

2.5. THE GLOBAL TREND: TOWARDS PERSONALISING LEARNING

Taking the roles of educators into account, it is essential for them to consider the needs of learners. Since this study focuses on strategies to enhance teaching and learning, the theory behind 'personalising learning' has relevance. In contemporary times, there is a global move towards the personalisation of learning experiences. As cited in Hargreaves (2005:1) Miliband, British Minister for School Standards said in September 2003: "Personalised learning demands that every aspect of teaching and support is designed around a pupil's needs".

The following nine gateways for learning were identified by school leaders at workshops hosted by the national education department where challenges to effective teaching and learning in the context of Personalising Learning were discussed. Each gateway provides a distinctive angle on Personalising Learning by ensuring that teaching and support are fashioned around learner needs:

- Curriculum;
- Advice and guidance;
- Assessment for learning;
- Learning to learn;
- School organisation and design;
- Workforce development;
- New technologies (ICT);
- Mentoring;
- Student voice;

The table below illustrates the interconnection between the nine gateways.

THE INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE NINE GATEWAYS FOR PERSONALISING LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to increasing curriculum choice in 14 –19 year olds provision, leads to rethinking the organisation of the school day and week to allow for mixed-age groups and ‘immersion’ days on a single theme or subject, as well as to make some new uses of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to complement teaching and tutorial sessions and to allow learners to spend more time working from home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project on student voice to help students to articulate their needs and wants (‘what helps you to learn? what stops you from learning?’) leads staff to recognise that they could use learning support assistants in a more learner-centred way and that increasing technical support could lead to more effective use of ICT, both at school and in the home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of assessment for learning has proved to be an effective way of enhancing learner’s capacity for learning to learn; the changed style of questioning has given learners greater voice and confidence to engage with staff when they do not understand the content or purpose of lessons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that they could meet the needs of senior learners more effectively, a secondary school and FET college partially aligned their timetables so that school learners could spend part of their week in the college. This provided access to courses that the school could not provide and eased transition to the college at a later stage.

Table 2 (Miliband, 2003:156)

One may ask why other possible gateways have been excluded, but there are several criteria for the selection of these nine:

- Each theme is applicable to every school and Geography classroom: it is an aspect of teaching and learning that is inescapable, though some aspects are given greater emphasis than others in any particular school and classroom.
- Each is already part of current professional practice in some form, however modest, but in some schools they are an area for pioneering innovation that is worth disseminating to others e.g. the Geography project.
- Each requires strong leadership, both from head teachers as well as in the form of distributed leadership, if progress is to be made.
- Each is potentially a way of enhancing learner motivation and commitment to learning, which is an essential prerequisite to raising achievement.
- No school is at the leading edge in every theme.

Some of these nine gateways are discussed more substantially in Chapter 5, as part of my recommendations. Entry to Personalised Learning can be made through any one of these gateways, namely starting from one lead to one or more of the others.

The political philosopher, Taylor (2004), who supports Personalised Learning, has invented the term 'social imaginary' to explain how, in any age, members of society make some unquestioned assumptions about the social and moral order in which they live. This is what constitutes normality for them in their practices and in their relationships with other people. Taylor has an interest in how the social imaginary of the middle ages, dominated by religious ideology and cosmology and by a deeply hierarchical social structure, gave way over time to the modern social imaginary. Hargreaves (2005) suggests that within any social imaginary lies an educational imaginary, and that at present we are in the midst of transition from the nineteenth century educational imaginary to one for the twenty-first century.

Personalising Learning, as the common theme to the nine gateways, may be seen as the driver from the nineteenth century educational imaginary to that of the twenty-first century. Past years have shown a slow evolution of imaginaries, people died before their social imaginary had changed much. Today evolution of educational imaginaries is so fast that the same leaders live through the transition and have to lead and manage it. This is what makes the leadership of Personalising Learning so important and challenging.

In the next few paragraphs the emphasis shifts to Geography as subject in the new NCS. It attempts to make clear the role of Geography in the learners' personal development and it also refers to the LOs to be achieved.

2.6. NCS: GEOGRAPHY

2.6.1. Principles underpinning the NCS

The principles underpinning the NCS have been outlined in Chapter 1 paragraph 1.9.2. Geography education incorporates all the principles in the process of teaching and learning. The NCS Geography, which adheres to an outcomes-based approach to education, aims at ensuring social transformation by providing equal educational opportunities for all learners.

Furthermore it sets out to develop a high level of knowledge and skills, since it specifies the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade through the specified LOs and ASs.

2.6.2. Definition and purpose

In Geography, "Physical and human processes and spatial patterns on Earth are studied in an integrated way over space and time" (DoE, 2003:9).

Geography enables learners to:

- explain processes and spatial patterns;
- make informed judgements about changing environments and contexts;
- think more critically and creatively about what it means to live sustainably;

- recognise how values and attitudes influence and affect the environment; and
- apply a range of geographical skills and techniques to issues in a rapidly changing world. (DoE, 2003:5)

2.6.3. Essential skills and techniques

The LOs for Geography encompass geographical skills and techniques, which address practical competence; knowledge and understanding, which address foundational competence, and application which addresses reflective competence i.e. reflecting on practice. These competences are associated with the role of the teacher, but should also be developed in Geography learning. The subject therefore includes geographical enquiry, knowledge and understanding and the application of geographical knowledge, skills and techniques to solve environmental and social issues, while it allows for reflection on what we are doing and have been doing. Different sections make up the Geography curriculum and include:

- Related facts;
- Data / statistics / information;
- Map skills; and
- Examination preparation

The teaching and learning experiences in the classroom are focused at developing these skills and techniques. The following diagram serves to illustrate what Geography teaching entails. It identifies various contexts of Geography education, development and use of specific skills and general concepts used in Geography.

What's the essence of Geography teaching?

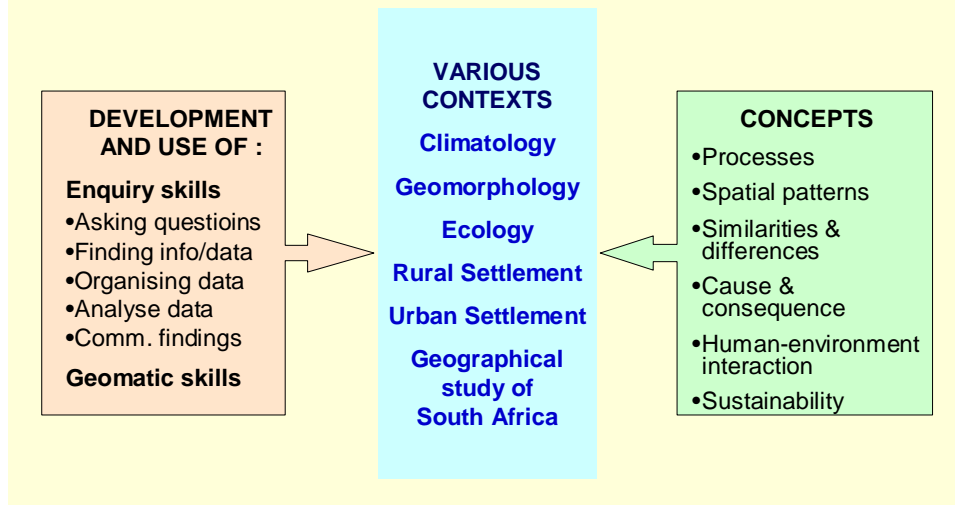


Figure 2: Beets (2006: slide 7)



2.6.4. Learning outcomes and assessment standards

The LOs are the essential building blocks of every learning programme for all subjects within the NCS. It therefore forms the basis of every Geography lesson and is dealt with consistently. It involves a process of geographical enquiry i.e. identifying a geographical issue, (e.g. the impact of urbanisation) the next step is to acquire the appropriate knowledge and understanding on the issue (e.g. what is urbanisation and what impact does it have on physical and human processes, etc.) and finally the application of knowledge and skills for exploring possible solutions to the identified issue (e.g. provision of housing, creating employment, improving infrastructure, decentralisation of industries; improving services in rural areas, etc.)

The Learning Outcomes are:

- LO 1: Geographical Skills and Techniques (practical competence)
- LO 2: Knowledge and Understanding (foundational competence)
- LO 3: Application (practical, foundational and reflexive competence)

(DoE, 2003)

There is a horizontal and vertical progression in the ASs across the FET band (Gr. 10-12) e.g. LO 1: The learner is able to demonstrate a range of geographical skills and techniques. The ASs state the Grade 10 learner is able to: identify issues and formulate questions for an investigation, the Grade 11 learner is able to plan and structure a project or enquiry process, the Grade 12 learner is able to plan a geographical research project of limited extent in a familiar context. Horizontal progression thus refers to the development of the ASs across the grades as it intensifies from grade 10 to 12.

The vertical progression of ASs is an in-depth development in the same grade. For example, LO 1 AS 2 states that the learner should be able to acquire information from fieldwork and a variety of sources, while in AS 3 the learner should be able to organise information graphically, pictorially and diagrammatically.

2.6.5. Human rights and values in the NCS

Since environmental and social issues form an integral part of the Geography curriculum, it is an ideal vehicle to address human rights issues and values. These include issues pertaining to social transformation, inclusivity, environmental and socio-economic justice. Geography in the NCS takes up a principled stand against injustices and inequalities relating to race, gender, and class, physical or mental attributes. The various geographical contexts that are dealt with throughout the FET band give learners opportunities to explore these issues. While Learners are guided to apply the acquired skills and knowledge, a deeper commitment is demanded from the Geography teacher to explore these issues on a continuous basis.

2.6.6. Education and change

Change in the curriculum calls for new ways of approaching education. The new educational dispensation in South Africa is not a unique phenomenon; globally curriculum changes are implemented on a continuous basis. In order

for Geography to stay relevant, due consideration has to be given to the fact that we live in a changing world. According to Robertson (2006), educational makeovers are happening in all parts of the world. Policy makers are guiding curriculum developments further away from the specialists' areas and more towards the zones of the generalists. In South Africa, similar to countries like Australia, the state is responsible for curriculum development. In Australia the state talks about Essential Learnings and New Basics (Robertson et al, 2004:18) such as:

- Thinking – enquiry and reflection;
- Communicating – being literate, numerate, information and arts literate;
- Personal futures – maintaining well being, being ethical, building relationships;
- Social responsibility – building social capital, valuing diversity, acting democratically; and
- World Futures – creating sustainable futures, understanding systems.

Similarly, these themes form the foundation of our new curriculum and are embedded generally in the Critical and Developmental Outcomes of OBE and more specifically the LOs for Geography. Urgency therefore arises for Geography educators to identify and use their capacity for leadership in these rapidly emerging educational environments. Furthermore Walford (2001:246) states:

... geography incorporates the study of two of the key dimensions of life – space and place. Without an appreciation of the significance of these it is impossible to develop one's understanding of environments and societies – and without such an understanding a person cannot be considered to be truly educated.

Geography undoubtedly has a very significant role in the development of every learner, considering Walford's opinion of the subject. In order to ensure that the subject fulfils this crucial role, we need well-equipped and sufficiently trained educators. At this point I focus on teacher training and support to ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum.

2.7. TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Teacher training and support are essential components for the successful implementation of the new curriculum. This has been one of the key factors that were highlighted as a shortcoming by the Review Committee on C2005. Insufficient teacher orientation, training and support leads to poor implementation of C2005 on classroom level and this obviously had a negative impact on the teaching and learning process (DoE, 2002).

Another important factor was the lack of sufficient and relevant learning support materials (Jansen and Christie, 1999). Teachers had to create their own materials, which was a time-consuming task and in many cases these were sub-standard and irrelevant, especially in disadvantaged and ill-resourced schools. These issues are also among those addressed in the new NCS; much greater emphasis is placed on the preparation for implementation and continuous training of teachers.

Geography educators usually engage in formal training programs, which involve either the completion of an undergraduate degree in a particular content area or more than one content area, followed by specialised pedagogic training to teach Geography that combines both content and pedagogy. Training programs include sessions of professional practice to demonstrate the teacher's competence in teaching Geography and highlights content expertise and pedagogic expertise. The challenge, however, for Geography educators is the nature of support that they receive to perform their jobs. The reality is that in developing countries around the world, no different than in our province, teachers receive limited support (Gerber, 2003). There might be the provision of textbooks and extremely limited resources for fieldwork. The curriculum then has to be taught to learners with these limited resources.

It is in the area of resource support that most inequalities exist amongst Geography educators in well-resourced and less resourced schools. This

notion is reflected in reports of curriculum advisers who offer support at schools in the Western Cape. This has an immense impact on quality education delivery and creates major frustration among educators.

Additions to educator training that should be considered besides the pedagogic issues are:

- The commitment of developing and upholding a firm link between research, teaching and professional practice in geography education;
- The development of collaborative learning networks where learners of various countries interact and learn together by utilising ICTs (if these are available);
- Teachers should be introduced to 'comparative geography education' in order to understand and sense that they are involved in a process that varies from one country to the next around the globe due to state policy, access to resources, curricula and multiple intelligences or learning styles of learners; and
- The development of reflective practitioners in geography education (Gerber, 2006:21).

These additions could enhance classroom practice and the outcomes of the curriculum substantially. In this way, the issue of professional development of educators can be addressed effectively and impact positively on teaching and learning.

In many developing countries the issue of access to professional development stays unresolved – though attempts have been made to address this issue the limited support offered currently is not effective (Gerber, 2003:25). The same could be said for the 'crash courses', labelled in this way due to the limited time spent, currently offered as orientation to assist with the implementation of the new curriculum in the Western Cape. The general feedback of educators is that once-off training sessions do not prepare them sufficiently to do what is expected in the classroom. My experiences as Geography educator and curriculum adviser have been overshadowed by the outcry for effective

preparation and training to ensure that educators are equipped and confident when they enter their classrooms.

Professional development is enhanced through a culture of teaching and learning at schools and it is to this issue that I turn to in the next paragraph.

2.8. A CULTURE OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND VALUES

A culture of teaching, learning and values refers to the attitudes and value systems that drive an individual to fulfil his/her responsibilities to ensure their own holistic development as well as that of the greater school community of which they form part. Defining values and especially values in education is a concern for many educators, because it is evident that values education is becoming more important to affect more positive outcomes for education. Values as we understand it can be defined as the beliefs held by individuals to which they attach special priority or worth, and by which they tend to order their lives (Hill, 1991:4). A value is more than a mere belief; it comprises a merit or a standard or opinion imbedded in a person, group, a religion or a belief system. This is what shapes a work ethos and a favourable educational environment. Other elements like discipline, respect, pride, co-operation and trust are a natural consequence of a positive culture of teaching, learning and values.

It is clear that C2005 and NCS provide for the integration of values in all eight LAs (GET) and subjects (FET). Since the emphasis in the curriculum is on knowledge, skills and values, educators should facilitate different value and belief systems into all LAs or subjects across the curriculum. Values acquired in and reinforced by educational institutions i.e. schools are more meaningful and lasting (Asmal and James, 2002). Therefore schools play a cardinal role in regenerating morality in a society such as ours by ensuring its inclusion in all learning experiences. According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy,

Values and morality give meaning to our individual and social relationships. They are the common currencies that help make life more meaningful than might otherwise have been. An education system does not exist to simply serve the market ... Its primary purpose must be to enrich the individual and, by extension, the broader society (DoE, 2001:9-10).

The manifesto is very clear about the role of values in an education system which aims to address the imbalances created by an oppressive and unjust education system. The new curriculum should empower and enrich the learner. With regards to Geography specifically, Gerber (2003:23) notes that different standard values and attitudes are promoted in state curricula, however other aspects worth considering include:

- Valuing geographical studies that display relevance to living in our context;
- Equity of opportunity for all children to study Geography in their formative years;
- Appreciation and fostering of cultural diversity;
- Commitment to sustainable actions for the future of the planet;
- Commitment to a global orientation to understand changing spatial patterns;
- Commitment to knowledge, skills and values through geography education; and
- Valuing all forms of geography education in people's lives.

Gerber highlights the role of Geography in addressing human rights and values issues and its relevance in developing socially and environmentally aware learners who can engage critically with issues impacting on their lives.

In his presidential address of the 19th annual conference of the CTPA) (July, 1985), Franklin Sonn had the following to say about the 'high values' that his organisation holds dear:

We believe that a good education, a standing in society and a good financial income are only justified if they are used in the service of others. We believe that we as teachers are the conveyers of the values of civilization and are called upon not only to pronounce these values, but also to represent them in our own lives. We believe them to be respect and discipline, which derive from self-respect and self-discipline, courage, honesty,

service to others before ourselves, and the maintenance of human dignity. In this regard we are reminded of the words of Albert Schweitzer: 'Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing'. We furthermore confess our horror at the breakdown of discipline and order in many of our schools as a consequence of the loss of faith of our children in the instruments of education conceived and structured in the name of apartheid. We acknowledge that, while education is about the future, our children are hesitant to enter into a future, which is a continuation of the dismal present (CTPA, 1985).

Twenty two years hence we find ourselves in a position in South African schools where the political climate has changed drastically. However, the vicious impact of apartheid is still evident in many of our township schools. Educators continue their struggle for quality teaching and learning with minimal resources and support in poorly developed educational environments plagued by the socio-economic challenges of the day. Suffice to say, these unfavourable conditions have an adverse impact on the teaching and learning of Geography. However, the subject also lends itself to address human rights and values issues e.g. respect, discipline, honesty and service to others and allows opportunities for debating possible solutions.

The onslaught of gangsterism, illegal drug and alcohol trafficking and all associated ills, e.g. violence, rape, child pornography and prostitution, weigh down many communities. Our school grounds have become battlefields of territorial fights between rival gangs and a viable market for drug lords. These symptoms of societal moral decay are prevalent in our schools and call for serious action. Educational institutions and more specifically subjects like Geography undoubtedly have a paramount function in guiding our learners to make informed choices. In this way the acquisition of values to develop resilient individuals is placed on the foreground of the educational agenda.

A natural consequence of a positive culture of teaching, learning and values is a general change in paradigm of the individuals involved, which is empowering and ultimately ensures the emancipation of such individuals. In the paragraphs that follow, more is said about emancipation.

2.9. EMANCIPATION

Emancipation is the act of setting free from any restraint, e.g. discrimination, injustices, inferiority, etc. In Geography, it would mean to sensitise learners on particular issues such as racial and gender inequalities, the effects of apartheid education and the impact of apartheid on South African society e.g. forced removals, migration labour, unequal and discriminatory distribution of resources, etc. LO 3 (Gr. 12) which develops the reflexive competence in learners and deals with applying skills and knowledge to environmental issues and challenges, includes the following ASs.

The learner is able to:

- Apply skills and knowledge to a range of phenomena, issues and challenges at a local and national scale; and
- Examine values and attitudes held by individuals and groups associated with processes, spatial patterns and human-environmental interactions at a local and national scale (DoE, 2003).

An attempt is made to free learners from confusion with regard to course content and the relevance of studying certain phenomena and to develop an understanding of how the curriculum fits into their own educational development process. The learning experience should be seen as an opportunity for self-improvement and preparation for life. It also involves looking at our context in a critical way and not just to accept things as they are. In this way we can start to explore possible ways to reverse situations that are unfavourable for learning and human development.

The next chapter elucidates the methodological framework, which comprises the research paradigm, design, instruments and procedures followed in this study.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to give a clear indication of the means by which I achieved my research objectives and aims. It provides an outline of the process that was followed. The framework includes detail about the approach, design, research instruments and procedures that were employed for the purpose of my study. It also serves to explain how the investigation took place.

3.2. METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Introduction to the research study

The research study falls within a qualitative research paradigm and the approach is interpretive. The research design is a case study. The aim is to investigate what strategies can be employed to enhance a culture of teaching, learning and values through the Geography curriculum. It also serves to inform or sensitise educators about the teaching and learning experiences in their classrooms and to develop an understanding of all the variables.

3.2.2. Qualitative research

Qualitative research enables educators to focus on the study of their own action from their own perspective. The key objective of this approach is to describe and understand human behaviour rather than explaining it. In other words, it enables us to interpret our action in the teaching of our subject in order to make required changes to ensure the enhancement of a culture of teaching, learning and values in the classroom. The study involves the use of qualitative methods, by gaining access from participants, collecting and analysing data. Qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors and focuses on process rather than outcome. The actor's

perspective is emphasised. Furthermore, qualitative research studies events as they occur rather than reconstructing events in retrospect. For example, the research will happen in the classroom while teaching is in progress, while planning a lesson or while learners are busy with learning and assessment activities. All classroom activities are included. Qualitative research is an attempt to view the world through the eyes or perspectives of the social actors themselves (phenomenological). Human behaviour is viewed as a product of how people interpret their world and therefore the role of the qualitative methodologist is to capture this process of interpretation in order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975).

The qualitative researcher has to make a purposeful effort to put themselves in the position of the participants they are studying and understand their actions, decisions and behaviour from their perspective. The emphasis on 'thick description' which is rich, detailed description of specific situations (Geertz, 1973:123) distinguishes qualitative research from the counting and quantifying nature of quantitative research. Another feature of qualitative research is that researchers prefer using the actual, daily terminology of the participants in order to grasp their own meanings. A contextualist or holistic strategy is followed since this is important if one needs to understand events that occur against the background of the whole context and how it adds meaning to such events.

In this study an idiographic (contextualizing) strategy is followed since it examines a single case (Geography project) and its structural coherence with a larger context (culture of teaching, learning and values at the particular school). The qualitative researcher more often does not take an inductive approach to their object of study as opposed to beginning with an existing theory or hypothesis. He or she immerses himself/herself in the natural setting and attempts to describe events as precisely as possible as they occurred. It involves the developing of a hypothesis and finally a theory that will make sense of the observations based on new interpretations of descriptions of events. Another important aspect in qualitative research is intersubjectivity which has to do with gaining the trust and rapport of

participants in order to get as close as possible to them. This also impacts on the validity and credibility of the research study. Triangulation is used to enhance the validity and credibility of a study and is defined by Denzin (1989:236) as the use of multiple methods of collecting research data. It lifts the researcher above the personal biases that is apparent in single methodologies. In this study triangulation was executed through interviews, questionnaires and observations in order to strengthen and validate my findings.

3.2.3. Quantitative research

In this study, I also made use of quantitative data. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships.

Quantitative research is an approach using scientific methods which include:

- The generation of models, theories and hypotheses;
- The development of instruments and methods for measurement;
- Experimental control and manipulation of variables;
- Collection of empirical data;
- Modelling and analysis of data; and
- Evaluation of results.

Measurement as employed in this study, is often regarded as being only a means by which observations are expressed numerically in order to investigate causal relations or associations.

3.2.4. Interpretive approach

In an interpretive approach to research, the researcher works on the premise of the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. The philosophical foundation of interpretative research is

hermeneutics and phenomenology (Boland, 1985). Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them and interpretive methods of research are "... aimed at an understanding of the context of the information system, and the process whereby the information system influences and is influenced by the context" (Walsham, 1993:4-5). Interpretative research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994).

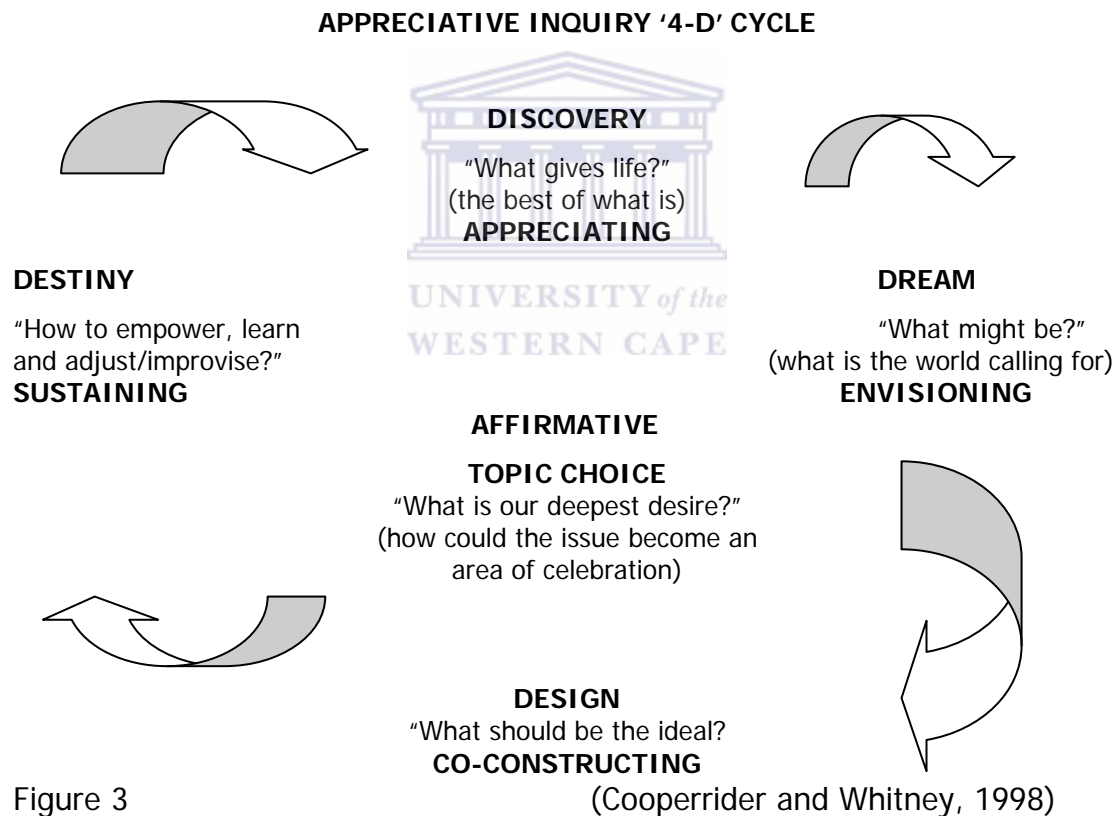
Interpretative research generally attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. It differs from positivist and critical research with regards to the underlying philosophical assumptions. Positivists generally assume that reality is objectively given and can be described by measurable properties which are independent of the observer (researcher) and his or her instruments. Positivist research attempts to test theory, in an attempt to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. Critical researchers on the other hand, assume that social reality is historically constituted and that it is produced and reproduced by people. In critical research, which is seen as social critique, here the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are uncovered.

After the completion of data collecting process, data was transcribed. In the case of interviews, similarities of response across interviews and recurring themes and critical points were examined, because the identification of concerns of interviewees is important.

Although an interpretative approach has been followed, I intend moving to the critical approach because emancipation is one of the objectives of my study. A critical approach is useful in this regard since it should help to eliminate the causes of alienation and domination in its various forms i.e. socially, culturally and politically. In the next paragraph, I discuss Appreciative Inquiry as an appropriate strategy to navigate us through this process.

Appreciative inquiry

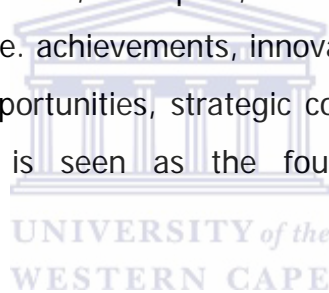
Appreciative inquiry (AI) according to Cooperrider and Whitney (1998) entails the "... cooperative search for the best in people, their organisations, and the world around them." It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to enhance positive potential. I see AI as part of an interpretive approach because it creates a process of interrelated steps, as data is interpreted to inform the next step. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an 'unconditional positive question' often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people. The diagram below (figure 3) represents the appreciative inquiry cycle.



In AI, intervention gives way to imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiralling diagnosis there is discovery, dream and design. There is an interesting link between this method of inquiry and an interpretive approach. It assumes that every living system has untapped, rich, and inspiring accounts of the positive. If one links this to any change agenda, changes never thought possible are 'suddenly and democratically mobilized'.

It is a fact that every organisation has a positive core that holds elements like achievements, technical assets, product strength, positive emotions, best business practices, financial assets, organisational wisdom, visions of possibility, core competencies, etc. AI is a vehicle for relating to the transformational power of this core by enabling every strength, innovation, achievement, imaginative story, hope, positive tradition, passion and dream to systematic inquiry. In other words it renders the elements of the positive core that keeps the organisation vibrant.

For the purposes of my study, the value of AI lies in its search or systematic discovery of what gives 'life' to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. The positive change core i.e. achievements, innovations, high point moments, strengths, lived values, opportunities, strategic competencies, stories, etc. is taken as a whole and is seen as the foundation for organisational development.



I deem AI an effective tool to improve the conditions of learning and teaching and in creating a solid base for continuous development of key performance areas in a learning organisation.

3.2.5. Research Design: Case study

The case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit (Handel, 1991; Runyan, 1982; Yin, 1994). A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2004).

It investigates multiple variables and the interaction of the unit with its context is an important part of the investigation. Case studies with a 'thick description' take multiple perspectives into consideration. It is an attempt to

understand the impact of complex social systems on the subjects' points of view and behaviours.

The unit of study in this research can be classified as a study of events, roles and relationships. It focuses on a specific event: a research project and the roles of learners and educators and the relationships between all the participants as they interact in this research process. The relationships that emerged from the study include learner-teacher, learner-learner, teacher-teacher and group-community relationships. The study provided an opportunity for both learners and educators to interact with one another and the community on a different level. Since some degree of inter-dependency existed to complete the project, the different group members assumed particular roles and responsibilities; ultimately this determined the positive outcomes of the project.

3.3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS (see Appendices A, B and C)

My data was obtained in the form of questionnaires, observations and interviews. Triangulation refers to the use of different data collection methods. In this way one attempts to strengthen the validity of data collected (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:5). Babbie and Mouton (2002:275) concur when they state: "Triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research". Both semi-structured and open-ended designs were used for interview schedules and questionnaires as commonly used in qualitative research to gain relevant data. This type of design allows the respondent the opportunity to add more information and it does not restrict dialogue. The observation schedule was semi-structured and allowed space for recording observations both inside and outside the classroom.

The instruments were used to gain optimal information from my participants. Advice from my colleagues and supervisor was requested after designing the interview schedules and questionnaires, to see whether the content covered was relevant and sufficient. My recording methods included the use of field

notes and a camera. The main themes used to elicit the relevant information are: attitudes, classroom practice, approach to the project and human rights issues (the right to shelter, education, a safe and healthy environment, etc.).

These themes were the focus of the questions in both the interview schedules and questionnaires as well as for observations. They link with the research aims with regard to exploring to what extent research and creative response projects could assist in creating a culture of teaching, learning and values, how educators could enhance their classroom practice by employing different strategies for learning, and the impact of these strategies on learner participation and attitudes.

3.4. SAMPLING

In an ideal world qualitative investigation would be based on grounded theory, which is normally associated with substantial samples. However, because of resource constraints, it was more practical to sample respondents purposively for qualitative data capture. Respondents were chosen because they have particular features that enabled detailed exploration of the research objectives.

The kind of purposive sampling used in this study is criterion purposive sampling, since it focuses on Grade 12 Geography educators and learners. Other types include 'snowballing' (people with the characteristics of interest identify people they know with those characteristics), intensity, opportunistic and convenience sampling.

Grade 12 Geography learners were selected from class lists provided by the two educators. In total the Grade 12 group consisted of 90 Geography learners. The interview process would have taken too long if I chose to have interviews with all the learners. Since this would have impacted negatively on the learners' teaching time, only five learners were randomly selected for interviews and another five for questionnaires.

3.5. ACCESS

Access was negotiated with the Western Cape Education Department, the principal and the two Grade 12 Geography teachers and learners concerned (see Appendix D). A meeting was arranged with all the participants a week before the start of the study to explain the purpose of the study, to clarify the ethical issues and to set the time frame for the research study and follow-up meetings. The meeting was held at the school and an agenda was supplied before the meeting to inform the participants.

The agenda included discussions around the starting and ending date of the study, logistical matters such as the venue for interviews, timeframes for observations, sampling, roles and responsibilities, etc. Minutes of the meeting were recorded for reference purposes. Educators' responses were: "We are very excited to be selected for a study of this nature and will assist in any way possible". This was a great encouragement.

The role of the researcher and participants was clarified and the educators were requested to supply the Grade 12 class with information in order to arrange the timetable for the interviews. Learners were informed about the process in class groups and they were also allowed to ask questions to have a better understanding of what the study entailed and how it would benefit them. After consulting with all the participants, the process proceeded as planned.

3.6. ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues are addressed in my ethics statement (refer to Appendix E) and include matters such as confidentiality of information obtained from learners and teachers, ensuring the rights and welfare of my participants, the protection of identities, and interests of learners and teachers. Since the research project involved learners and teachers, it was important to establish relationships of trust. I ensured the participants that the information shared would be confidential and their anonymity will be protected. They were also

reassured that the purpose of the study was not to implicate anyone, but purely for the development of Geography. The use of different data recording methods was discussed and negotiated and all participants were comfortable with the selected recording instruments.

Chapter 4, which follows, entails the presentation and analysis of data and includes an introduction, the process of data collection, the data analysis itself and a discussion on the responses of participants to the questions in the interview schedules and questionnaires as well as data gained through observations.



Chapter 4

PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF DATA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The data collection process was conducted at a secondary school in Eerste River in the Western Cape. Ninety Grade 12 Geography learners and two educators participated in the study. Data were collected while their normal curricular programme was in progress.

The aim of the study was to investigate how Geography can enhance a culture of teaching, learning and values. As a Geography educator, this investigation allowed me to gain some insight into possible ways of enhancing learner interest and participation in the activities presented by the educator. Since the teaching and learning process includes activities within the constraints of the traditional classroom and outside the classroom, I deemed it useful to gain the perceptions of learners and educators of how they experienced this process. In order to improve our educational outcomes, we need to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of our practice. The research project created an ideal opportunity for the educators involved to do this needs assessment.

Access was negotiated with the Western Cape Education Department and the participants at the school as already referred to in Chapter One (see par 1.7) and Chapter Three (see par 3.5).

4.2. THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

4.2.1 Background to the process

The study was conducted in July 2005 at the start of the third term. During this period the Grade 12 Geography learners adopted an exciting project,

aimed at making the section that they were covering in the syllabus under 'Settlement Geography', more educational and meaningful by means of an informal settlement research project. In the FET Geography curriculum, urban and rural settlements are studied as part of the 'People and Places' section and focuses on factors influencing the origin and development of these two main categories of settlements. It includes settlement patterns, pull and push factors, population needs and how human activity impacts on the environment, consequences of urbanisation and rural depopulation, etc. The study therefore linked well with the section on 'People and Places' and created valuable and relevant experiences to make the LOs and ASs of this section obtainable.

The ASs, which could be illustrated by learners in this section, are:

- LO3, AS1 - To apply skills and knowledge to a range of phenomena, issues and challenges at a local and global scale.
- LO3, AS2 - To identify different values and attitudes held by individuals and groups associated with processes, spatial patterns, and human-environment interactions on a local, continental and global scale (DoE, 2003: 18-23).

The integration of other subjects like Business Studies (LO2) and Life Orientation (LO2) was significant since both linked well with the outcomes addressed in the research project. Business Studies LO2 deals with business ventures as the learner should identify and research viable business opportunities and explore these and related issues through the creation of an achievable business venture. Life Orientation LO2 states: "the learner demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practice responsible citizenship, and to enhance social justice and environmentally sustainable living" (DoE, 2003:20).

The first phase of the of the project was to investigate the factors impacting on urbanisation with the spotlight on housing shortages caused by population influx into urban areas. To gain a better perspective of life in an informal settlement, an excursion to Khayelitsha on the Cape Flats was organised and learners gained tremendous insight with regard to life in an informal settlement. The learners had to associate the theory covered in the classroom

with the real-life situation as they experienced it on the excursion. The learners had to observe the existence and distribution of services e.g. housing, infrastructure (roads, railways, water supply, and electricity), schools, libraries, clinics, etc.). They had to take this into account for the construction of their own informal settlement.

The purpose of this visit was to familiarise learners with the harsh conditions in an informal settlement e.g. lack of sanitation, limited space, poor infrastructure, unemployment, social problems, etc. They also focussed on visiting different sites that represent the various sectors of social and economic activity. This included visits to shacks, a hospitality business and a day care facility. After this, they returned to the school and the second phase of the project was to construct shacks on the school premises resulting in their own informal settlement.

The entire Grade 12 learners and two educators were involved in the research project. This research study was conducted while the whole project unfolded and therefore the data collected was valuable for my study. Interviews were conducted with learners and educators in order to produce in depth information and detail not only on the project, but also on specific classroom issues, e.g.: What are learners' opinion about Geography? What teaching style do they find most appropriate? How often are human rights and values issues addressed?, etc. The semi-structured interviews received a high response rate because it was pre-arranged and scheduled for the convenience of the participants with regard to time and venue. Five Grade 12 learners were selected randomly from the four Grade 12 classes by using class lists and the only two educators involved in the project were interviewed. For the purposes of the analysis of data and to abide by the principle of confidentiality or anonymity, the researcher refers to **L₁ - L₅** for interview responses by learners and **E₁** and **E₂** for the educator responses. Learner responses from questionnaires are referred to as **R₁ - R₅**.

The researcher organised the data in tabular form in order to look across all responses so that consistencies and differences could be identified. The five

step approach to analysing and interpreting narrative data as suggested by Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003:1 – 2) i.e.:

1. Getting to know the data;
2. Focus the analysis;
3. Categorise the information;
4. Identify patterns; and
5. Look for connections and interpretations.

The depth of the information gained in the interviews guided the study to important insights since it created an opportunity to access the participants' priorities, opinions and ideas. During the interviews, the participants had an opportunity to expand on and clarify their views and to identify critical factors. In addition, it offered flexibility in prospects to look into, to develop or to change the line of enquiry. The direct contact with the interviewee allowed data to be checked for accuracy and relevance. The interviews were a positive experience due to the personal element and interviewees talked about their ideas and experiences spontaneously.

The interviews, questionnaires and observations were used for triangulation purposes. Questions included the reason for taking part in the project, the level of interest to the project, learner perceptions to human rights issues, what knowledge and skills were learnt from the experience, etc.

4.2.2 Biographical data of interviewees and questionnaire respondents

Three of the five learners who were interviewed were male and two were female. All the learners were between 17 and 20 years old. The respondents of the questionnaires were also three males and two females, three were aged between 17 and 18 and two were 19 and 20 respectively. One learner was black and four coloured. Both educators were female and coloured, between the ages of 30 and 40 years.

4.3. PRESENTATION OF DATA

In the following paragraphs the findings of the interviews, questionnaires and observations are discussed.

4.3.1. Interviews (see Appendices A and B)

Interviews with the learners were conducted at an agreed time during the school day. The interviews were conducted in the Guidance interview room, which provided a quiet and private space. This environment was conducive for the interview process. The researcher and interviewees were seated comfortably so that eye contact and other observations could be made, without being intrusive. The researcher made the preliminary introductions and provided a brief outline of the research. The consent of the interviewees was affirmed once more and they were assured of their anonymity.

All interviewees confirmed that their primary language is English and therefore all interviews were conducted in English.

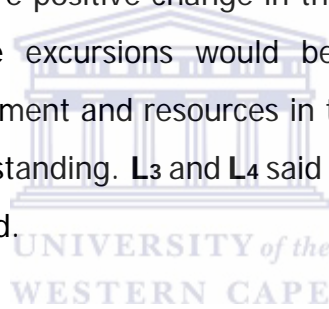
4.3.2 Responses to interviews

4.3.2.1. Learners' responses to interviews

In the first question, learners were probed about their reason for selecting Geography. **L1** said she wanted to know what goes on in other countries and she would like to travel the world. **L2** said she enjoyed the subject and learnt a lot from it. **L3** and his friends made a joint decision to choose the subject. **L4** stated that Geography has been her favourite subject since primary school. **L5** said she understood the subject content much better than the other subjects.

The second question dealt with their current attitude towards Geography. All respondents were positive and referred to the valuable knowledge gained through the subject. **L5** had the following response, "I can't wait to go to the Geography classroom".

Question 3 probed their level of understanding and the responses varied from “I understand fairly well” (L₁) to “If I don’t understand something, I ask for further explanation”(L₃). They were also probed to give reasons for their answer in Question 4. L₁ – L₅ said teaching style was the reason for their level of understanding. The teaching style is adapted to suit all learners’ needs e.g. visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The educator facilitates a process where an inquiry approach is adopted by formulating questions before the content is taught. In question 6 interviewees were asked whether anything could be done to affect change. L₁ and L₂ thought that if there were more resources available, it would improve the conditions of learning. L₃ said, “We should focus on our lesson when it’s taught”, while L₄ and L₅ had no response. In Question 6 the researcher wanted to know whether anything else could be done to affect an even more positive change in the level of understanding. L₁ and L₃ replied that more excursions would be helpful while L₂ and L₄ suggested that more equipment and resources in the classroom would further improve the level of understanding. L₃ and L₄ said that the contact sessions or periods must be lengthened.



In Question 7 learners were probed about the section which they least enjoy. L₁, L₂ and L₃ said they least enjoy Geomorphology because they found it too challenging. L₄ and L₅'s answers corresponded; they said that they enjoyed all sections of Geography. Question 8 referred to their most memorable experience and all interviewees deemed the settlement project the most memorable.

In Questions 9 and 10 learners’ opinions about the contribution and educational value of the project were asked about and all said that it was significant. L₁ said that everybody participated; L₂ said he found it interesting and “... it improved my understanding”. L₃ said that they enjoyed every moment of the project and L₅ said that “a lot was learnt”. L₅ referred to the field trip to Khayelitsha and elaborated that it was much more interesting than sitting in a classroom.

The answers of all interviewees corresponded in Question 11 that dealt with how learners responded when the project was introduced. Generally, the learners were very excited about the project and saw it as a 'welcome and fresh angle to learning' as stated by L₃.

Question 12 dealt with learners' perceptions of human rights issues and all interviewees agreed that it was important that human rights issues were integrated in the curriculum. L₃ was of the opinion that; "... the school should play a part in emphasising its importance" and L₄ said, "... in many homes in our community parents do not have time to address human rights issues efficiently". With regard to the question, How often human rights issues are dealt with in the classroom?, all interviewees agreed that the educators referred to it regularly. Question 14 received a response from only one learner, namely L₅ who was of the opinion that this type of research should be done more regularly at their school since "... it makes us feel that our inputs are valued".

4.3.2.2. Educators' responses to interviews

The educator interviews were similarly structured but included much more detail with regard to the subject, their presentation of it and important aspects with regards to the project.

Question 1 and 2 referred to their motivation for teaching the subject and current attitude towards the subject respectively. E₁ replied that the enthusiasm and energy of her educator was inspirational and influenced her to become a Geography teacher. She said that she enjoyed teaching the subject. E₂ said she has found Geography a fascinating subject due to the interesting content covered.

With regard to Question 3 and 4 pertaining to learner progress and reasons for poor performance, both educators admitted that the conditions of learning were not always conducive to teaching and learning. E₂ mentioned barriers to learning e.g. social problems, learning, reading and numeracy deficiencies,

which have a significant impact on some learners. Both agreed that generally the progress was satisfactory, although more could be done to improve the progress of learners. **E1** referred to other factors like large class sizes, high absenteeism and incorrect study methods as barriers to learning.

Question 5 challenged the educators with possible strategies to support progress. **E1** and **E2** mentioned strategies varying from rewards to learning support from the EMDC. Both also referred to raising learner interest by using appropriate strategies. Both educators' answers to Question 6 corresponded. They both find the 'People and Places' section more enjoyable, because most learners found this section interesting.

Question 7 probed their response as to the purpose of the project. **E1** responded that the project initially started as a means to "evoke learner participation" and to increase their interest in Settlement Geography. **E2** said that she wanted to explore ways of making "the content more meaningful and interesting to learners" and also referred to the infusion of human rights, entrepreneurship and integration of the LOs of the other subjects in the curriculum.

Questions 8 and 9 dealt with the learners' responses and the contribution of the project. Both agreed that the learners' responses to the project were very positive, more than expected (**E1**). The contribution of the project with regard to academic relevance was overwhelmingly positive according to both educators.

The next question referred to their preferred methods of instruction. **E1** said she uses a combination of techniques "with due consideration to different learning styles of learners". She also preferred using modern technology e.g. videos, and PowerPoint presentations. She also gave learners the opportunity to present their own work. **E2** used different techniques as far as possible; she added, "There are challenges due to a lack of resources". She found that group work was an effective technique in the senior classes, but one has to plan well and facilitate the process by guiding discussions.

Both educators are graduates with a post graduate diploma in education (Question 12 & 13). **E1** has thirteen years of teaching experience while **E2** has six years of experience. They both had Geography as a major in the BA degree and are therefore suitably qualified to teach Geography.

Questions 14 and 15, probed past matric pass rates, which was answered by **E1** only since **E2** had her first FET classes in 2005. **E1** said, "Over the past few years my matric results were seldom less than 100%". She employed the following strategies to ensure a good pass rate: extensive revision programme, effective planning, motivational sessions, extra classes for matrics and a matric camp to name a few. Question 16 referred to the efficiency of the strategies and both educators found these strategies very effective.

Question 17 probed the educators about their opinion of educational research. **E1** said that she read a lot to stay abreast with developments in her subject and that the "value of education research is often taken for granted". **E2** also referred to the importance of research to assist educators to raise the achievement levels of their learners. With regard to Question 18, both said that this was the first research that they were involved in.

With regard to human rights and values (Question 19) both educators agreed that it was very important that the school ensures its inclusion in all its activities. In their answers they exhibited a good understanding of human rights and values issues. **E1** responded, "... especially in a context of social deprivation the school has to take the lead in ensuring the holistic development of its learners." **E2** said that human rights "should be incorporated in every lesson".

Question 20 referred to the strategies for a culture of teaching and learning. Both educators referred to the school's code of conduct that addressed particular disciplinary issues and procedures in cases of transgressions. **E2** also referred to motivational speakers who were invited to address learners.

E₁ said, "... effective learning and teaching can only take place in a healthy educational environment".

4.3.3. Questionnaires (see Appendix C)

The questionnaires were disseminated to the selected learners during their administration session in their home classes and were handed back to the educators after completion. The questionnaires had to be translated into Afrikaans because two learners' mother tongue was Afrikaans.

The questionnaires were less time consuming than the interviews and much easier to arrange. The respondents had an easier task with questionnaires, since they simply selected the answers in front of them rather than to generate their own ideas. The response rate to the questionnaires was 100% since all selected respondents submitted their questionnaires. Five questionnaires were issued and five were returned. The aim of the questionnaire was to investigate how they experienced spending a night in a shack and the questions therefore centred on this. For the purpose of anonymity the respondents are referred to as **R₁** to **R₅**.

Responses to questionnaires

Question 1: What was your motivation for taking part in this project?

R₁ said the idea of visiting a squatter camp sounded strange at first, but then he realised how interesting this project could become. **R₂** had his doubts at the beginning, but it sounded interesting. **R₄** said it sounded a bit too far-fetched, but he wanted to know more about life in squatter camps. **R₅** was attracted to the possibility of building her own shack. She said, "It sounded fascinating".

Question 2: What was the learners' general response to the project?

All five respondents rated the learners' response to the project high. **R₁** said, "the project was hot on the agenda" since their teacher introduced the

project. **R2**, **R3** and **R4** said that learners were excited about the project and wanted to be involved.

Question 3: What was the reaction of your parents and the broader community?

R1 responded that his parents found it interesting and that his dad arranged with his manager to offer transport for the building of the shacks. The surrounding community was notified about the project and they also came to see what the shacks looked like. **R2** said his parents offered old furniture to furnish their shack and they were also excited about the project. He said members of the community were worried when they saw the shacks, "but they were very impressed when they found out that it was a project". **R3's** parents helped by donating ingredients for the food they planned to sell. **R4's** dad helped him with the design of the shack and his mom made soup. "The community supported the project when they were informed about it", he said. **R5's** parents did not like the idea of sleeping in the shacks, but they agreed when the teacher ensured them that security was organised. They received quite a few things to furnish the shack.

Question 4: What was it like to sleep in a shack?

R1 said it was fun but also a bit scary. **R2** practically slept with one eye open he said one feels so exposed. **R3** was of the opinion that the shack was much smaller than the houses they were used to; it was a strange experience. **R4** said he genuinely did not close an eye, "... the slightest movement startled me". **R5's** group made their shack very comfortable. She said they enjoyed the experience, but did not get much sleep. "We were too excited", she said.

Question 5: What did you learn from this experience?

R1 said, "I learnt that teamwork is important, because we all had to play our part in constructing and furnishing the shacks". **R2** agreed that he learnt to appreciate what he has and he now has greater respect for people who make it in life despite of their circumstances. **R3** wrote about the importance of caring for the homeless and that he now has a greater appreciation for those who work in squatter camps to improve the lives of people. **R4** said when he

gets into his bed at night he often thinks of those who has to battle for survival in squatter camps. **R5** said she is more sensitive to the needs of others after this experience and she believes that everybody has the right to decent housing.

Question 6: How did the project contribute towards your opinion about Geography learning experiences?

R1 always liked Geography, but have a deeper appreciation for the value of the subject to make learners aware of other important stuff like human rights issues. **R2** said, "I am excited about the work in the Geography classroom, because it deals with more than just transferring content". **R3** responded that the project has opened his eyes to the realities in informal settlements and he would like to become involved in other projects to empower people. Geography has given him this opportunity. According to **R4** the most important lesson he has learnt is that we all have a responsibility towards one another and that we should not only look at our own needs. **R5** said the Geography classroom experience can be very significant and empowering, if the teacher is innovative and understands the needs of learners, the sky is the limit.

4.3.4 Observations (see Appendix D)

The observations done were focussed on four aspects with regard to the project and included i) the situation in the classroom; ii) the planning of the two phases and interaction between the role-players; and iii) the launch of the informal settlement as an entrepreneurial strategy. The observation schedule included aspects like: activity, location, and learner and educator actions.

4.3.4.1 Observations in the classroom

Observation 1

Activity: Presentation of Lesson (1)

Location: Classroom

Theme: Impact of Urbanisation

LO 2: Geographical knowledge and understanding

ASs: Describe processes and associated spatial patterns in places and regions.

Learners: Learners listened attentively while the educator presented a lesson on the impact of urbanisation. Some were making notes, while the educator talked. A learner put up his hand and asked: "Why do we still have informal settlements, if the government promises to provide housing?" He was of the opinion that people should not be allowed to put up more shacks. "If they want to move to the city, they must first have a house", he commented. Another learner did not agree and said: "You cannot determine where people should stay; it's their choice to live wherever they choose to; the government should provide sufficient housing."

Educator: The educator's response was that: "Unfortunately the pace of influx to cities is so high, the government cannot keep up with providing houses quickly enough". She continued, "The government should rather find ways to improve the conditions of living in the rural areas. Solutions to the challenges in urban areas however are not simple." The educator facilitated a group work activity on the impact of urbanisation after the presentation. The class layout was practical for this type of activity. Desks were arranged in groups of six and the educator moved freely while discussions took place.

Learners participated freely as they worked through their assignment and after the group work session one representative per group reported on the findings of the group. Each group worked on a particular scenario and had to identify challenges and solutions. The educator commended all the groups for their presentations. She then ended the session.

Observation 2

Activity: Presentation of lesson (2)

Location: Classroom

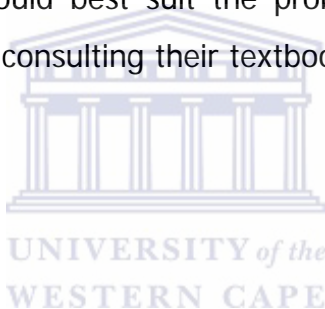
Theme: Urban Problems

LO 1: Geographical skills and techniques

AS: Analyse information obtained from a variety of sources.

Educator: The educator started by asking learners to use the newspaper articles on urban problems that they had to bring along to identify three problems in cities. This was an individual exercise and learners who could not find any articles or who had forgotten were provided with articles by the educator.

Learners: The learners had ten minutes to scan through the article and highlight as many problems as they could. While they were reading through the articles, some shared some interesting facts with the class. In general, the learners seemed to enjoy this exercise. After the identification of urban problems, they were tasked to group the problems into different categories. The educator provided possible categories on a flip chart. These included: housing, infrastructure, crime, education, services, etc. and learners had to choose a category that would best suit the problems they have identified. They ended the session by consulting their textbooks to complete work set on 'Urbanisation'.



Observation 3

Activity: Planning of project

Location: Classroom and school grounds

LO 1: Geographical skills and techniques

ASs: Identify issues and formulate questions for an investigation.

Acquire information from fieldwork and a variety of other sources.

The planning session started in the classrooms where learners were divided into their project groups. They were quite excited when someone suggested that each team should select a name that would describe the team.

As they planned the two phases with the guidance of the educator, they drew on the knowledge and skills acquired in other subjects like Business Studies and Life Orientation. Not all the learners studied Business studies, but those who did, assisted in drawing up a business plan and creating ideas for the entrepreneurial strategy.

The planning of the second phase (construction of informal settlement) was done at the front section of the school grounds. This site was selected for security purposes and because it is visible to the public. The groups decided on the layout of the settlement. A u-shape layout was selected as the most practical. Each group selected a stand for their shack. When two groups wanted the same stand, the educator tossed a coin to determine who would have it.

Observation 4

Activity: Construction of shacks and interaction between role players

Location: Site of informal settlement

LO 3: Application

AS: Apply skills and knowledge to a range of phenomena, issues and challenges at local and national scales.

Learners: The school ground was a hub of activity as trucks pulled up with timber and corrugated sheeting. Cars were also used to transport essential requirements for the project. Parents assisted by supplying old furniture, crockery and cutlery, linen and utensils for cooking. The supplies were stored in a storeroom while the shacks were put together. The boys, who offered woodwork, skilfully hammered away on their shacks and assisted the girl groups who could not manage to erect the shacks on their own. Some of the fathers also joined after work and helped to ensure a sturdy shack. Educators were on duty while the learners raced to complete the shacks. The atmosphere was electric and learners could not wait to see the shacks completed. While they were busy they sang along to some cheerful tunes coming from a car parked close by. They seemed energetic and in high spirits and one could see the pride on their faces as they made progress with their shacks. A cheerful group of spectators made jokes about some shacks. One said: "Sorry, I wouldn't risk sleeping in that thing. What's (sic) the chances of getting out in one piece?" The rest laughed uncontrollably, but the owner carried on with the task at hand as if his life depended on it.

By the time the sun set, the educators had to call a halt to the day's work. Some learners remarked that they would like to finish, but it had been a long day and they could have ended up hurting themselves in the dark. Their dedication to this project was evident in the focused way they participated and the educators were very pleased with their progress.

Observation 5

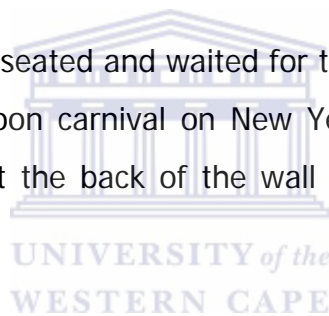
Activity: Launch of project

Location: School Hall

LO 3: Application

AS: Examine values and attitudes held by individuals and groups associated with processes, spatial patterns and human-environment interactions at local and national scales.

All the invited guests were seated and waited for the opening, when we heard music sounding like the coon carnival on New Year's Day. A group dressed like the coons appeared at the back of the wall and danced and sang their way through the audience.



The main spokesperson (Grade 12 learner) of the project then approached the podium and welcomed everybody present. She then did an introductory speech, followed by a PowerPoint presentation of the different phases complete with photographs and video clips. The audience listened attentively as the story unfolded and was amazed by what they heard.

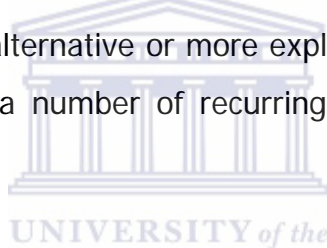
After the presentation, we were invited to the informal settlement to view the shacks and to take part in the festivities. The shacks looked amazing, completely furnished with beds, chairs and whatever learners could find to draw attention.

They sold different dishes prepared on the site and while we roamed through the shacks, the fires were kept alive for more food to be prepared as the need arose. Everybody who attended enjoyed themselves with the nice food on offer and the shacks caused quite a lot of excitement. The feedback from

parents, learners, educators, and officials from the Department of Education included: "I have never seen anything like this." "This is a true reflection of what can be achieved when we apply our minds." "The team spirit is contagious, we also want to do something this exciting", a learner remarked. "It was a remarkable experience to be part of this initiative, we should do it again."

4.4 EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Qualitative data offers descriptions and theories that are grounded in reality. The data collected was rooted in the conditions that existed in the natural setting which often represents a complex social situation, yet it does justice to the intricacies of social life. The data therefore provided a richness and detail to the data generated. Qualitative data draws on the interpretive skills of the researcher and allows for alternative or more explanations to be valid. During the transcription of data, a number of recurring themes and similarities of responses were identified.



The questions in both the interview schedules and questionnaires focussed on learners' and educators' general perceptions of the subject and how they experienced the learning and teaching processes in the Geography curriculum. The three main categories of questions were:

- Attitudes towards the subject;
- Classroom practice, teaching styles and progress levels; and
- A perception of the project and human rights and values issues.

The idea was to find out how they were involved in as well as their ideas on how this project could enhance values acquisition through the Geography curriculum. The next few paragraphs offer an elaboration of the data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires.

4.4.1. Data gathered from questionnaires and interviews

4.4.1.1. Data from learners' responses

The responses reflected a general positive attitude towards Geography. It was clear that most respondents enjoyed their classroom experiences and the interest levels were high. One respondent said "It's been my favourite subject since primary school". Another said: "I can't wait to get to the Geography classroom". Their responses indicated an appreciation for the value of Geography as it unlocks an unfamiliar world beyond the borders of their own local community and their day-to-day experiences there. One respondent said that: "I get to learn about things I never knew about and it's exciting". Others also indicated that it is interesting to learn about life in other places, highlighting their interest in cultural aspects of foreign places and countries. Others indicated that they selected Geography for purely academic reasons in pursuit of future careers.

All the respondents indicated that they understood the content of the subject well, mostly due to the teaching style of their educators. One referred to the fact that she understood the subject content "better than other subjects". 'Settlement Geography' was indicated as the most interesting and enjoyable section of Geography by all of the respondents based on an interest in cultural and human rights and values issues. They had a stronger sense of the real needs experienced in informal settlements and wanted to make a positive contribution to the betterment of the lives of people less fortunate than them. Furthermore, the cultural exchanges that took place were rewarding and developmental. In their responses, the learners also indicated that there was a high level of motivation on the part of educators, leading to an increased interest in the subject and higher achievement levels.

The learners portrayed a good sense of how this project promoted human rights and values. One of the respondents said, "If we are not taught about this at school, where are we going to learn about it?" This statement proves that some learners did not have much exposure to the topic of human rights

and values at home. The school according to them has a significant role in making learners aware of human rights issues e.g. respecting diversity, gender equity and the right to a decent shelter among others. Learners in their responses also affirmed what educators said about incorporating human rights and values issues in their lessons as often as possible.

Most learners viewed excursions beneficial, since it brought them in contact with the physical environment and they were given the opportunity to experience phenomena personally, resulting in a better understanding of the theory. Most learners also seemed excited about moving beyond the classroom to experience learning in a different way and getting into contact with real situations. According to them this played an effective part in a better level of understanding and interest in their Geography content which sometimes seemed abstract in the classroom, due to a lack of understanding.

4.4.1.2. Data from educators' responses

The educators' responses were similarly positive and corresponded with the learners' responses with regard to their interest in the subject and the enjoyment of the teaching and learning experiences. They highlighted the importance of encouraging learner participation and were confident that these types of projects would raise awareness about human rights and values among learners. According to them, the positive response of the learners to the project was encouraging and it motivated them to embark on similar initiatives to evoke learner participation. The data gained from the educators also indicated their sensitivity to the needs of the learners. They employed different teaching styles and approaches to accommodate the different learning styles of their learners.

The educators attributed the persistent low interest and achievement levels of some learners to the lack of parent involvement and the harsh social conditions they were exposed to. These social evils that spilled over to the school community manifested itself in drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, alcohol deficiency syndrome and violence. Another contributing factor that

was highlighted is a generally low self-esteem among these learners, resulting in high absenteeism and dropout rates.

Both educators emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for learners to exhibit and explore their capabilities and they expressed their satisfaction with the co-operation achieved with the project. The project evoked the interest of the entire school community – it was an exciting yet educational deviation from the normal approach to teaching and learning. The integration of Business Economics was also significant, since learners could apply relevant business skills achieved through the subject to enhance their work in the project e.g. entrepreneurship, designing a business plan and drawing up a budget.

With regard to values acquisition and human rights advocacy, both interviewees referred to the important role of the school in this process. Interviewee one said that learners were not sufficiently exposed to human rights issues at home. Due to the dynamics of a working class society, most parents leave home early in the morning and arrive home late at night. Quality family time seems to be a rare commodity in many homes. Interviewee two said that it is crucial in ensuring the holistic development of learners. Both interviewees said that there was no official collective strategy for this employed by the school currently. Individual educators followed their own strategies to ensure values acquisition e.g. instilling pride, respect, honesty, empathy, and democratic values like freedom to voice your opinion, equal opportunity, etc. However in certain subjects it forms part of the formal curriculum; these include Geography, History and Life Orientation.

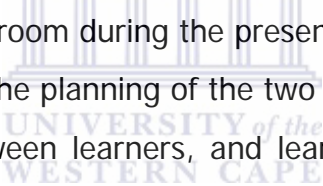
The purpose of the project included human rights issues to a considerable extent. Interviewee one said that the fact that learners themselves came up with the idea of adopting a day care centre in Khayelitsha proved that considerable progress was achieved with regard to human rights and values issues. Interviewee two said that they attempted to instil values whenever the opportunity arose. She also alluded to the fact that learners were willing to

take ownership of a project if their voices were heard and if they were part of the planning from the on-set.

4.4.2. Data gathered from observations

Observations created an opportunity to collect relevant and significant data to investigate what strategies could be employed to enhance a culture of teaching, learning and values while requiring little technical support. Since this method did not interfere with the natural setting, the school or more specifically the classroom, it stood a better chance to retain the spontaneity of the setting. It allowed me to note down different interactions and to gain rich insights into the process. Observations were completed for two lessons, during the informal settlement construction and during the launch of the informal settlement.

The observations included:

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- i) Situation in the classroom during the presentation of lessons;
 - ii) Discussions around the planning of the two phases of the project;
 - iii) The interaction between learners, and learners and educators during the construction of the informal settlement; and
 - iv) The launch of the informal settlement as an entrepreneurial strategy.

Economic and Management Sciences and Business Studies were integrated to achieve this since these subjects offer learners the knowledge and skills needed to ensure sound business practices and principles. Life Orientation was also incorporated since it directly addresses human rights issues.

4.4.2.1 Observations in the classroom during lessons

During the observations in the classroom, it was evident that learners were enjoying the lessons. They participated freely and did not hesitate to ask questions when they wanted more clarity on a particular topic. During the lesson observed in the first educator's classroom, LO 2 which deals with knowledge and understanding of processes and spatial patterns and AS 3

(Explore possible responses to issues and challenges arising from human and environment interactions in a local and national context) were addressed.

The educator presented an introduction of about twenty minutes and supplied relevant information about the impact of urbanisation under the topic settlement issues. Learners were then instructed to take part in group work activities. Each group was provided with a different scenario and had to identify the challenges and present solutions or recommendations. It was evident that the interest levels were high, because vibrant discussions were held during group work sessions and the report back session was an indication that they met the outcome for this section.

The observation in the second educator's classroom was similarly interesting due to the high level of interest and discussions during group work. The same LO and AS was dealt with and learners participated freely after a PowerPoint presentation by the educator on urban settlement issues. Learners asked questions if they were not sure about the instructions and the educator facilitated the process in a professional way.

4.4.2.2 Planning of the two phases

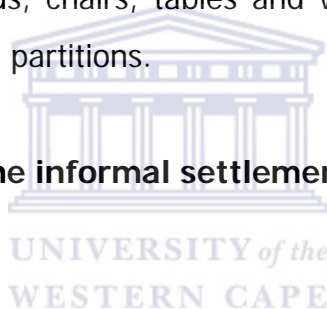
It was interesting to hear how they planned the two phases of the project with the assistance and guidance of the educators. A strategic plan was drawn up which indicated the various steps for action and timeframes were attached to each step. The plan also indicated who would be responsible for the execution of the different action steps and the resources required. A sketch map was drawn of the informal settlement, which indicated the location of each shack. In this exercise, learners demonstrated LO 3, AS 1 and applied skills and knowledge to a range of phenomena, issues and challenges at a local and national scale.

4.4.2.3 Construction of the shacks

The learners were truly excited when they reported that their parents agreed to help them with the supplies for constructing and furnishing the shacks and other supplies for their stay over. The interaction between learners and learners and between learners and educators was phenomenal. A spirit of dedicated teamwork prevailed throughout the construction phase. Learners worked till late afternoon to see their end product, which resembled the shacks that they visited during the excursion to Khayelitsha.

It was amazing to see how they used their skills to construct the shacks and the teamwork was excellent. Everybody, boys and girls alike, were working extremely hard to ensure a sturdy shack. The interiors were decorated suitably complete with beds, chairs, tables and wash basins for the dishes. Even curtains were used as partitions.

4.4.2.4 Launch of the informal settlement as entrepreneurial strategy



The launch consisted of a presentation in the school hall and a tour of the informal settlement. The presentation was facilitated by the learners and included a PowerPoint presentation outlining the different phases of the project. A group who participated in the Cape Carnival ('Kaapse Klopse') performed and set a great atmosphere, enjoyed by all the invited guests.

The learners portrayed their entrepreneurial skills by selling goods to the school community and other people from the surrounding community who came to view their shacks. These included the sale of traditional dishes like tripe and trotters, 'vetkoek', curry and rice, etc. The proceeds of this fundraising initiative were handed to the day care centre as well as the toys that they collected during the toy drive. The dedication of all the learners to ensure the success of the project was inspiring and it proved that with a little creativity and the right attitude incredible results can be achieved. The interest and response shown by both the learners at the school and the

community was remarkable. Other learners who were not part of the project supported the Grade 12 learners by offering assistance. The community supported their food sales.

During informal discussions with learners, they said that they were overwhelmed by the response to their project; they did not expect so much interest because they thought they were the only ones excited about the project. They felt proud of what they have achieved through the project with regard to their own prejudices. They have become more aware of life in an informal settlement and had a change in their perceptions towards other people who live in different and trying circumstances. They also felt a greater sense of responsibility towards others less fortunate than themselves. They had a greater appreciation for their educators for going the extra mile in making their school work more interesting and enjoyable. They agreed that this type of initiative had enormous value in the way they perceived human rights and values issues and how the work that they studied in the classroom contributed to their understanding thereof.

It was clear to me as researcher that the project was an experience these learners would never forget. Its educational value was incalculable and learners were so proud of what they have accomplished through the project. They spoke about it with confidence and their morale was very high. For me, this was an example of best practice both on the part of learners and educators and it could encourage other educators to undertake similar endeavours to enhance their classroom practice.

In the next chapter, which is the final chapter, conclusions and recommendations are offered to assist classroom practitioners in creating enabling conditions for teaching and learning in an environment where human rights and values are fostered and appreciated. These recommendations are universal and could be applied in any school context. However, one should always consider that school contexts differ and therefore they could be adapted according to specific needs of the school, learners and individual educators involved.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

There have been significant changes in our education system to ensure that the quality of education in post apartheid South Africa is improved in a way that benefits all learners irrespective of their historical background. Educational innovation and transformation can have a powerful impact on the quality of education schools provide for their learners.

Curriculum reform has been one of the most essential elements in the education change process over the past sixteen years. One truth that remains is the vast inequalities that exist between schools. Social, economic and political factors are the primary causes. However, effective school leadership and classroom practices can ameliorate the negative impact of inequality on student achievement. Learners are differently talented and schools should strive to develop different talents and help all learners to realise their potential. It is the privileged task of educators to assist learners to expand their horizons of what is possible for them to achieve. Strategies to improve learner achievement and raise awareness of human rights and values issues should therefore be high on the agenda of all schools.

Effective policies and practices can create the desired conditions to ensure that learner development is sustained and that they are equipped with the required knowledge and skills to make a significant contribution to society. Hence schools should provide a high quality of education. In my opinion, schools should focus on their ability to raise the achievement level of their learners and reduce the negative impact of socio-economic and other background factors on the learner. In this regard, the provincial government has shown how serious they are in ensuring the improved quality of education in the Western Cape by introducing the Human Capital Development Strategy (Provincial Government of the western Cape, 2006).

The task to ensure the development of this strategy was allocated to the Western Cape Education Department. The purpose of the strategy is to address the human resource needs of the Western Cape. The main goals of the strategy is to be achieved through a “deliberate confluence of education programmes and economic opportunity” by enabling more of our youth to participate in and contribute to the province’s socio-economic development.

Geography educators must take the responsibility to prepare learners through curriculum provision as global citizens who are capable of negotiating edifying and linguistic differences, respectful of others and aware of their interdependence between each other. The definition of success in any subject must be expanded to include more than learners’ academic performance; basic life skills and human rights issues are paramount in developing the whole child and creates the foundation for successful education.

This research study has shown that strategies employed by educators can have a positive impact on learners if the latter are part of the planning and feel that their input is valued. With the right approach, educators can evoke participation and cooperation, consequently causing a turn-around in learner interest.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1. Positive correlation between creative methods of educators and learner achievement

The research findings have shown a positive correlation between the willingness of educators to use more creative methods to enhance learning and positive learner response and achievement. The responses from both learners and educators corresponded with regard to the impact of the research project on enhancing a culture of teaching, learning and values in the Geography classroom. Both educators and learners alike, in their responses, referred to human rights issues like voice, respect, empathy, etc.

One particular example that stood out was the learners' decision to adopt the day-care centre they visited and the toy and clothes drive they arranged for the learners.

5.2.2. Learner interest

From the research it is evident that including them from the outset and allowing them to contribute in a meaningful way can evoke learner interest. Learners were prepared to sacrifice extra time to complete the project because they took ownership of the idea. They felt that their opinion and ideas counted and this motivated them to make it a success.

5.2.3. Meeting the challenges of poor learner achievement

Evidently, the educators involved are serious about meeting the challenges of poor learner interest and achievement and proved that by allowing space for creativity and innovation in their classroom practice, the learning outcomes can be reached. They have recognised a need, employed a particular strategy and were surprised by the outcome, because much more than was initially planned was achieved through the project. The project was one example of the merits of appreciative enquiry.

The educator, through applying an innovative idea, has sparked the interest of learners and witnessed the project unfold beyond the initial idea of a project coupled with a fieldwork excursion. It began an adventure of discovery – learners found this approach to learning much more enlightening and attractive than the conventional approach where they are expected to absorb information presented in a lesson.

5.2.4. Value of effective planning

Planning is a complex endeavour that requires much time and strategic thinking. The value of effective planning was evident in the outcomes of this project, both with regard to educator and learner development.

The educators invested their time and energy in planning, and therefore showed good progress as this impacted positively on both educators' and learners' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities to ensure that their educational outcomes were met.

5.2.5. Putting the learners' needs first

Personalising Learning, as cited in a joint publication by the INET (International Networking for Educational Transformation) and the Specialist Schools Trust (June 2005), "... demands that every aspect of teaching and support is designed around a learners' needs" and is aimed at setting a general context for making learning more personalised than in the past. The concept generally has to do with an old idea that practitioners have taken seriously i.e. designing their teaching to meet the needs of their learners. The research project of the FET learners and educators is a model example of Personalising Learning. There is recognition for the fact that practitioners are not always successful in meeting the needs of all learners, however in this case one could confidently conclude that all learners were involved and their attitudes towards the subject have been affected positively as the data illustrates.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1. The Role of the Educator

As alluded to in Chapter Two, the educator as manager of the curriculum in the classroom should play a cardinal role in the development of his/her learners and should ensure the positive impact of learning experiences. These roles as stipulated in the Norms and Standards for Educators have always been assumed to be the key performance indicators of our work as educators, be it consciously or unconsciously. It might seem a mouth full now that it has been documented and transformed into policy, but no educator would disagree that in pre-democratic times, our jobs involved anything different to

this. The only point of contention is to what extent all educators are equipped to fulfil these roles efficiently. There are many factors that impact on the competences of educators and this would ultimately determine their ability to perform well in each role.

The educator's role of instilling values is important for holistic development. Every opportunity should be utilised to do this. Since teachers have the closest contact with their learners, they are in the most favourable position to do this. In a report from their research findings, Portues, *et al.* (2000:7) state that while the challenges are momentous, the large majority of educators (81%) believe that they have the power to influence learners' values in their classrooms.

The two educators who participated in my study evidently have developed the competences, which consist of foundational, practical and reflexive competences as set out in the Norms and Standards for Educators to a great extent. They understood the importance of their role as facilitators of learning and enablers of holistic learner development. A need for change in classroom practice and attitudes towards learning should be identified, as the FET educators did, and then appropriate strategies to address such needs should be employed. In as far as classroom practice is concerned; curriculum delivery should be complimented by assessment for learning and of learning. Assessment for learning with the assistance of the ASs should be done to gauge what still needs to be done to assist learners to develop the competencies required to reach the LOs.

Assessment for Geography learners at all levels should focus on learners demonstrating that they understand and can practice specific knowledge and skills and here again ASs are important. Criteria-referenced assessment is a preferable way to allow learners to demonstrate proof of their performance. The criteria provided for assessment are clarified and act as a guide to the learner, contrary to norm referenced assessment which does not take account of individual needs and development of learners.

5.3.2 Correspondence between the types of learning experiences, the LOs and forms of assessment

Furthermore, there needs to be a correspondence between the types of learning experiences in the Geography curriculum, the LOs and the forms of assessment. These elements form part of a process, which starts with setting LOs, selecting a topic (content) and finding a vehicle to assess whether the outcome can be demonstrated. There should also be scope for other applied forms of assessment e.g. field study reports and projects so that learners can prove to their educator that they have understood and can practice the relevant knowledge, skills and values.

5.3.3. Cognitive skills development

Learners should also be required to use a wide range of cognitive skills like identification, analysis, description, etc. in their assessment tasks to show if they have any depth of understanding the relevant geographical concepts. Different types of assessment tasks should also develop the skills to interpret challenging questions and give learners opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in creative ways.

5.3.4. Effective planning

Planning is an essential element in the teaching and learning process. Failing to plan impacts negatively on teaching and learning, which holds true in any education context. In our transformed curriculum, planning should be one of the educator's core activities. Lack of planning or poor planning has been a huge contributor to the poor achievement levels of some schools.

As curriculum adviser, I have written numerous reports on the progress made with the implementation of the NCS and often schools failed to show any progress due to inadequate planning.

Educators are given clear guidelines to planning in the NCS since it gives a description of each of the three phases of planning. It refers to the learning programme, which is distinctively divided into:

- A macro (longterm) planning model, the subject framework; which includes the LOs, content framework and ASs for each grade in the phase,
- A meso (medium term) plan, the work schedule; which includes a work plan and time frame for all activities for each term, more detailed than the subject framework and,
- A micro (short term) plan, the lesson plan; which zooms into particular topics to be covered over a shorter period of time and is even more detailed than the work schedule. Here all activities - the lesson presentation, assessment and other activities - are clearly defined.

Planning should focus on the key aspects that impact on effective teaching and learning. In an outcomes-based approach these incorporate LOs, content, ASs, assessment for learning (formative), assessment of learning (summative), feedback on progress, barriers to learning, intervention, enrichment, time frames and learning and teaching support material.

It is clear that educators should have a lucid perception of each of these aspects in order to enhance the outcomes of teaching and learning.

I refer to the FET project where the key questions for effective planning should include:

- What are we planning? (Research Project)
- Who are our stakeholders? Who needs to be involved in planning to achieve our goal to improve learner interest and performance?
- What should the purpose be? Why is it important at this time? What would not happen if it is not successful? What do we intend to happen and what other opportunities are there that we can also include as we plan our research study?
- What are our goals and desired results for this study?

- Are they specific, realistic and achievable?
- What process must we follow to achieve our desired results?
- What's our plan to manage our own motivation and that of others?
- How will we celebrate progress and success with all involved?

In the context of the research this was important since it gave direction with regard to the different phases of the project and it ensured a focussed approach.

5.3.5. Personalising learning

The challenge is whether more could be done to meet the needs of all learners. Personalised learning is a process that reinforces some current practices in schools and classrooms, demands modifications to some of these practices, and entails creating some new practices. It should therefore be a catalyst for effective teaching and learning. This process, if seen from a business world perspective, may be treated as a description called customisation, e.g. as Hargreaves (2005:12) writes:

... in the last century there was a transformative change from Henry Ford's readiness to offer his customers a car of any colour, as long as it was black, to the revolution in the automobile industry created by the Japanese, whose success relied on putting the customer first and recognising that innovation should be user-driven, the better to meet their needs and aspirations.

Personalising learning, as Hargreaves (2005:12) elaborates, "... means taking a novel angle on current practice and on innovation" e.g. trying out a new idea like the research project. It is not reducible to the idea that class sizes should be much smaller and that if there were a very low educator-learner ratio, personalisation would automatically be realised. He says it is more productive to look at personalisation from different but complementary perspectives afforded by a series of gateways as identified in Chapter two.

Today, much more value should be placed on the inputs and feedback of learners in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Since learners are the clients, it is generally accepted that they should be included in the dialogue of what works for them and what hinders their progress.

Learners should contribute significantly to improving their conditions of learning by voicing their opinions in the classroom. However, the educator is the enabler of an atmosphere of open and responsible dialogue in his/her classroom.

Learning to learn should be the most important aspect of schooling, but it is perhaps one of the most neglected. Educators should stop rushing to get through the syllabus and spend sufficient time to ascertain whether learners understand the content and have learnt the required knowledge or skill during the particular lesson.

It is often the case that learning problems, due to the lack of proper evaluation and assessment in the earlier stages of schooling, are discovered later when more independent and challenging tasks have to be completed. Hence, learners battle to meet the LOs as a result of barriers to learning and the inability to apply suitable learning methods. Educators should therefore create an environment that addresses the needs of all learners. The pace at which all learners learn should also be offered due consideration.

In addition, the new curriculum requires more challenging learning processes with the emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking. Many learners find it difficult to read texts and calculating and solving mathematical problems becomes a real challenge due to barriers in numeracy and literacy. This also is reflected in many learners' inability to develop geographical skills e.g. calculation of distance on maps, determining true bearing or grid referencing. These types of barriers should be identified early in a child's developmental stages given the proper learning conditions and effective evaluation and assessment strategies. Once it has been identified, the relevant support should be offered to enable such learners to improve their performance.

Educators should therefore be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet these challenges, which are more common in societies where poverty is rife and parents themselves are either illiterate or have lower levels of education. Schools should ensure the professional development of their staff to enable them to meet these challenges on a continuous basis. However, too often development programmes are selected without prior consultation with the broader staff or without performing an audit to determine the needs of individual educators. A whole school audit should be used as a valuable tool to determine shortcomings and also to gauge progress or the efficiency of interventions.

5.3.6. Information technology

Over the past two decades, information technology has increasingly become a core component of intervention strategies in education. Today it is possible for learners from different parts of the world to communicate via education discussion forums on an array of educational programmes. Electronic learning (e-learning) is also growing in popularity as learners discover how easy it has become to access information via the Internet and other electronic sources like the television, radio, satellite connections e.g. DSTV, CD and DVD ROM's, etc.

New technologies are invented daily, which improves communication and opens up new ways of executing important tasks. Computers are seen today as an essential tool for teaching and learning and its popularity is growing even in schools that are under-resourced. It was encouraging to see the learners use a PowerPoint presentation to explain the purpose and outcomes of their project to the school community. This should be done more often.

5.3.7 The educator mentor and coach

Another important aspect in schooling is the educator's role of mentor and coach. Mentoring and coaching necessitate a good knowledge and skills base in order to ensure a valuable effect on the development of learners.

Without the appropriate knowledge and skills, educators cannot fulfil this very important responsibility towards their learners. Staff development programmes should therefore include the development of mentoring and coaching skills to ensure that sufficient support is offered to learners.

Holistic development should be ensured by the curriculum offered in schools. One also needs to bear in mind that different learners have different talents and interests and the curriculum should accommodate these. Personalising is a process of discovery for both teachers and learners as was the case with the research project. The general advice is to think big but start small. The vision of where you want to be should be the starting point and this should be embedded in the culture and routine life of the classroom. However, a small, dedicated group of willing volunteers should start on a limited agenda of innovation, like in the case of the FET project group. These become the foundation on which more challenging developments can be built and to draw other colleagues into the venture.



5.3.8. Learner roles and responsibility

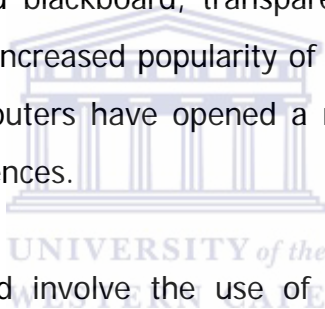
Learners are the main beneficiaries of schooling; they should therefore be susceptible for the contribution of education to their holistic development. This includes all learning experiences i.e. acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. They have to be prepared not only to be the recipients of this knowledge, skills and values, but also to apply it in effective practice and to engage with it critically through debate and dialogue.

The educator is the facilitator of learning. However, the learner has to do his/her part and take responsibility by cooperating and executing requested tasks timeously. Participating in classroom activities and being attentive during lessons puts the learner in a more favourable position to meet their learning outcomes.

Learners should take the responsibility of ensuring that their voices are heard if they want to improve their conditions of learning or if their needs are not met. They have a lot to contribute in this regard to ensure that their best interests are served and to ensure that schools fulfil their core purpose.

5.3.9. Innovation in the Geography classroom

In pursuit of improving the achievement of learners, educators should try different strategies and methods to enhance learning and teaching even if it means trying out something that we doubt will have an impact or that we're not comfortable with. It might suit the learners' learning style more than the one that we are comfortable with. Innovation in the Geography classroom has come a long way since the invention of learning support material, such as the conventional chalk and blackboard, transparencies, overhead projectors and the use of maps. The increased popularity of information technology, the electronic media and computers have opened a new world of possibility for Geography learning experiences.



Innovative methods should involve the use of modern technology in the classroom to ensure that learner interest and motivation is attained. It also encourages the learners to become more creative and increases their participation and a more co-operative spirit is established. Modern technology draws learners of all ages; it fascinates them and they want to be involved as they seek to explore new inventions.

5.3.9.1. Information technology in the Geography classroom

Computer applications like PowerPoint and Media Player have become more popular and should be used as an effective tool for teaching and learning. These methods offer exciting ways of sharing information or geographical lesson content that can be portrayed with visual effects e.g. settlement patterns, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, air circulation, cloud formation, precipitation, tropical cyclones, etc.

The learner should literally experience these geographic phenomena as animations or video clips by using a data projector. In this way, learner interest is increased, they are more attentive and it enhances learning. This way of learning should also evoke greater learner participation in classroom activities and discussions, increasing the interactions between the educator and learners. At any point, the presentation could be paused to give more detailed explanations or to answer questions to clarify issues. This should also be used as an effective tool for revision exercises after the completion of a lesson. Today learners can also access a wide range of geographical data by making use of geographic information systems (GIS), available on their school networks. GIS is one of the new components of geographical skills and techniques in the NCS (FET) and can be used in a wide range of applications. It is an exciting way of engaging with practical work and applying the theory covered in other sections of the curriculum.

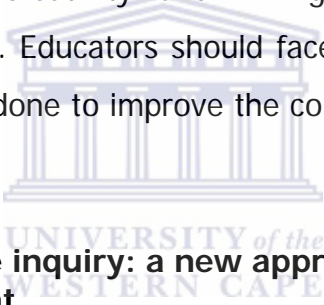
5.3.9.2. Interventions for enhancing learning

Learning requires five inputs: the learner's capacity and motivation to learn, the subject to be learned, an educator who knows the subject and can teach it, time for learning, and tools for teaching and learning (World Bank, 1995). Capacity for learning according to the World Bank can be increased through high-quality educational programmes throughout the learner's school life. Such programmes are even more effective when combined with efforts to improve the physical environment in the school. The enhancement of the proper conditions for learning should be a priority in all schools.

The curriculum determines the subjects to be taught and offers general guidance on the frequency and duration of instruction. The amount of actual time dedicated to learning is always related to achievement. Factors that impede learner achievement in our context often are related to fewer hours of classroom instruction, a shorter official school year, unscheduled school closings, learner and educator absences, and various disruptions. School management should ensure that other school activities do not interfere with instructional time and should plan adequately to avoid such interruptions.

Instructional materials are paramount in creating effective conditions for learning. Developments in technology have opened a wide range of possibilities that go beyond the conventional blackboard, chalk, and textbooks. The ideal modern classroom should be furnished with a computer, inter-active whiteboard, data projector, television, etc. A few years ago this might have sounded far-fetched. Today however, there are schools privileged to offer this to their learners and educators. Having all these essential elements in place, however, does not guarantee that actual learning takes place. There are many factors that need to be considered if we want to ensure learning i.e. barriers to learning, ineffective learning techniques and lack of diversity in teaching styles among others.

It seems that now more than ever a change to more positive outcomes for education relies on the creativity and willingness of the educator to experiment with new ideas. Educators should face this challenge and ensure that everything possible is done to improve the conditions for learning in their classroom.



5.3.10. Appreciative inquiry: a new approach to whole school improvement

Teaching and learning approaches in Geography should centre on a collegial relationship between learners and educators as researchers investigating spatial issues at different scales. Local and virtual fieldwork investigations enhance learning and makes obscure content more meaningful and understandable.

The relevance of geographical investigations, as shown through this Geography project, can be demonstrated through cooperative community action studies in which the educator and learners work with the local community. In this way learners can contribute meaningfully to social and environmental issues and the learning process is collaborative, discursive, community based and continually renewing knowledge and ideas. It also creates an opportunity for learners and educators to reflect on their learning and understanding with regard to values and human rights issues.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study only involved one school, two Grade 12 educators and ten Grade 12 learners and therefore the data obtained could not be utilised as a generalisation for current practices in the Geography classroom.

A comparative study involving more schools should provide a greater sense of what happens in the Geography classroom in different contexts and how educators meet the challenges of the new curriculum.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the strategies recommended should provide a premise for developing a more focused approach to enhancing teaching, learning and values and will hopefully serve to sensitize educators on the possibilities for improving the conditions of learning in the classroom in particular and the school in general.

The Settlement project employed by the educators, as a strategy to improve learner interest and achievement in the Geography classroom, is one example of how the content studied in a subject can become more relevant and interesting. It captured the learners' attention, since it offered something new and exciting while taking the learning experience beyond the conventional classroom. The project created an opportunity to reflect on their shortcomings and to tap on the potential of the learners.

The findings show that through collaboration and a shared vision, educators and learners can make a meaningful difference. The educators and learners who participated in the project demonstrated a firm commitment to improve their conditions of teaching and learning. The positive outcome of this project should act as a catalyst for future projects across the curriculum and grades. The approach to teaching and learning employed here could be relevant in any subject or grade, something worth exploring by more educators.

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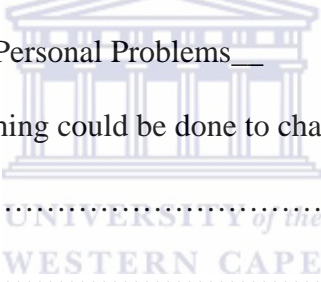
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APPENDIX A

Learner Interview Schedule

1. What motivated you to choose Geography as a subject?
.....
.....
2. How do you feel about the subject at this point in time?
.....
.....
3. How would you describe how you feel generally during a Geography lesson?
(in terms of level of understanding)
Understand Well___ Understand fairly Well___ Don't Understand at all___
4. What would you say is the reason for this?
Teaching Style___ Personal Problems___ Other factors___
5. Do you think that anything could be done to change this situation?
.....
.....

6. Which section of Geography do you enjoy most and why?
.....
.....
7. Which section do you least enjoy and why?
.....
.....
8. What was your most memorable experience in the Geography classroom?
.....
.....
9. Do you think the 'squatter camp' project will contribute positively to learner interest and participation in Geography? Explain why you think so.
.....

.....
.....

10. What could you learn from this project?

.....
.....

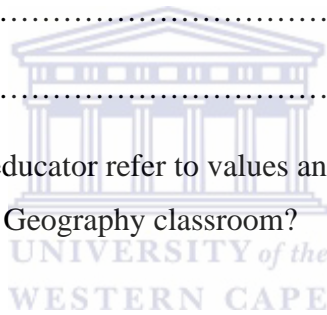
11. How did learners respond when the educator introduced the project?

.....
.....

12. Do you think that it is important for educators to emphasise values and human rights in the classroom?

.....
.....

13. How often does your educator refer to values and human rights during your contact sessions in the Geography classroom?



.....

14. Is there anything else you would like to contribute to this interview?

.....
.....

Thanks for your valuable contribution!

8. How did your learners respond to this?

9. Have they made some contribution towards the way the project will be approached and what the focus should be?



10. Do you employ different methods of instruction in your classroom?

11. Which type of instructional method do your learners find most suitable?

OHP__ Group work__ Lecture style__ Other__

Please explain:

12. How many years of experience do you have in teaching this subject field?

13. Do you have formal training in the subject? What are your qualifications?

14. What was the average pass rate for the Geography classes that you teach for the most recent exam?

15. What strategies do you employ to improve the progress of your learners?

16. How would you rate the level of efficiency of these strategies?

Very efficient__ Fairly efficient__ Inefficient__

17. What is your opinion of educational research?



18. Have you ever been involved in a study of this nature?

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

19. How important do you rate values acquisition and human rights advocacy in the learning process? Explain.

20. What strategies do educators employ collectively to enhance the culture of learning and teaching in your school?

21. Do you have anything else to contribute to this interview?

Thank you for your valuable contribution.



APPENDIX C

Learner Questionnaires

1. What was your motivation for taking part in this project?

2. What was the learners general response to the project? How would you rate their response: 1. High 2. Average 3. Low

3. Elaborate on your answer in question 2.



4. What was the reaction of your parents and the broader community?

5. What was it like to sleep in a shack?

6. What did you learn from this experience?


7. How did it contribute towards your opinion about Geography learning experiences?

Thank you for your valuable contribution!



APPENDIX D

Observation Schedule

Activity:	Date:	Location:
Aspects Identified	Learners	Educator
	 UNIVERSITY <i>of the</i> WESTERN CAPE	

APPENDIX E

Letter to Negotiate Access

The Superintendent General
Western Cape Education Department
9th Floor
Grand Central Building
Cape Town
8000

Dear Sir

This letter serves to request access to
Secondary School for the purpose of conducting a research study.

The study is planned for July 2005 and focuses on enhancing a culture of teaching, learning and values in the Geography classroom. Only FET educators and learners will form part of this study and it will not impact on instruction time, because the research will be done while the planned curricular programme is in progress. A meeting will be scheduled with the role-players involved to determine the appropriate timeframe for my visits.

I can assure that the research study would be of great educational value and would encourage educators to explore new ways of improving the conditions of teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Yours faithfully

.....

V.V.F. Stuurman