequently worked against a living contradiction. Having immersed myself in this reflective process and having completed my first cycle, I now wish to use this section as a discussion platform to evaluate and allude to some of the implications my study has, not only for my own practice, but for teaching and learning within the context of teacher education. In evaluating my action cycle, I draw on the four critical questions (1.4) that guided me in this enquiry

### 5.5.1 My claim to knowledge

One of the most important factors that I had to take into consideration in the evaluation process was that my focus should be centred around determining my own ability to infuse social justice within my practice, and not so much on my students. Thus, in evaluating my action cycle, I asked myself: *What am I claiming to have achieved through engaging in this study*? With regard to my achievements, I want to make the following learning claims:

- I have gained a deeper understanding of social justice and what it means to teach for social justice, and I wish to continue deepening my understanding in this area;
- I am now more aware of how my own socialisation could influence my practice;
- by infusing social justice in the Commerce discipline, I have influenced my practice not to be a living contradiction and this I regard as an on-going process; and

- I have been successful in creating spaces for both my students and colleagues to engage in issues of social justice, and I seek to continue finding creative ways in which I can engage my students and colleagues.

At the beginning of this study, my understanding of social justice was narrow and primarily limiting in my objective to prepare educators who would become change agents. Through engaging with literature on social justice, I have come to a deeper understanding that social justice is not merely about the fair distribution of social goods and resources in society (Rawls, 1997). Rather, social justice also has to do with challenging the ways in which society and social institutions position social groups to ensure that those who suffer oppression are given opportunities to decide on their own destinies, and not to have their destinies dictated by those in power (1.5). Through the process of deepening my understating of social justice, I subsequently addressed my first critical question (1.4): *What is my own understanding of social justice and its values*? Furthermore, I also argued that as oppression is a learned form of behaviour, it is also largely possible to unlearn such behaviour and attitudes (1.3). The foregoing thus led me to the realisation that we need to centre education as the primary tool to disrupt learned oppression and discrimination (1.1). By identifying education as the tool for challenging oppression, I had made a rationale for why my study was imperative and then addressed my second critical question: *Why was it important for me to influence my practice not to be a living contradiction*? As a teacher educator, I did not wish to neglect my responsibility to educate student teachers who would act in the interest of society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice (DoE, 2002: 3). Through engaging with literature on what it means to teach for social justice education, I identified five frameworks (Adams, 2007) and six components (Hackman, 2005) for social justice (4.3.1 & 4.3.2) to underpin my practice:

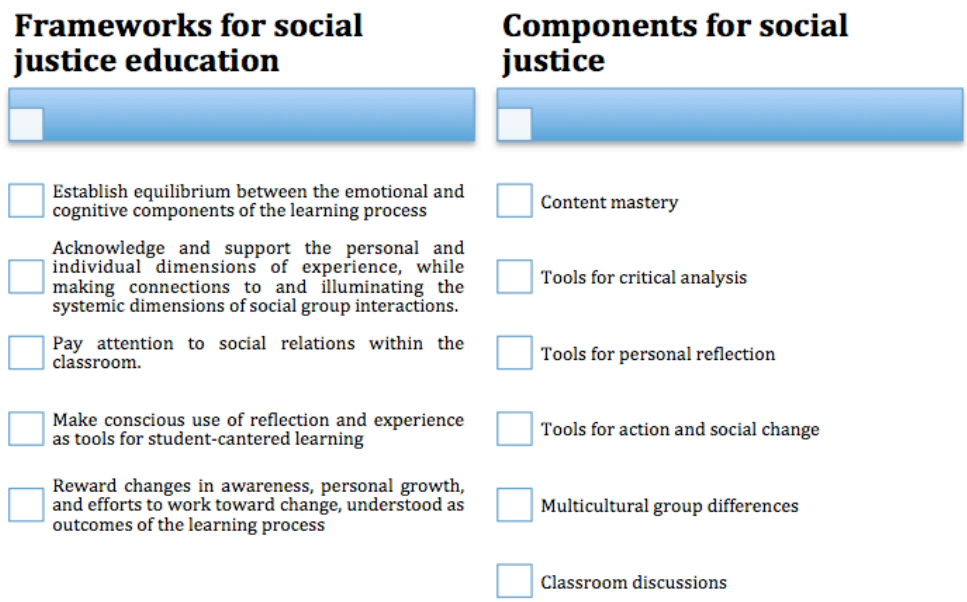


Figure 5.5: Frameworks and components for social justice education

I subsequently employed the abovementioned frameworks and components for social justice into my practice through creative classroom activities and by facilitating classroom discussions (5.4.2.1). The latter was aimed at providing students with a foundation to begin to align teaching with values of equality, respect, human dignity and social justice. I also revised the kinds of assessment tasks my students had to do in order to challenge them to begin to think about how (a) their own socialisation can influence their practice, and (b) to think of creative practical ways in which they could start to challenge dominant knowledge discourses in the Commerce discipline. The foregoing was made possible through a negotiated process with my colleagues (5.4.1.1) so as to revise the module guides in such a manner that the pedagogical content knowledge does not overshadow the teaching for social justice as an intended outcome. By revising the content of the modules in collaboration with my colleagues and by means of employing different forms of assessment, I was able to open spaces for my students and colleagues to engage in dialogue, primarily on how to infuse social justice within the Commerce discipline. Mr Thabethe also concurred that I had been able to infuse social justice into my practice when I asked him: *What was your experience of sitting in some of the classes that I taught in the Qwaqwa campus? Do you think I was able to infuse social justice in my teaching of how to teach in the Commerce discipline*? He responded:

> I think the aim of infusing social justice in your teaching was achieved and you had simple and practical strategies to use to achieve the above aim. The only challenge was time. I think you needed more time to make sure that students understood the issue of social justice not just as a topic in their different subjects but as something they should embrace in their daily teaching

By employing the frameworks and components for social justice as part of my practice, Mr Thabethe's response to my question is therefore testimony to my claim that I had addressed the third and fourth critical questions that guided my study: *How do I improve my own professional practice as a social justice educator for the benefit of my professional growth and development, and that of my students and colleagues? How can I open up spaces for my students and colleagues to engage in issues of social justice?*

While I claim the above achievements, I am also aware that through engaging in this study, I have come to a realisation that in this first cycle I was not able to engage students in challenging the structural nature of oppression deeply rooted in how social power is unfairly distributed. One of the ways the aforementioned was made evident to me was through an activity I did with a group of students at the Qwaqwa campus after I had taught a few lessons that relates to the theme *Curriculum as a vehicle for social transformation*. In the activity, students were asked to problematise a number of images I had collected from various EMS textbooks used at school level. The purpose of this activity was to get students to be critical of the textbooks they use in their teaching and to see how issues of *inter alia* race, gender and ability status are often communicated with relation to power and privilege. The responses from the students revealed how they could not identify covert exclusionary practices rooted in unfair distribution of social power and privilege common within business practices. Therefore, a second cycle is imperative for me in order to add depth in discussions on social justice in the Commerce discipline. My hope is that with the implementation of the new B.Ed. curriculum that is underpinned by both the academic and human project, deepening classroom discussions on social justice and Commerce education will be more possible. One of the challenges posed by Mr Thabethe for my second cycle, is to devise strategies for teaching for social justice in all topics and to avoid what he refers, to as a "basic understanding of social justice" framed within the Commerce discipline. Although I commit myself to broadening my attempts of infusing social justice into other themes in the Commerce discipline in future, I wish to make it clear that my work only

provides an initial step with regard to the foregoing. My work primarily serves to open discussion on how we can infuse social justice in Commerce education and remains open for critique and furthering.

Furthermore, I am also aware that I was unsuccessful in creating classroom spaces that reflected the diversity of our nation and the primary reason for this had to do with the UFS language policy and its interpretation. I subsequently intend to negotiate, in my second cycle, for combining the Afrikaans and English groups into one class unit, before the drafting of the official university timetable. To ensure that I respect the right students have to study in their language of choice, including the aim of building a multilingual society, I will request the use of translation services in these linguistically diverse classes. Whilst this arrangement would be in line with the university's language policy, it will create the space for students to learn in a diversity-rich classroom.

I also have noted how my own unconscious patterns of thought are often deeply rooted in my own socialisation. For example, in designing the activity where students had to name the different characters in a case study (a), I had worked with a dangerous assumption that judging by the name and surname students gave to each of the characters I would be able to assume the race of the particular character. I only realised that this was an assumption based on racial stereotyping when I started going through the activity and realised how for example "Grace Mofokeng" does not necessarily mean the person is African or that "John Jacobs" refers to a white person. Therefore there is always a need for continuous self-reflection where I identify factors that influence my actions and practice with the intention of challenging what is often thought of as the norm.

In the next section I expand on the implications my study has for teacher education and the implications that then emerge for schooling.

### 5.5.2 Implications

As my first action cycle draws to an end I identify a number of implications my study has for curriculum development, for teacher education, staff development and subsequently for schooling. This section discusses the foregoing and concludes by drawing attention to the

contribution my study makes in infusing social justice within the discipline of Commerce education.

#### 5.5.2.1 Teacher education

**a) Implications for curriculum development**

When reflecting on the values of the South African Constitution (1996), of the UFS (www.ufs.ac.za) and the Faculty of Education (http://edu.ufs.ac.za), it becomes apparent that there is an unquestionable need that students in institutions of higher education should be engaging in issues such as, *inter alia,* social justice, human dignity, diversity, identity and transformation in the new democratic South Africa. Furthermore, teacher education has an even more inescapable need for engaging students in the aforementioned discussions if we are to prepare the kind of educators envisioned by the Department of Education (DoE, 2011) who are capable of:

> equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country.

The above quote from the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* has implications for curriculum development within teacher education. Teacher education programmes need to be designed so that they also address social issues that often shape our daily experiences to prepare educators who will be in a position to teach for transformation. The reconceptualisation of the B.Ed. curriculum and outlined exit-level outcome in our Faculty of Education is one example of how alignment between the academic and human project could be included in curriculum design.

Having a clearly stated objective or outcome that recognises the value of social justice in designing of any curriculum, decreases the risk of undue focus on labour-market responsiveness at the expense of the wider social and cultural contributions of higher education. However, it does not ensure that such objectives or outcomes will be realised. Careful attention should therefore be given to the curriculum design process. I subsequently advocate for curriculum design to cater for foundational courses that engage students in discussions on social justice, diversity, and oppression. An example of such a foundational course is called *Diversity and Learning* that is currently offered to

undergraduate students in their first year at UKZN (Faculty of Education) (Francis et al, 2003: 140). This module aims to

> enable students to understand how gender and race have impacted on experience, and how the related power relationships impede social justice generally and in education specifically.

But can such courses really invoke students to start questioning structural oppression and inequalities in society and encourage them to act as change agents? I would argue that they could certainly begin the process of critical self-reflection in a society underpinned by oppression and inequality. It was through the same module offered at UKZN that I began to question societal inequalities and my own internalised domination and subordination with regards to my multiple identities (3.6). Through the foundation provided by that module, I not only engaged in this study, but I also intend to further seek ways to deepen my scholarship through values of social justice. Although I advocate for courses that engage students specifically on issues of social justice within their undergraduate studies, I wish to caution against situations where such courses end up being viewed as detached from other courses in their curriculum. Courses designed exclusively to provide a foundation for students to engage with social justice issues should be viewed in such a manner that they provide a space for deepening an understanding of social justice issues embedded in the students' specialisations or major courses. The module *The Individual in the Education Context* recently designed for implementation in our new B.Ed. curriculum is another example how a foundation for social justice can be layered through curriculum. Therefore, social justice should be infused in all courses offered as part of the curriculum. Garri and Rule (2009), for example, indicated in their study with a group of student teachers on how social justice can be integrated with Mathematics and Science. There has also been work done on how social justice can be infused within service learning modules (Lesser, 2007; Petersen 2007).

### b) Implications for professional development

In line with the foregoing exposition, I also argue in favour of the need for the professional development of teacher educators with regard to issues of social justice. I argue that professional development is crucial as values of social justice are not naturally inherent and that even in attempts of embracing such values, we are often confronted with conflicting

messages about our identities regarding power, privilege and the structural nature of oppression. Consider for example how even after I had completed the module *Diversity and Learning* and having taught a number of modules on social justice, I still had difficulty embedding social justice in my own Commerce classrooms. The foregoing is affirmed by my experiences reflected on in this study where after having a discussion about social justice with my colleagues, they had still failed to consider social justice and its values as an outcome of the AEO module design (5.4.1.3). I argue that professional development in a forever changing society concerned with preparing educators who will be able to teach through multiple and complex social changes, should thus be welcomed with no reservations. However, I need to warn against the assumption that when the level exit outcome of any educational programme is concerned with transformation, it will automatically translate into all teacher educators taking responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum working towards such an aim. Such an assumption can easily threaten the very design and aim of the programme. Through on-going professional development, we can be able to challenge the historic conceptualisation (which is still deeply embedded in our current B.Ed. programme) of teacher education as ensuring that all teachers have basic subject matter knowledge and the technical skills to work in school just to improve the pass rate (Smith, 2004). Furthermore, professional development can help foster solidarity amongst colleagues to work collaboratively in challenging oppression. The implications for teacher education highlighted in this section invariably have indirect implications for schooling, as our students are the ones who end up practicing at school level.

**c) Implications for schooling**

The implication that stems from my study is the responsibility for teaching at school level to be concerned about preparing learners that value inclusivity and social justice in protecting our democracy. Thus, the responsibility of building a foundation to a society free from discrimination and citizens concerned with challenging oppression in all spheres of life should not only be left in the hands of institutions of higher education. With our current *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (DoE, 2012) that already gives expression to the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South Africa, educators have to rise to the challenge of teaching a new generation of active citizens concerned about the future of

humanity. Furthermore, those responsible for implementing the curriculum at school level also need to realise that the aforementioned challenge should be embedded in all school subjects and not simply locate it within certain subjects such as Life Orientation. In so doing, by the time learners exit high school, they will already have begun a process of understanding how oppression works and what education for social justice is about. Consequently, the Department of Education has an even bigger responsibility of training practising educators across all subjects offered at school level to teach with the objective of upholding the principles that inform the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (2012: 4). In so doing, the Department of Education would ensure that educators realise how policies regarding school curriculum do not simply come as a result of "common sense or expediency alone, nor are they disconnected from existing systems of power and privilege" (Smith, 2004). The overall responsibility therefore lies with teacher education programmes to ensure that they prepare educators who will be in a position to teach for social justice in their future classrooms.

#### 5.5.2.2 The significance of my study

As a result of my study, I would like to suggest that my living theory creates a platform to engage in a reflective practice that seeks to infuse social justice in the Commerce discipline within teacher education. Social justice is often seen as an independent discipline, and as a consequence, little research has been done with regard to the infusion of social justice in the teaching of subjects in the field of Commerce. Most research (cf. Ponemon, 1993; Armstrong, 1993; Gray, Bebbington & McPhail, 1994) tends to focus on the teaching of acceptable Accounting and Business ethics that speak to values such as fairness, transparency, and integrity. Although these values are important, they cannot be understood in the same way as social justice as they do not deepen engagement to challenge oppression. Furthermore, very little research is done in infusing social justice in the teaching of Commerce related subjects such as Economics, Business Studies and Accounting. Mr Thabethe also affirmed these claims when he stated that it is often common practice that there is a gap between social justice and Commerce education. Consequently, my study also offers possible ways that other practitioners concerned with teaching for social justice, could engage in a similar reflective process of creating their own living theories by infusing social justice into their practice.

## 5.6 Afterword

I describe my study as as a journey of self-reflection to address my professional concerns about my practice beign divorced from social justice, and it draws to an end in this chapter with more challenges that need to be addressed in my second action cycle. This is a journey that began in 2011 based on the rationale that education is not merely about transferring content knowledge, but rather it should also seek to address social justice in order to transform society. One of the ways in which we could transform society would be through carefully planned curricula. To help guide me in my quest of seeking to infuse social justice into my practice, I identified four critical questions (1.4). I employed a living theory approach to assist me in seeking possible ways to address my critical questions. I opted for a living theory approach because it is the one approach that could explain my educational influence on my own learning and improvement (Whitehead, 2008).

Through engaging in this study, I have been able to begin working towards ensuring that my practice as a teacher educator is not a living contradiction. I have been able to work towards the aforementioned by deeping my understanding of social justice, employing different teaching and assessment strategies, opening up spaces for dialogue for both my students and collegues, and engaging in reflective practice. My study reveals that values of social justice are not naturally inherent, instead such values need to be cultivated amongst our students if they are to teach for transfomation in a society engorged with inequalities and different forms of oppression. The responsibility of teaching for social justice is not only for a select few. As teacher educators we should share this task as a common responsibility that binds our practice.

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## Appendix 1: PowerPoint presentation- Situation Analysis

AEO 132

# SITUATION ANALYSIS & OUTCOMES

1

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## Outcomes for this module

2

- Critically analyze the **participative approach** to teaching-learning dynamics of the classroom
- Describe and reflect what is and how a **contextual analysis and diversity** are contained in the preparation of teaching-learning in the classroom
- Identify the Learning **outcomes** for EMS and write outcomes in lesson plans

# Learning unit 1: Outcomes
# Contextual analysis

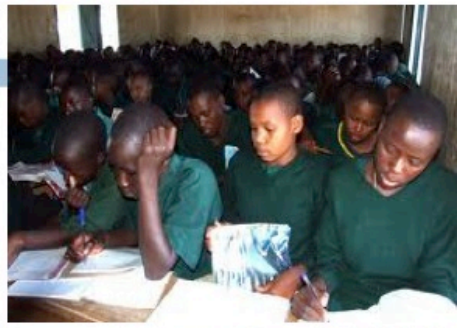
3

- Discuss what is contextual analysis?
- Explain why and how different teachers organize learning experiences for optimal participation and involving learners?
- Give a broad outline of other contextual factors.
- Describe the interrelation between different contextual factors
- Critically discuss how you would create a classroom for equity and social justice
- Discuss strategies on how you would manage diversity in a multicultural classroom environment

# What is a contextual analysis?

4

- It is the context / situation in which the teacher finds themselves in before teaching can take place
- Teacher needs first to analyze all the factors that might **influence** (positive/negative)the teaching-learning situation
- Identify by the teacher and need to consider the effect the factors will have on teaching-learning
- Diagnosis = sizing up of a situation to understand it fully and to find clues for deciding what to do
- Provides information about the teaching and leaning context that they can use in their lesson preparation or planning.
- This is a continuous process carried out by the educator

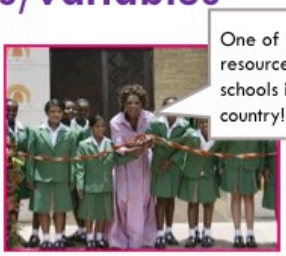


# Information for contextual analysis

5

## Contextual Factors/variables

- Teachers XX
- Learners XX
- Classroom
- Learning content
- Teacher methods
- School
- Community
- Environment



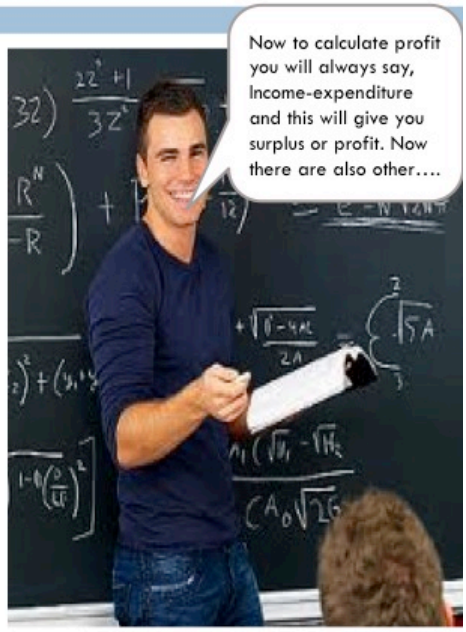

# Information for contextual analysis

6

## Teacher: EMS *pp108-110*
## Personal and Professional

7

- Teaching styles are a combination of teachers personalities, their competence, expertise and level of communication & values?
- The most effective teachers are the ones who are flexible in their teaching styles, adapting to their classroom context
- Direct teaching style- e.g. pg 108, use of objects
- Indirect teaching style-independent thinking skills and discovery learning
- Different skills and abilities
- Using other teachers




## Teacher: EMS
## Personal and Professional

8

- Proactive set realistic goals, move learners towards realizing goal
- reactive _ adjust expectations in line with new information, emerging trends and unexpected events
- Overactive, rigid, stereotype perceptions of learners based on 1st impressions of Ls behavior
- Teachers' preferences
- Management of classrooms
- Awareness of strengths and weaknesses

You are writing a case study for your learners in grade 9 what name would you use for the following characters inside the bank? Name and surname.

9

1. Truck driver depositing money
2. Entrepreneur investing on shares
3. Accountant
4. Bank teller
5. Personal assistant to the bank manager
6. Priest at the bank
7. Doctor applying for a loan
8. Domestic worker depositing a cheque
9. A person applying for a loan to open up a hair salon
10. A primary school teacher enquiring for a bank over draft
11. The bank manager
12. A client loaning money to start a welding business

# Lest answer the following questions

10

1. Your Gender
2. Your Race
3. What is your favourite sport?
4. Your favourite Soccer / Rugby player?
5. Your favourite Primary School Teacher?
6. Your favourite male primary school teacher?
7. Your favourite toy as a child
8. Your favourite colour as a child
9. Your favourite colour now
10. What is your best friends name?
11. Gender ?
12. Race ?

## EMS: Learners
## physical/ mentally/ emotionally & socially

11

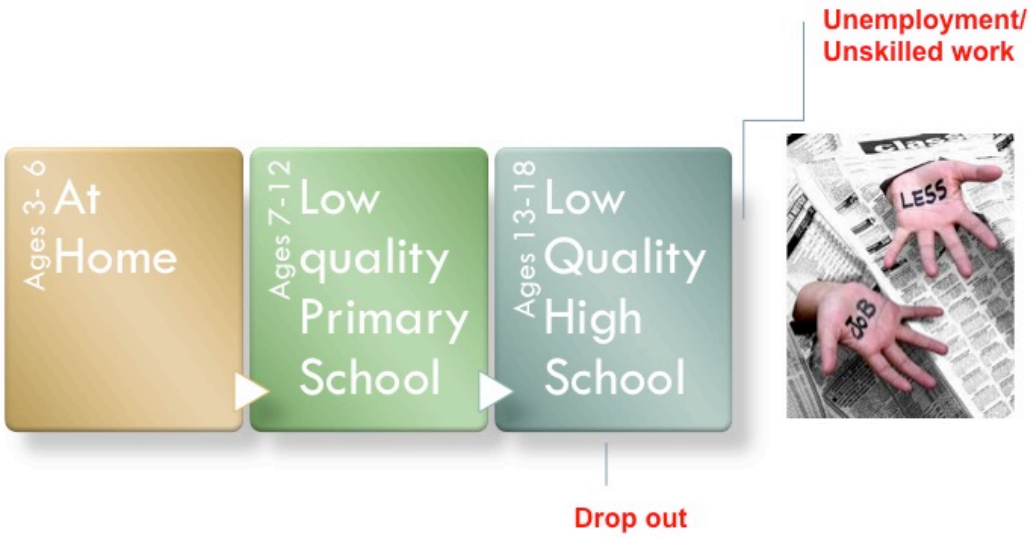
- Every learner unique e.g. pg. 100 e.g. *of Sipho who lost his mother*
- *Social* and *cultural* background
- Culture= way of life, traditions, background, customs etc.
- Patterns of learning and childrearing carried out at home

## Privileged child

12

# Disadvantaged or under privileged child

13




## EMS: Learners physical/ mentally/ emotionally & socially

14

- Norms, values and customs –draw from these for teaching and learning
- Socio-economic status
- Development levels
  - Level of intellectual development
  - Level of affective development
  - Level of physical and psychomotor development

15

# So what is the challenge for the Educator?

## Information for contextual analysis

16

# Learning content

17

- EMS: NCS policy document
- Applicable selection of content (Assessment standards)
  - The applicable selection of learning content
- **Applicability** – to achieve learning outcomes
- **Learnability** – intellectual dev of learner
- **Durability** – updated keep up with the times, e.g. Book keeping
- **Gender sensitive**
- **Cultural diversity**
- **Usefulness** (relevance) – relevant to context

- **Group discussion:**

If you decide to look for learning content, why are the above elements important for selection of learning content? Critically explain in your groups.

# The ordering of content

18


- **Chronological ordering**
- **Spiral or concentric ordering**
  - *Rational or reasoning, logical*
- **Divergent ordering**
  - *Creative production is often characterized by the divergent nature of human thought and action. Divergence is usually indicated by the ability to generate many, or more complex or complicated, ideas from one idea or from simple ideas or triggers*
- **Linear ordering**
- **Heuristic ordering**
  - *experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning, and discovery*

# THE SCHOOL

19

- **Nature of the school**- urban, co- educational etc
- **Facilities**- labs, class sizes, school hall, grounds, DVD players, PC etc.
- **Class size and composition** no. of pupils, demographics, language, culture,

Read the example on page 132 make remarks or suggestions / critically reflect on the example.

# THE CLASSROOM

20

- Seating arrangements, *according to activity and not permanent, movement*
- Creation of subject / learning area *atmosphere- who moves during change overs, atmosphere must be friendly and motivational*
- Other features- *lighting ventilation, chalk board and other aids e.g taps*

# THE ENVIRONMENT

21


- **Changing conditions**
  - Changes in society / environment
  - E.g. economic melt down / 9/11 bombing as an intro to lesson
  - Aware of environment
- **Extra-curricular and external environment**
  - Extra curricular activities e.g. sport, music = themes
  - Holidays and special events, pregnancy etc
  - Religion

# THE COMMUNITY

22

- Rural communities
- Urban communities,
  - wealth of resources e.g. libraries etc
- Field trips
- Mass media
  - Radio, television, can record, you tube?
  - Computer programmes for teaching,
- Resource people
- The role of parents


# Remember to Mind Map

# Appendix 2: Case study activity- student responses

Date: _____ Module: _____

**You are writing a case study for your grade 9 EMS lesson, what names would you use for the following characters? Name and surname e.g Mr. Sizwe Mhlongo**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Mr Jacob Wilson |
| 2. | Mrs Serati Makhata |
| 3. | Mr Mothibeli Khooa |
| 4. | Miss Neo Tlali |
| 5. | Mr Mphatle Pheko |
| 6. | Rev Joseph Lemao |
| 7. | Doc. Samuel Molapo |
| 8. | Mrs Liabo chele |
| 9. | Mrs Mary Soole |
| 10. | Miss Relebohile Mothibeli |
| 11. | Mrs Matlotliso Lesesa |
| 12. | Mr Ramokoatsi Ramokoatsi |

**Let us answer the following questions**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | FEMALE |
| 2. | SOTHO |
| 3. | Tennis |
| 4. | chabalala |
| 5. | Mrs Griffiths |
| 6. | Doll Mr Rantoa |
| 7. | Doll |
| 8. | Pink |
| 9. | Purple |
| 10. | My husband |
| 11. | MALE |
| 12. | MOSOTHO |

Date: _____ Module: _____

**You are writing a case study for your grade 9 EMS lesson, what names would you use for the following characters? Name and surname e.g Mr. Sizwe Mhlongo**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | George Mazibuko (Mr) |
| 2. | Johnathan Stewart (Mr) |
| 3. | Pieter Kenedy (Mr) |
| 4. | Sarah Marshall (Miss) |
| 5. | Micheal Pretorius (Mr) |
| 6. | At Boshoff (Pastor) |
| 7. | Stoffel Du toit (DR) |
| 8. | Thandi Tselo (Miss) |
| 9. | Darryn Du Randt (Miss) |
| 10. | Marinel Roussouw (Mrs) |
| 11. | Ryan Roux (Mr) |
| 12. | Jakes van der Westhuizen (Mr) |

**Let us answer the following questions**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | ~~F~~ Female |
| 2. | White |
| 3. | Netball |
| 4. | Morne Steyn (Rugby) |
| 5. | Carin Jordaan (Mrs) |
| 6. | ~~Pram Dolls~~ Mnr Nel |
| 7. | ~~Blue~~. Pram Doll |
| 8. | Blue |
| 9. | Pink |
| 10. | Marinel |
| 11. | Female. |
| 12. | White |

Date: 0 Module: _____

You are writing a case study for your grade 9 EMS lesson, what names would you use for the following characters? Name and surname e.g Mr. Sizwe Mhlongo

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Mr. Maluleka Sipho |
| 2. | Mrs. Petersen |
| 3. | Mrs. Dineo Tshabalala |
| 4. | Mrs. Kele Molo̊i |
| 5. | Mrs. Karabo |
| 6. | Rev Samuel Ndlovu |
| 7. | Dr. Phillip Lesia |
| 8. | Mrs. Radebe |
| 9. | Mr. Sam Mokonyane |
| 10. | Mr. Heining Mayburg |
| 11. | Mrs. Thandile Kubeka |
| 12. | Mr. Bushy Leboela |

Let us answer the following questions

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Female |
| 2. | Black African |
| 3. | Cricket |
| 4. | Male |
| 5. | Mrs. Mohale |
| 6. | ~~Barbie Doll~~ Mr. Okucha |
| 7. | Barbie Doll |
| 8. | Purple |
| 9. | Pink |
| 10. | Puleng |
| 11. | Female |
| 12. | African |

Date: _____ Module: _____

You are writing a case study for your grade 9 EMS lesson, what names would you use for the following characters? Name and surname e.g Mr. Sizwe Mhlongo

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | MR SOLOMON DLAMINI |
| 2. | MRS LESEGO MOSIPE |
| 3. | MR lesego Hubi |
| 4. | Ms Lorraine Du Plessis |
| 5. | Mrs Vikke Van Wyk |
| 6. | Rev Solomon Boysen |
| 7. | Dr Solomon Mahlangu |
| 8. | MRS Amanda Dupree |
| 9. | MR Johan Van Wyk |
| 10. | MR LESEGO MOTSPMAI |
| 11. | De Rafubacle Selowo |
| 12. | MR Shabangu Sesotho |

Let us answer the following questions

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | MALE |
| 2. | AFRICAN |
| 3. | WHEEL-CHAIR RACING |
| 4. | MALE |
| 5. | MR MAHLOKO |
| 6. | MR MAHLOKO |
| 7. | CAR |
| 8. | BLUE |
| 9. | PURPLE |
| 10. | EZEKIEL |
| 11. | MALE |
| 12. | BLACK |

# Appendix 3: Lesson introduction: QwaQwa campus

**Mr. Thabethe**

[*Introduces me to the students*]

…but please treat him like you treat me.

**Percy**

A very good morning to everyone and thank you to your lecturer for allowing me to be here today. My name is Percy, forget everything about the tittle and the surname; just feel free to call me Percy. I'm lecturing on the Bloemfontein campus, I'm here because last year when I visited the first years they insisted that we have more interaction between the QwaQwa and the Bloemfontein campuses. The second reason why I am here is because of my study that I am currently working on. So I'm doing some research on how we can teach for social justice. So I'm going to ask for you permission to record todays' session both by video and audio. For the data, when I present my data I will not obviously use anyone's real name although I would like for you to share your name if you're answering so that I can be able to refer to you by your name. But when I report on the data I will not be using anyone's name. I need to know that everyone is comfortable with the use of the video camera and the audio recording. Is there anyone who is uncomfortable with this arrangement?

*[Some students respond yes this is followed by laughter and giggling]*

Please be honest if you are uncomfortable just let me know. Are you uncomfortable? Are you uncomfortable?

*[There is no response from the students and it seems they are comfortable]*

Now I will be going through 2 sections from your study guide and the first section is when you're looking at how do we view curriculum as a social transformation tool, and how we understand hidden curriculum. So those are the two themes that we are going to look at today. And I'm going to combine these two themes and at the end try and summarise. However I'm not here to teach or preach I'm here to listen to what you have to say.

The first thing that I want to ask from you is what do you understand it means to be an educator in South Africa? What are the responsibilities or qualities that you should have as an educator in South Africa? Simple question. There is a lot of things that you can mention but let us mention a few and I will share with you my two.

**Female student 1**

To be a facilitate of the teaching and learning process

**Percy**

*[Repeats what the student said]* Excellent.

**Male student 1**

To be a parent and a motivator to your learners

**Percy**

*[repeats what the student has said]* excellent. Other people

**Female student 2**

To guide them

**Percy**

To guide them where? To the bush?

**Female student 2**

To guide them to the right path

**Percy**

Yes thank you. Let me share with you the two things that I think are important about education.

I think that the first thing that is important for us as educators is for you when you go into the classroom to develop your learner's cognitively/academically. Which means that as EMS teachers you need to be an excellent EMS teacher, you need to know exactly how to teach EMS you need to know your EMS content knowledge. So it means you need to be a specialist in EMS.

The second aspect that I feel is important for you as an educator is to work towards changing South Africa for the better for everyone. Do you understand the second part? So it means that your first duty is to obviously to develop your learners cognitively and the second one I also think is important for educators is changing South Africa for the better for all…I'll obviously unpack this as we move further along.

We are going to play a short game with pictures and assumptions. I will show you a picture and I want you to share with me the first thing that comes to mind when you see the picture. You will tell me whether you think the person is male or female, whether you think

the person is married, has kids or what sort of job the person has *[repeats]* or if you think the person is sick and what sort of illness the person has. So I want you to let loose, don't be shy to say anything...say whatever comes to mind.

This is the first picture.

**Female student**

Addicted to drugs

**Male student**

Bored and confused

**Female student**

I think she is a mother with children, probably a secretary

**Female student**

I think she is a women who is married, she has a face problem like she has an allergy

**Male student**

Below poverty line

**Female Student**

She is an alcoholic

**Female student**

Divorced

**Percy**

That's the first picture the next picture.

**Female student**

A professor

**Female student**

Happily married living a healthy life

**Percy**

Married to a female or a male?

*[laughter in the class]*

**Male student**

A CEO of a company

**Female student**

He looks like he likes whiskey

**Female student**

Probably driving a sports car

**Female student**

He looks like he is organized.  Some one who likes the outdoor life

**Percy**

Next picture

**Female student**

Here he looks like someone who is fashionable. He looks like a model.

**Student X**

He's gay.

*[Laughter in the class]*

**Percy**

So he looks like someone who is into fashion and you think he is a model? And because he is a model you think that he is gay? *[more laughter from the class]*

Do you think that he is married if he is gay or not gay?

**Female student 3**

He is single

**Percy**

He is single as a gay person or a [heterosexual] person?

**Female student 3**

A straight person

**Female student**

He is a charmer boy and a player

**Female student**

He looks like he just found out that he is HIV+

**Male student**

He's a model

**Percy**

Let me move on because there are a couple of other pictures. Her.

**Female student**

She looks like Nonhle Thema

**Percy**

Nonhle Thema looks like money am I correct?

**Female student**

Like a gold digger

**Female student**

She looks innocent, a Christian

**Male student**

She's not married

**Percy**

Does she look ill?

*[Most of the students shouting "NO"]*

**Percy**

She doesn't look like she has a drug problem. Right look it's the same person

**Female student**

Mother Theresa type, she likes interacting with people

**Female student**

She is the minister of health

**Female student**

A motivator

**Male student**

Humanitarian

**Male student**

A socialist

**Female student**

She is a poet

**Percy**

Him


**Mr Thabethe**

Ushaya isiginci (He plays guitar)

**Percy**

They say he plays the guitar.

**Female student**

A drug dealer

**Student**

He's in the media industry

**Male student**

He smokes dagga

**Male student**

He is a rock star

**Female student**

a photographer

**Female student**

He's a player

**Percy**

Is he working or is his job being a player?

**Female student**

Business, musician

**Percy**

Let us look at her

**Female student**

She is a P.A.

**Female student**

Very intelligent

**Percy**

What do you think she does?

**Female student**

Accountancy

**Female student**

A Psychologist

**Male student**

She looks like a secretary

**Male student**

A bank teller

**Male student**

Single and available

**Percy**

Does she look female or male?

*[Students respond female]*

**Percy**

Right I will stop there and I now want to go back and tell you more about these people.

**[I go through the story as per slides giving the real details about each of the people behind the picture.]**

**Percy**

What is the point of me taking you through this exercise? I'm trying to show you how we actually think and stereotype. How we see people and are able to judge [not clear] the same thing when you walk into your classroom you will encounter learners…will you judge your learners according to the way they dress? [not clear] so the learner that dresses smartly with their tie and everything tucked in, you will think that this learner is the one that has more potential and the learner that comes from a disadvantaged background, tend to think there is very little that education can do to try and help this learner? We think in stereotypes and stereotypes are very harmful, it's not our fault that we think in stereotypes, we learn these things ourselves, but what's the danger? The danger is that if we as educators do not challenge these stereotypes that exist we will perpetuate these stereotypes, than we are not doing... [not clear] which brings me to the second point of being and educator which I said was your duty to teach for transformation. So when you walk into the classroom you need to be able to see beyond stereotypes, beyond stereotypes that girls are not as intelligent as boys when it comes to Accounting. You need to be able to encourage you female learners just like how you encourage your male learners. If you are teaching in a school where it is a multiracial school there is two or more races, there is white and there's black learners, you need to be able to encourage your black learners that they are capable just as the next learner, regardless of the race [not clear] because remember what stereotypes do [not clear] we are not even aware that we think in these patterns. And I will prove to you that sometime we do and we are not even aware of it.

That small piece of paper that I gave you. It is time to refer to it…

Don't write your names or anything because I'm going to collect these as part of my data. I'm going to show you how easy it is to think in stereotypes and how we transmit these stereotypes to our learners when we start teaching. Can you see the first section is talking about a case study? It says that you are writing a case study for your learners in grade 9 what names would you use for the following characters inside the bank. This is the task, as educators you will have to set tests, assignments exams and you also have to create some case studies for your learners to teach, especially in EMS.

I want you to pretend that you are writing a case study for a grade 9 class. I'm going to give you a scenario; I'm saying the case study is inside the bank. I'm going to give a list of people that are inside the bank all I want you to do is I want you to give me the gender (the title) is

either going to be a Mr. Mrs or Miss or a Dr. and I want you to give that person a first name and last name. So as an example the first character is a truck driver who has come to deposit money, I want you to give this person a name, give this person a title first is it a Mr. Miss. Mrs. Give this person a first name and a last name. What name would you give this character in your case study?

# Appendix 4

**UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT**
**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**

HOOFKAMPUS / MAIN CAMPUS

**REO122**

UFS·UV
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

EDUCATION
OPVOEDKUNDE
UFS·UV

**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION**

.....
50

**Student number**: ……..……..
**Contact number**: .....
**E-mail address**: .....

**E-MAIL:**
mdungepm@ufs.ac.za

You have been appointed as the Accounting teacher for Grade 10 at Heidedal Secondary School where you teach the subject together with another colleague. Your Head of Department has asked the two of you to work together in preparing lesson plans that you will use for the duration of the year and one of the lesson plans you have been tasked with writing up is on the topic *Bookkeeping of a sole trade*. You have also been asked to present this lesson plan in a meeting with other Grade 10 Accounting educators from the different schools in Heidedal.

What is required of you?

- ✓ Provide a detailed lesson plan.
- ✓ Prepare a PowerPoint presentation of your lesson plan that you will present at the Grade 10 Accounting teachers' meeting.
- ✓ Prepare and present all resources you would use to teach this lesson.
- ✓ After your presentation, you have been asked to give a written reflection on your presentation, which includes reflecting on your lesson plan and any

strategies you have suggested to be used to teach the topic and your choice of resources.

Marking Rubric

| Criteria | Comments | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| The lesson plan form has been completed with all the necessary information, i.e. grade, duration, phase, lesson theme, etc. The lesson plan should also detail each step of the planned lesson, including a proposed plan on how the lesson should be concluded. | | **10** |
| A suitable introduction to the lesson has been provided with a brief situation analysis. Evidence of any activities to be used during the lesson introduction should be presented during the presentation. | | **10** |
| The student has identified an initial approach in the teaching of accounting he/she recommends to use for the lesson, e.g. the accounting equation approach, the general ledger approach, the journal approach, etc. The student should demonstrate how this approach would be applied in the classroom situation. | | **15** |
| The lesson uses a minimum of 3 of the methods to teaching accounting, e.g. the textbook method, the lecture method, and the question-and-answer method. During the presentation, the student should explain in detail how each of the chosen approaches would be used in the classroom situation. | | **10** |
| The lesson makes use of various teaching media such as the chalkboard, the overhead projector, commercial documents, computers, textbooks, etc. The student should demonstrate how each of these would be used in | | **10** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| his/her presentation. | | |
| During the presentation, the student should mention and provide an example of an assessment activity or worksheet he/she would use during the lesson and any homework activity he/she may plan for their learners. These should be original in the sense that student should design these him/herself. | | **15** |
| The student should show how he/she have taken issues of inclusive education and diversity into consideration during his/her preparation. | | **10** |
| A mark will be allocated for the overall quality of the presentation and preparedness of the student. | | **10** |
| The student's personal critical reflection on his/her own presentation and lesson plan.<br>This is a written reflection that the student has to submit after his/her presentation. | | **10** |

## Summary

My dissertation is a reflection on the first cycle of a journey in which I seek to make my practice a living theory by answering the question: *How do I improve my professional practice as a teacher educator by infusing it with values of social justice*? In undertaking this study I identified four guiding questions:

- What is my own understanding of social justice and its values?
- Why is it important to influence my practice so as not to be a living contradiction?
- How do I improve my own professional practice as a social justice educator for the benefit of my professional growth and development, and that of my students and colleagues?
- How can I open up spaces for my students and colleagues to engage in issues of social justice?

I employed a living theory approach in conducting this study because it created a space for me in which to improve my practice by embedding it with the values that I cherish. The data collection methods I used included video and audio recordings of my lessons, document analysis, validation group and a journal for personal reflection throughout this process of seeking to improve my practice.

The first chapter begins with mapping out some of the concerns and the rationale that led me to conduct this study, while also reflecting on the process of deepening my understanding of social justice. Chapter 2 details my research design and methodology, providing arguments for selecting a living theory approach to improve my practice. In the third chapter, I deconstruct my own socialisation with the aim of understanding the role it plays in shaping both my personal and professional identity. Chapter 3 concludes with a reflection on how my socialisation was contested and how I identified contestation as one of the reasons why I began to value social justice and, eventually, to undertake this study.

In the fourth chapter, I contextualise my practice by reviewing various policy documents that inform curriculum development within teacher training and schooling. I further discuss

the vision and mission of the University of the Free State as my current employer and explain the implications they have for my practice and curriculum development for the Faculty of Education. Within chapter 4 I also extend my understanding of what it means to teach for social justice by discussing its frameworks and components. The chapter concludes with the argument that teaching is a conscious act that engages students in the type of learning that equips them with knowledge to be specialists in their chosen field of study, while enabling them to realise their citizenry responsibility to become active change agents.

Finally, chapter 5 reflects on my first action cycle by identifying concerns regarding my practice, reflecting for action, planning for action and implementing my plan. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the implementation of my first cycle before alluding to some of the implications for teacher education, staff development and schooling.

*Keywords*

Social justice, South Africa, higher education, teacher education, action research, living theory, reflection, curriculum development, University of the Free State

# Opsomming

My verhandeling is ’n refleksie op die eerste siklus van ’n reis waarin ek poog om my praktyk ’n lewende teorie te maak deur die volgende vraag te beantwoord: *Hoe verbeter ek my professionele praktyk as onderwyser-opvoeder deur dit met waardes van sosiale geregtigheid te besiel?* In my onderneming van hierdie studie het ek vier leidende vrae geïdentifiseer:

- Wat is my eie begrip van sosiale geregtigheid en die waardes daarvan?
- Waarom is dit belangrik om my praktyk te beïnvloed sodat dit nie ’n lewende teenstrydigheid is nie?
- Hoe verbeter ek my eie professionele praktyk as ’n sosiale geregtigheidsopvoeder tot voordeel van my professionele groei en ontwikkeling, asook dié van my studente en kollegas?
- Hoe kan ek ruimtes oopstel vir my studente en kollegas om in sosiale geregtigheidskwessies betrokke te raak?

Ek het ’n lewende teorie-benadering in hierdie studie aangewend omdat dit ’n ruimte skep waarin ek my praktyk kan verbeter deur dit vas te lê in die waardes wat ek hoog ag. Die dataversamelingsmetodes was onder meer video- en oudio-opnames van my lesse, dokumentanalise, validasiegroep en ’n joernaal vir persoonlike refleksie regdeur hierdie proses van praktyksverbetering.

Die eerste hoofstuk begin met ’n uiteensetting van die grondrede en sommige kwessies wat my tot die uitvoer van hierdie studie gelei het. Die hoofstuk reflekteer ook oor die proses waartydens my begrip van sosiale geregtigheid verdiep is. Hoofstuk 2 gee besonderhede oor my navorsingsontwerp en -metodologie deur argumente te verskaf vir my keuse van ’n lewende teorie-benadering om my praktyk te verbeter. In die derde hoofstuk dekonstrueer ek my eie sosialisering ten einde die rol wat dit in die vorming van my persoonlike sowel as professionele identiteit speel, te begryp. Hoofstuk 3 sluit af met ’n refleksie oor hoe my sosialisering uitgedaag is en hoe ek uitdaging geïdentifiseer het as een van die redes waarom ek sosiale geregtigheid hoog op prys begin stel het – dit het uiteindelik tot hierdie studie gelei.

In die vierde hoofstuk kontekstualiseer ek my praktyk deur ’n oorsig te gee van verskeie beleidsdokumente wat kurrikulumontwikkeling binne onderwyser-opleiding en -opvoeding besiel. Ek bespreek ook die visie en missie van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat as my huidige werkgewer en verduidelik die implikasies wat dit vir my praktyk en kurrikulumontwikkeling vir die Fakulteit Opvoedkunde het. In hoofstuk 4 brei ek ook my begrip uit van wat dit beteken om in die lig van sosiale geregtigheid te onderrig deur die raamwerke en komponente van sosiale geregtigheid te bespreek. Die hoofstuk sluit af met die argument dat onderrig ’n bewuste aksie is wat studente betrokke maak in die soort leer wat hulle met kennis toerus om spesialiste in hulle gekose studieveld te wys, en hulle terselfdertyd in staat stel om hulle burgerlike verantwoordelikheid om aktiewe veranderings-agente te word, te verwesenlik.

Laastens reflekteer hoofstuk 5 oor my eerste aksie-siklus deur kwessies rakende my praktyk, refleksie vir aksie, beplanning vir aksie en implementering van my plan te identifiseer. Die hoofstuk sluit af met ’n refleksie oor die implementering van my eerste siklus, waarna ek na sommige van die implikasies vir onderwyser-opleiding, personeelontwikkeling en -opvoeding verwys.

*Sleutelwoorde*

Sosiale geregtigheid, Suid-Afrika, hoër onderwyser, onderwyser-opvoeding, aksienavorsing, lewende teorie, refleksie, kurrikulumontwikkeling, Universiteit van die Vrystaat