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Memory and Pedagogy
Special Issue

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Editorial

Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan, Claudia Mitchell and Daisy Pillay

This special edition of the *Journal of Education* draws on a contemporary concern with memory and pedagogy in South Africa – as we see, for example, in a themed issue of *Perspectives in Education* that examines how different "post-conflict societies", including South Africa, engage with "the past as a pedagogical problem" (Jansen and Weldon, 2009, pp.107–108). At the same time, this edition builds on recent international work done in an invitational workshop on *Productive Memory & Social Action* held in 2008 (see http://iirc.mcgill.ca/workshop/) and in an edited book titled *Memory and Pedagogy* (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnutt, 2011b), to consider how working with memory – as phenomenon and method – might contribute to pedagogic practice and research in the South African context.

Memory-work has its roots in a process of collaborative inquiry on female sexualisation undertaken by a group of feminist women in Germany (see Haug, 1987) and then further developed and elaborated by researchers such as Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, and Benton (1992), Onyx and Small (2001), and Lapadat, Black, Clark, Gremm, Karanja, Mieke and Quinlan (2010). Memory-work is underpinned by the premise that memories play a fundamental role in current individual and collective patterns of thought and action and that we can consciously work with memory to become aware of and intervene creatively in these patterns (Pithouse, 2007). In particular, memory-work is aimed at revealing and gaining insight into the social meanings of and influences on memory. As Crawford *et al*. (1992, p.49), explain:

> What is of interest is not why person X' s father did such and such but why fathers do such things. The aim is to uncover the social meanings embodied by the [memories] and to uncover the processes whereby the meanings – both then and now – are arrived at.

Hence, the fundamental purpose of memory-work is to facilitate a heightened consciousness of how social forces and practices, such as gender, race and class, affect human experiences and understandings and of how individuals and groups can take action in response to these social forces and practices in ways that can make a qualitative difference to the present and the future.

Memory-work has been taken up in relation to pedagogy by Mitchell and Weber (1998,1999), who conducted pioneering research on the role of memory-work in teacher development in the 1990s. They worked with Canadian schoolteachers to examine how their memories of childhood and schooling had influenced their own teaching and how they might engage critically and creatively with these memories as "[tools] for change" (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnutt, 2011a, p.2). Subsequently, Samaras, Hicks, and Berger (2004) drew on a range of largely North American studies to explore how schoolteachers' and teacher educators' memory-work – conceptualised as 'personal history self-study' – could facilitate personal and professional development. And, in Australia, Austin and Hickey's (2007) use of autoethnographic memory-work with student teachers and practising teachers highlighted its potential "for the development of critically reflexive and genuinely emancipatory professional practice, particularly, in Education" (p.377).

Memory-work is also emerging as a significant pedagogic and research method in the South African Education field. Shortly after the first democratic elections in South Africa, Mitchell (2004) conducted a series of workshops with beginning teachers, in which drawings produced by school children in response to the prompt 'let every child learn' invoked the teachers' memories of schooling. And Samuel (2003) conducted participatory autobiographical research with pre-service English teachers to explore the how their memories of the learning and teaching of English might influence their future development as English teachers. Then, Pithouse's doctoral study (2007, 2011) demonstrated how memory-work with practising teachers in Honours and Masters courses facilitated their intellectual and emotional engagement with the learning process. Moving beyond the domain of teacher education, De Beer (2009), a lecturer in the arts and design field, explored how her own autoethnographic memory-work had transformed her pedagogic practice with students.

What this growing body of scholarship in *educational* memory-work points to are significant interconnections between memory-work and educators' reflexive study of their own pedagogic selves and practices. Mitchell and Weber have conceptualised this as "a pedagogy of reinvention" – "a process of going back over something in different ways and with new perspectives, of studying one's own experience with insight and awareness of the present for purposed of acting on the future" (1999, p.8). This work also speaks to the

idea of what they term "beyond nostalgia", and they call for ways to work with memory that go beyond what bell hooks refers to as "useless longing" (cited in Mitchell and Weber, 1999, p.5), turning practices of working with memory into what might be described as "future oriented remembering" (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002, p.54).

In this themed issue, we see a range of ways that scholars are currently taking up a 'pedagogy of reinvention' in diverse South African contexts. In so doing, they respond to what Hampl writes about memory in relation to the self:

> There may be no more pressing intellectual need in our culture than for people to become sophisticated about the function of memory. The political implications of the loss of memory are obvious. The authority of memory is a personal confirmation of self-hood.
> (Hampl, 1996, p.211)

The articles in the issue call attention to both the educational significance and challenges of working with memory and self in relation to pedagogy in South Africa. They also illustrate a variety of innovative and creative approaches to educational memory-work.

Pattman's article describes and examines an experience of involving postgraduate Sociology students in a process of collective memory-work through choosing, writing and telling a story in class relating to their youth or childhoods. Hemson's article problematises a process of young student leaders 'speaking' their early memories of violence in a group context. Hobden, a Mathematics teacher educator, explores the pedagogic value of asking future teachers to remember their experiences with Mathematics. Maistry, working in the field of Business Studies teacher education, focuses not only on the pedagogic significance of triggering his students' memories, but also on the pedagogic value of bringing his own memories into play. This move towards the remembered self of the author/researcher/educator takes us to Singh's article, where she uses the method of a self-interview to explore the evolution of her own identity and practice as a Drama Education lecturer. Tobias, a schoolteacher, also employs memory-work to inquire into his past learning experiences, with the aim of deepening his understanding of his current teaching and of potential for future change. Finally, Masinga offers an account of the methodological possibilities and challenges of using memory-work in a participatory study of teachers as sexuality educators – in which she is both researcher and participant.

The articles in this issue offer a sense of 'future oriented remembering' in relation to how memory can be used productively in diverse educational contexts in South Africa, and, as such, these articles contribute to raising new questions about memory-work and self-reflexive study of pedagogic practice. How, for example, might 'a pedagogy of reinvention' be integrated across disciplines in Higher Education institutions in South Africa? Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) – an NRF-funded inter-institutional, trans-disciplinary project involving researchers from the Durban University of Technology, Walter Sisulu University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal – is currently addressing some of the complexities of carrying out this work (see Pithouse-Morgan, Rawlinson, Pillay, Chisanga and Timm, 2012). Taken as a whole, what the articles in this special issue draw attention to is the pedagogic significance of bringing forward the past, as painful as it might be. This is aptly expressed by a South African teacher, reflecting on his experience of memory-work (in Pithouse, 2007, p.118):

> There is a saying that a nation without history is a lost nation. So, as much as there may be certain things that we might not want to remember, those things could be important to remedy the situation we are in at the present moment and to lead us to the future.

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Investigating student memories of cross racial mixing in a postgraduate sociology class in a South African university

Rob Pattman

Abstract

The paper reports on a pedagogic and research initiative which I introduced in a postgraduate sociology course on Youth, Childhood and Gendered Identities which I taught at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This involved students participating in Collective Memory Work: choosing, writing and telling a story in class relating to their youth or childhoods (from their early to very recent years) about themes which were selected by the class, and then collectively and critically reflecting on these. The aim of this initiative was to explore and compare constructions and experiences of youth and childhood of different members of the group. The paper focuses on stories students told on one of the selected themes: cross racial mixing. Four stories are selected for closer thematic and narrative analysis. The paper reports on the collective discussions which were held after all the stories had been read, and the kinds of questions raised in these about the shape, form and content of the different stories and the nature and status of memories.

Introduction

The paper reports on a pedagogic and research initiative which I introduced in a postgraduate sociology course on Youth, Childhood and Gendered Identities which I taught at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The course drew on contemporary research in Southern Africa and the West on young people's understandings and constructions of their social worlds, and the significance of gender and its intersections with sexuality, age, race and class as sources of identification and dimensions of power. The first part of the course addressed this research and its findings, as well as the 'young person centred' (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) methods these researchers developed in order to engage in empathetic and critical ways with young people, in various contexts. In the second part of the course the students explored their own childhoods through Collective Memory Work, (Haug, Andresen, Brunz-Elfferding, Hauser, Lang, Laudan, *et al.,* 1999; Crawford, Kippax, Onyx,

Gault and Benton, 1992). It is this initiative and the students' engagement with this which is the subject of this paper.

Collective memory work, as the name implies, takes place in a group, and involves individuals choosing, writing and then telling a story about their past in relation to an agreed theme and then discussing *these* collectively. In the

postgraduate course the class constituted the group, and the students chose to tell stories from early to very recent years on the following themes – toys and games, cross racial mixing, family conflict and first boyfriends/girlfriends. The aim was to explore and compare, through engaging in Collective Memory Work, constructions and experiences of youth and childhood of different members of the group with a particular focus on how variables such as gender, race, age and class influence and shape this.

The article examines stories students told on one of the selected themes: cross racial mixing. Most of the stories students choose to tell on this theme were set when they were at high school or were memories from their more recent past. This, as elaborated later, reflected their increasing participation in multiracial institutions and communities. Opportunities for mixing with people of other races only occurred, for some students, notably lower class black students who went to the more poorly resourced schools, in their later school years or when they got to university. In stories of cross racial mixing in multiracial schools and university frequent references were made to 'culture' and the pursuit of shared cultural interests which were seen to cut across race. So closely tied were 'race' and 'culture' that in some of the stories cultural differences seemed to signify presumed race differences.

For these students, as for many young people growing up in the post-apartheid era race was a familiar marker of identity, which tended to inhibit engagement with others constructed as racially or culturally different. Drawing on these stories and the collective discussions which they provoked, I argue that Collective Memory Work, as practised in this course, opened up opportunities for students from different social and cultural backgrounds (mediated in complex ways by race and class) to engage with and learn about each other, and encouraged critical thinking about race, gender, sexuality, power and processes of identity construction.

Theoretical influences on the nature of the course, student research and the analysis

In the first part of the course students were introduced to forms of research influenced by poststructuralist versions of feminism which, in line with what James and Prout (1997) refer to as the *New Sociology of Childhood*, seek to engage with people as active agents, and to explore processes of identity construction and negotiation in relation to gender and other variables such as

race (Thorne, 1993; Frosh *et al*., 2002; MacNaughton, 2000; Davies, 2011; Pattman and Bhana, 2009). Collective Memory Work was presented on the course as an approach to investigating youth and childhood which was 'young person centred' and countered the tendency for adults to construct their identities by forgetting childhood and projecting innocence and ignorance on children (Kehily and Montgomery, 2003; Pattman and Chege, 2003; Bhana, 2008).

The course was strongly influenced by what some writers have referred to as the 'biographical turn' in the social sciences (see Thomson, 2007), based on the view that language is not simply descriptive but constitutive of realities (Foucault, 1979), that experiences are never raw but always mediated and shaped by people's narrative accounts of these (Riessman, 1993). In line with these perspectives, we paid close attention, in the first part of the course, to the narrative accounts of young people in the interview and ethnographic research we discussed, treating these not simply as windows on a real world 'out there' but as important resources through which they forged and fashioned particular kinds of identities and relations.

Though Collective Memory Work was used on the course as a way of researching experiences of youth and childhood, the assumption that story tellers could simply step into their shoes in the recent or more distant past and recount (raw) experiences was problematised. When analysing stories produced through Collective Memory Work, students were encouraged not to see these narratives merely as photographic reflections of the past but as re-constructions of the past which in some ways tell us as much about how they present themselves now as about their past (Rosenwald and Ocheberg, 1992; Personal Narratives Group, 1989).

We were interested in how memories were influenced by contemporary concerns, and, following Nuttall and Coetzee (2005, p.1) on the construction of memories in the post-apartheid era, how "certain versions of the past get to be remembered". However, whereas Nuttall and Coetzee were concerned with people's memories of apartheid, our focus was particular university students with no living memories of apartheid, and their memories as young people growing up in the post-apartheid context.

This raises questions, we addressed in collective discussions following the reading of the stories, about how they frame these, how they present themselves (and others) and invite certain kinds of interpretations in their stories. I shall reflect on some of these questions when reviewing discussions about stories of cross racial mixing. The thematic analyses of the stories draw

on poststructuralist theories of gender and race, mentioned briefly above, which conceptualise these as relational, imbued with power, and always negotiated and enacted in relation to identities constructed as Other. Such theories, as Glenda MacNaughton (2000) argues, imply forms of 'binary analysis' which seek to 'reveal' implicit constructions of the Other in relation to which certain kinds of identifications are made. In the stories I shall be discussing, race and gender were central features of processes of identification.

Method

The postgraduate class comprised 18 students, all of whom participated in Collective Memory Work. Twelve were female and six male. Seven identified as black, one as coloured, six as Indian and four as white.[1]

The students were asked to write stories relating to the selected theme in which they featured prominently, and to try to tell these from their points of view, as they recalled these. In order to encourage this identification they were asked to write about themselves in the first person. The usual procedure however in Collective Memory Work is to write about oneself in the third person as a way of recognising and highlighting differences between oneself now and then. While writing about oneself in the first person may have encouraged a spurious sense of homogeneity across different moments in their lives, the intention of asking students to do this was to encourage empathy with the people they once were in their stories and to present them as active agents.

After writing their stories each student read them aloud in class. Opportunities were provided after the reading of each story for brief discussion mainly on points of clarification. After all the stories had been read, classes were set aside for more substantial discussions where themes emerging from the stories were identified and discussed and comparisons were drawn between the stories in terms of the emerging themes and story constructions.

Race was chosen as one of the themes for story telling because it had emerged

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[1]   These were the racial categories which the students themselves used in their stories. The term African which is sometimes used synonymously with black in contemporary South Africa and was used to construct this group under apartheid was not mentioned by students either in their stories or in the discussions. Coloureds and Indians were not subsumed under the category of black as in 'black consciousness' but treated by the students as separate categories.

as an important biographical marker when students initially introduced themselves to each other, and also because of the interest generated in one of the classes in the first part of the course which engaged with literature on young people, race, gender and schooling. This literature (which included Nadine Dolby's ethnography of a formerly white school in Durban: Dolby, 2001, and my interview research with Deevia Bhana with grade 11 learners in township, formerly white and formerly Indian schools; Pattman and Bhana, 2009, 2010) raised questions about the significance of race for different students in different schools in South Africa, and precipitated animated discussion in the group about experiencing race in and outside school. The discussion, led by students, was dominated by accounts of not mixing, or not mixing very well, with people from other races. In response to this, I suggested we make *race mixing* a specific topic for Collective Memory Work, and to write stories about mixing with people of other races in and outside school.

Ethical permission was obtained from the University to conduct research on the course using Collective Memory Work, and, before enrolling on the course, students were notified that they would have to engage in this research and that this would entail writing, telling and discussing stories about themselves on selected themes.

Students' stories of cross racial mixing

All the stories of cross racial mixing were about contexts and events which were presented as unusual, strange or surprising, though the implied norm, namely mono-racial mixing, was rarely mentioned or made explicit. Most of the stories were about cross racial mixing through *shared interests* and *heterosexual attraction*. Four of these are selected for analysis. I provide brief descriptive and analytic accounts of these. I then report on the collective discussions which were held after all the stories had been read, and the kinds of critical questions raised in these about the shape, form and content of these particular stories and the nature and status of memories.

1. Stories of cross racial mixing through shared interests

In six of the stories (three told by girls and three by boys) cultural and sporting activities and interests were presented as powerful catalysts for promoting cross racial mixing. These were stories about how, for example, shared interests in particular kinds of sport, music, dance or fashion could provide common points of identification and pull people together physically and symbolically from different races. In the stories below cross racial mixing through shared interests figured most prominently:

Ramesh's story
Ramesh writes about how playing football enabled him and other Indian boys to mix and interact with black boys in a formerly Indian high school in which, generally, 'interaction between black and Indian boys was non-existent'. He describes how playing football not only provided an opportunity to engage with black boys albeit in opposing teams, but also how it led, with time, to the formation of cross racial friendships between boys:

> These boys together with my friends and I met once a week to play a game of football. Initially the environment was that of hostility and filled with high testosterone levels. . .our meetings were based solely on competition. . . .As the year went on we began to look past the differences of skin colour. . . we began to enjoy the company of each other as well as the sportsmanship which every boy showed. . .from our meetings which were based solely on sport followed friendships and understanding but this did not mean that the competitiveness in every boy died. We began to mix our teams and include boys from the previously other teams.

When Ramesh refers to his 'friends' we know he means not only other Indians

but Indian boys; so taken for granted is this that he does not need to specify it. But intersections of race and gender are made very clear as the story progresses. For the story is about how football, constructed as a highly masculine 'testosterone' fuelled affair, impacted on black and Indian boys' racial identifications and relations. It is about how football which had initially seemed to reproduce racial oppositions and tensions in the form of hostile and conflicting assertions of masculinities became a site of racial transformation which produced points of identification between Indian and black boys and promoted all male cross racial friendships.

Reflecting at the end of his story on his participation in racially mixed football at his school, Ramesh makes a bold claim about the 'amazing' positive and 'lifelong' impact of this on him and his views about and relations with black people:

> It has taught me a great deal of respect for different people, it has taught me to be more tolerant and understanding and it has even assisted me in learning a bit of Zulu. It is truly amazing how a simple inter-action through an activity eliminates boundaries of society and unites people forever leaving a lifelong quality in a person's life

Simon's Story
Football was also mentioned in the same light by a black boy, Simon. Simon had been to a township school comprising only black learners and like Sultan indicated that his first experiences of social interaction with people from other races was at university:

> During my first year there was this Indian guy who I would always sit next to. We both liked football and we would chat about it especially after our favourite, Manchester United, had played. Outside the lecture theatre there was also a bit of mixing between the different race groups. . . For example a white guy would borrow a cigarette lighter from an Indian student. I remember one day sitting in this space and this coloured student, a girl, was playing a very nice song of house music and my friend approached her asking if she could send the song through to him via Bluetooth.

Cross racial socialising at university, as Simon spoke about this, did not seem very common or very deep; the examples he gave of these were very specific, one off, instrumental activities which went on outside the lecture theatre. However football talk did seem to provide an opportunity for developing a more longstanding relationship with an Indian boy even if this did not go beyond football talk and was confined to the lecture theatre.

Jenny's Story
Jenny spoke about her interests in the music of a group called 'Skwatta Kamp'

to which her older brother had just introduced her. She said she 'listened to it and loved it' and mentioned telling other children at school about it:

> I started telling some of the white kids in my class, they hadn't heard of them, because to them if it isn't on MTV it's not real music. Even with their lack of interest I decided to bring the CD. . . a white friend of mine took it to his car to play at break.

The implication was that white kids were her friends, though the reason presumably why she specifies their race (rather than take this for granted) was that the story was about the very contrasting reactions of black girls to her interest as a white girl in this music:

> As the CD started a group of black girls walked past, stopped and shouted to the boys' car asking where he got the CD. He told them it was mine. Next thing they start dancing, yelling, screaming, smiling, laughing and rattling off in Zulu. Then they ran to me and asked me who I got the CD from. I told them it was my brother and they said 'your white brother???' I said 'yes he's white, well according to my parents. . .'. They hugged me and smiled. . . they told me to join them for the rest of break. I did, we talked and then they said I'm one of them now and they all started to agree that Skwatta Kamp was the best new group out

In contrast to Ramesh's story there were no reflective moments in Jenny's story about engaging with people from different races and there were no allusions to ideas of learning and progression. We do not hear about her experiences (or lack of these) of cross racial mixing, her story is about the moment, but this suggests perhaps that this was an unusual and short-lived example of cross racial mixing. Indeed the unstated implication is that not mixing socially across lines of race was the norm. For why would the black girls show such surprise (and joy) when encountering Jenny listening to music which they constructed as black. In the story the black girls appeared warm but irrational, and the laughter the story provoked, when it was read in class, tended to reinforce this view.

Even though this story is about a white person enjoying music normally listened to by black people, it serves to emphasise just how powerful (musical) tastes can be as markers of race, with the black girls claiming her as 'one of them' because of their common tastes in music. Clearly the music was seen by the black girls as appealing to blacks, and, more than that, as a source of black identification. They were shocked then to find a white girl listening

to this music and also euphoric that she 'was one of them now', as if through the music she was identifying with them.

2. Stories of cross racial heterosexual mixing

Six of the stories told about cross racial mixing were with people of the opposite sex. All of these were told by women, and four featured conflicts, problems and tensions. These four stories focused on the negative reactions of others to people who were, or were assumed to be, in racially mixed, heterosexual relationships. One of these was about the story teller, a white girl, being treated, mistakenly, *as if* she was in a mixed relationship when her shocked mother discovered that one of her friends who had stayed over after a party was a black man. Another was about a rumour, started by a white girl in an Afrikaans high school that another white girl had slept with a black man, and intended to sully her 'reputation'. The other two stories were about actually being in mixed relationships, and were told by a black and an Indian woman. I have selected Reesha's (the Indian woman's) story for more detailed presentation and analysis below.

Reesha's Story
Reesha's story about her relationship with a fellow coloured boyfriend, Elton comprises three interlocking parts which read like, what William Labov (1972. p.354) refers to in his analysis of narrative structures, as "orientations, complicating actions, and resolutions/evaluations".

She begins by providing an orientation to the relationship which seems to anticipate the negative reactions of her friends, describing Elton, when she first saw him, as coloured but adding that this was not something she noticed, '*I thought he was extremely cute and sexy. He was coloured but I did not see that. All I saw was someone I liked*'. She describes her relationship as one in which she made the first move asking him out and also asking him for a kiss and him responding with some reticence.

This sets the scene for the *complicating action* or narrative core: her friends' negative reactions to her and especially her boyfriend.

> Most of my friends thought it was wrong and weird to ask him out, and they saw this as being forward and not Indian like. . . This was further exacerbated by the fact that Elton was coloured. They went on to tell me that coloured boys only want sex from girls. . .and are big players and that he will cheat on me and that I should watch out for him taking drugs and drinking all the time. All this loving advice came from my Indian friends both male and female.

In stark contrast to the way he was presented in the Orientation, Elton was constructed as a 'player', an exploitative sexual predator who would use her

and cheat on her and get drunk, simply by virtue of being coloured. Significantly she refers to this advice coming from her 'Indian friends, both male and female', with the implication, perhaps, that advice about relationships normally comes from one sex, presumably girl friends, and that her relationship with a coloured man was seen as constituting a relationship problem of a different order to the ones for which she normally sought and got advice from her (girl) friends.

The complicating action is followed by a resolution and an evaluation which reads like a 'happy ending.' She not only proves her 'Indian friends' wrong, representing her boyfriend as the very antithesis of the man they made him out to be, but also as hypocritical, as practising the very vices which they projected on to coloured people, and suffering in the ways they imagined Reesha would:

> Elton has never. . .cheated on me or forced me into sex, he was a perfect gentleman, so sweet and so shy that he would even ask my permission to hold my hand. The so called perfect Indian boyfriends and girlfriends turned out to be the regrets and nightmares of partners, while my so called hyper sexualised cheating boyfriend turned out to be the loving, patient and respectful man who gives me the world and treats me like a queen.

This story does not just describe the racist reactions of her Indian friends to her relationship; it is also a way of responding to and dealing with these, full of emotion and irony, which turns the tables and transforms and re-defines her boyfriend from the racist construction of him as 'a big player' to a gentlemanly man, sweet, shy and chivalrous. Racism takes a gendered and sexual form, in this story – stereotyping her boyfriend as a hypersexual male – and is confronted through romantic idealisation. Towards the end she writes in the language of romantic fiction, speaking as the female subject of, what Wendy Hollway (1984, p.??), refers to as, the "have-hold discourse" and describing her boyfriend, still in highly gender polarised ways, but not as a man who dominates sexually, rather a "man who gives me the world and treats me like a queen".

Drawing on memories to promote critical thinking

One of the main challenges in our Collective Memory Work was to encourage students to move beyond seeing the stories as descriptive accounts of past realities, and to focus instead on the selectivity and work of memories, what memories do, what identities they construct and affirm and how, and our

current investments in particular memories. I tried to facilitate the collective discussions we had about the stories, after they had all been read, in ways which sought to promote this kind of critical thinking, (for example working with students to formulate appropriate questions on how the stories were socially constructed and what cultural assumptions and material conditions make the stories possible). Comparisons were drawn in the discussions between the shape, form and content of the different stories and how the story tellers were positioning themselves in these, notably in terms of race and gender.

Discussing Ramesh and Simon's stories

Ramesh's story carried very explicit and 'optimistic' messages, which read like 'concluding' remarks, about his contemporary self and his attitudes to and relations with people of other races. These served to contextualise the story as part of a more general narrative of progression and self development. They were reflections on the past, which drew on this as a reference point to construct a much better version of the present. In the conclusion in Ramesh's story, playing racially mixed football at school was presented as a watershed moment in a narrative of progression from racial segregation to integration. 'Happy endings' constructing narratives of progression featured in four other stories on race mixing. Questions were raised about the popularity of these stories and the immediate and broader social contexts which might encourage the telling of these, the multi racial group in which people were participating as researchers and researched and the wider circulation of Rainbow Nation discourses of 'race and progression' in post-apartheid cultures.

These led to further questions about the absences of *current* conflicts and tensions in stories of race mixing, framed by narratives of progression. Comparisons were drawn, for example, between stories on race mixing in which conflicts and tensions, (if they featured very much) were often ironed out by the end, and stories on family conflicts (which were told in other Collective Memory Work sessions) which rarely had happy resolutions. Contemporary literature on 'race talk' in South Africa has suggested that alluding to race (in racially mixed company) is 'troubling' and therefore tends not to be done, even if it is relevant to do so (Durrheim, Mtose and Brown, 2011). Elsewhere I have argued that anxieties produced by asking questions about race limits possibilities of doing research on race and cross racial mixing at University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pattman, 2010). Drawing on this literature, questions were posed about whether narratives of progression in

stories of cross racial mixing glossed over racial divisions or tensions in the university and whether telling these stories was influenced by anxieties about talking about self and race in a multi racial group.

In Simon's story there was no narrative of progression, no moments of evaluation of the 'progress' he had made; he simply identified specific occasions where he or others he observed mixed across lines of race. Opportunities for cross racial mixing were associated with coming to university, but are presented not as a defining period in his life's trajectory, but as features of a university, which, in contrast to his school, had a multi racial student population. Simon's story invited very different readings in the discussion, on whether it represented the university positively as a place where 'races' mixed, or negatively as a place where race mixing was rare, formal and superficial.

Contemporary critical literature on masculinities and football has suggested that football is not simply a game played mainly by males, but in many cultural contexts may operate, too, as a powerful signifier of masculinity. Engaging with this literature, we discussed how playing or even (as in Simon's story) talking about football might come to be seen as *male* activities and involve various kinds of gendered negotiations and identifications. (See, for example, Frosh *et al.*, 2002 and Pattman and Bhana, 2010).

The idealisation of football, in Ramesh's story, as a vehicle for promoting cross racial friendships, was tied to celebrations of versions of masculinity (indeed Ramesh's story only made sense precisely because of the way football operates as cultural signifier of (hegemonic) versions of masculinity, and questions were raised about the significance of this memory for Ramesh in terms of how it was constructing him and his investments in these identities: a tough and physical male, an anti racist Indian, a child of the Rainbow Nation.

While Ramesh praised football for its inclusive practices with regard to race, (for 'uniting people for ever') no mention was made of its exclusionary practices with regard to gender (girls or even boys who did not participate in the 'testosterone' (Ramesh) fuelled games). Was there an assumption that gendered forms of segregation in relation to tastes and interests in football were natural whereas racial forms of segregation could be broached through activities like football which appealed to 'natural' gendered inclinations which cut across race? These questions opened up critical discussions about how people interpreted racism and sexism, and what they understood by forms of

racial and gendered integration.

Discussing Jenny's story

Though it is a story about racial integration (at least in that moment) and presents black girls as the instigators of this, it also pokes fun at them. When the story was read in class it elicited much laughter, which turned on the black girls and their constructions of and reactions to Jenny, as if these were absurd and over the top, even if warm and friendly. Descriptions of them as 'yelling screaming' and 'rattling off in Zulu' (as if Zulu was a language for 'rattling off') fed into the humour, and the laughter in class was loudest at the moment in the story when the rationality of the black girls' response was most clearly questioned, that is when they asked if this was Jenny's 'white brother' who had introduced her to the music. (even in the written version of the story, the surreal nature of this moment is marked with three question marks.)

Their shock and surprise reflects the continued racialisation of cultural interests in the post-apartheid context, even in racially mixed schools, and also, perhaps, implicit associations of whiteness with privilege and superiority complex. Whether a similar story could have been told about white girls expressing joy and surprise and embracing black girls for doing things which they (the white girls) constructed as black was asked in the discussion. This was inconceivable, according to all the students, and their reflections on why this was so led them to question the view that cross racial social mixing necessarily challenged race–power relations, and to explore the nature and direction of particular forms of cross racial mixing among young people in South Africa. Typical forms of cross racial socialising on and off campus and in racially mixed schools which were discussed were ones which seemed to take place on 'white terms' in the sense that they involved a minority of blacks or Indians mixing with a majority of whites, in 'white institutions' such as particular nightclubs which played 'white music', such as Rock, or participating in 'white' sports activities like rugby. (A study of racial mixing among 8-year-old coloured, black and white children in the Western Cape makes a similar point; in this the sites for cross racial mixing were formerly white schools and churches in 'white' towns: Bray, Gooskens, Kahn and Seekings, 2010).

In the light of these discussions the black girls in Jenny's story seemed much less irrational, and Jenny's story more partial and less descriptive. If cross racial relations are typically established on white terms, the surprise and joy

the black girls expressed when they saw Jenny listening to 'black' music, and their attempts to claim her as 'one of them', made more sense.

Discussing Reesha's story

As in the discussions relating to Jenny's story, questions were also asked about what made Reesha's story possible. In the case of Reesha's story the questions asked concerned why certain kinds of mixed race boyfriend/ girlfriend relations become problematised, and why opposition to her relationship took the form of sexual vilification of her boyfriend by her same race friends. Could a similar story have been told if the race of the story teller or boyfriend had been different, if for example the story teller had been black and her boyfriend coloured, or if the boyfriend had been white and she Indian, or if their gender had been reversed, an Indian male telling a story about his relationship with a coloured female? Such questions provoked critical thinking about gender, race and sexuality and their intersections and the complex dynamics of power associated with these.

One of the features of this story was the absence of a clearly defined chronological ending (in contrast to its beginning several years ago when she met her boyfriend at university and started pursuing the relationship). Though the story ends on a 'happy note' it is not clear what her relationship is with her Indian friends and whether she and her boyfriend are still experiencing racist abuse, and if so, how this is expressed. This raised questions in our discussions about her current investments in the story as a way of dealing with and responding to racism. We discussed too how the ways she re-constructed her boyfriend and the particular romanticised forms her

idealisation of him took, were shaped by the forms of gendered and sexual vilification through which the racist abuse was expressed.

Conclusion: memories of cross racial mixing, research and pedagogy

Precisely because the Collective Memory Work exercise offered the students such a wide time span from which to choose to tell their story, it provided

scope for individuality, and one of the features of the stories was how different they were, in contrast for example to the stories people may tell in group interviews. But what was also interesting about these personalised stories was how much they had in common in terms of themes as well as form and structure.

Two thirds of the stories were either about cross racial mixing through shared interests or heterosexual desire. Furthermore these stories were highly gendered with similar gendered concerns and issues emerging, for example engagements with 'football' in some of the men's stories, and stigmatisation, sexual vilification and misrecognition in the women's stories on cross racial heterosexual relations. The implication was that these were both significant and common gendered constructions and experiences of forms of cross racial mixing.

The stories, and notably those which turned everyday activities into very specific examples of cross racial mixing as well as those about the problematisation of mixed race relations, implied, too, that cross racial mixing was not the norm though this was not made explicit (perhaps because this was so taken for granted). Of course it could be argued that by being asked to tell a story about cross racial mixing the suggestion was being made that this was unusual, but cross racial mixing was chosen for Memory Work precisely because the students themselves showed so much interest in a class earlier in the course, on race, gender and schooling.

Ramesh's and Simon's stories, with their focus on shared interests as presenting possibilities for forms of cross racial mixing, are supported by Nadine Dolby's ethnographic study, Dolby, 2001, of a formerly white school in Durban. She found that though identities and group affiliations of students, to some extent, followed the old apartheid divisions, cross 'racial' friendships were common based on criteria other than 'race' such as shared 'tastes' in music, sport or fashion. But such friendships, as implied in some of the postgraduate students' stories, were often limited and were not necessarily sustained on a more general level (e.g. outside school) or across a range of

different contexts in school. Furthermore tastes, themselves, Dolby found, might be racialised, as illustrated in Jenny's story.

Though there were commonalities between the stories, there were also marked differences. The kind of stories different students told and the possibilities of telling them, were crucially affected by their particular and very different

cultural and material circumstances, such as the kinds of schools they went to, where they lived, and, as it emerged when comparing the stories, whether they were male, female, black, white, Indian or coloured. What emerged, also, in the stories was how connected gender and race were with power, from Jenny's story about the excitement of the black girls that she, a white girl, was listening to 'black' music, to Reesha's story about the sexual vilification of her boyfriend and criticisms of her by her Indian friends, to Ramesh's celebratory story about cross racial engagements through gender exclusionary (football) practices.

These stories, after they had all been read, provoked discussion about different students from different backgrounds (marked by race, gender and class) and their very different experiences, and their *constructions* of these, of cross racial mixing. The discussion worked both as a research and pedagogic strategy, with the students having to locate their own stories in relation to others and reflect on how their memories and the content and presentation of their stories were shaped by and also served to shape different cultural and material experiences.

In these discussions students were encouraged to see each other's stories not simply as descriptive (if faded) accounts of past events, but as socially constructed and mediated by processes of selection and interpretation. In this sense the stories produced through Collective Memory Work were as much about the present as the past. This was a view implied in some of the questions which were raised when the stories were discussed, about people's investments in the stories.

It may be that the interest and engagement shown by students in my postgraduate group in these stories of race and schooling was influenced, in part, by the multi-cultural composition of the group. Here was an occasion when students were reflecting, in such a group, on their relations with others from different racialised backgrounds with whom, as implied by the stories, they may rarely have socialised in the past and perhaps even the present.

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Crossing from violence to nonviolence: pedagogy and memory

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Abstract

This qualitative case study addresses the use of memories of violence in a workshop with ten young student leaders in Durban. The pedagogy included the use of guidelines and gender-based groups as ways of enabling safety. A particularly direct discussion of gender and its relationship to violence followed, though violence in relation to other social identities was also explored. Walkerdine's work (2006) on border crossing is used to analyse the data from the records of discussion and evaluation comments. The argument is that such a pedagogy enabled participants to address some of the sedimented connections that held them to relationships based on violence. Generally, if we understand violence as caught up in social identities, work on memories of violence will require attention to dynamics related to the identities present. While gender's relation to violence is central in this context, further cases in which the pedagogy is structured around other social identities would extend our understanding.

The education of young people in a violent society needs to enhance equity and inclusion rather than violence and relations of domination. How best then do we deal with their memories of violence? Can our pedagogy in fact draw on such memories as a resource which can be transmuted into a conviction for nonviolence? If it can, what pedagogy is then appropriate?

This article poses such questions in relation to young people in South African society. It argues that violence is caught up in the specific social identities and histories of people, and that through these histories violence has become ingrained. Transition to nonviolence may draw on memories of violence. Such transition requires creating conditions of sufficient safety to enable students to recognise and challenge the relationships which foster violence.

This article reports on a qualitative case study of the use of a particular pedagogy in a three-day workshop held with ten student leaders from three schools in Durban. It used their memories of violence as a resource for their learning about violence and nonviolence.

In addressing the memories of violence, the pedagogy had these elements: ways of creating conditions of safety to enable participants to speak freely, and a deliberate addressing of social identities (primarily gender) in the educational process. It drew on the assumption that it is more effective to speak even of bad memories than to silence them (Stone, Coman, Brown, Koppel and Hirst, 2012). The purpose of the article is to provide insight into the use of that pedagogy through its mapping of the dynamics of this specific case, and to consider the broader implications for work on violence. *Violence* is here understood as systemic; its use is consistent with the notion of 'structural violence' (Galtung,1996), in which physical violence, even implicit, is caught up in relations of power and subordination (Waterston and Kujac, 2007), or with the notion of 'social suffering' (Kleinman, 2000). This reading assumes continuity from structural inequality to the personal experience of everyday violence:

> Interrogating structural violence – the subtleties and complexities of power relations and the microeconomics of difference – historically and locally gives attention to the multiple ways in which this violence is reworked through the routines of daily life as well as enacted through social relations and social institutions (Green, 2004, p.220).

Use of this conceptual framework has implications both for the pedagogy used in this case and for the research strategy. For a pedagogy that promotes *nonviolence*, it requires a vision of society in which relations are based on equity and not on domination or subordination. It requires also an awareness of how violence has constrained the lives of students and teachers.

Nonviolence is not restricted to situations of conflict, but informs thinking and actions more generally. It extends beyond the narrow choice of nonviolence as a means to an end (Sharp, 2005). Harris (2010) makes a distinction between non-violence (the replacement of violence by other ways of defeating an enemy) and nonviolence (built on love and respect for opponents). It is further seen in Gandhian terms as a principle that informs human relations and the aims and processes of development (Gandhi, 1939); it also sees it not so much as pacifism as a process of struggle for justice (Terchek, 1998).

The implication of this framework for the strategy of the case study is that there is a need to situate participants in the context of structural relationships, as is done below.

Research design and trustworthiness

This article reports on a qualitative case study; the particular case is the use of memories of violence in a three-day workshop. The rationale for using a qualitative approach is the need to engage in depth with language and the meanings given in a particular interaction – for example, to the use in this data of such words as 'violence'. In this study participants start to use the term 'violence' to describe ways in which men speak about themselves, which is not the everyday use of the term. Conceptual complexity favours an approach in which the researcher and reader can see how such concepts are embedded in language; the ability of a qualitative approach to clarify and distinguish concepts is a particular strength (Mahoney, 2010).

Williams and Morrow (2009) argue that to achieve trustworthiness the qualitative researcher needs to give particular attention to the integrity of data, balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings.

Integrity of data is here addressed by the verbatim use of discussion, as well as checking to ensure that what is used is consistent with the discussion that was not selected. This is enhanced by the consistency of data from various sources – data sources were the researcher's notes, verbatim recordings, images and writing on newsprint and evaluation forms. In addition, the researcher checked with participants how they understood the interactions before asserting his own interpretation.

The balance between reflexivity and subjectivity is dealt with through making visible to himself and the reader the researcher's own handling of his memories of violence and by identifying some of the limits to his knowledge of participants' subjectivity (for example, his not being present in groupwork).

Clear communication is addressed in part by the fullness of the description of the context and the history leading up to the study, to enable the reader to judge the credibility of the findings. This brings into sharper relief what is different in the case study from the previous history. A reference to a subsequent case makes the comparison stronger.

Analysis of the data focused in particular on those moments characterised by contestation over attachment to or letting go of attitudes and ways of relating, in accordance with the theoretical framework (see below).

For further development of theory on this pedagogy, comparisons could usefully be made across cases (Mahoney, 2010), most effectively where a similar pedagogy is used either with a slightly different context or structured around other social identities.

Violence in the regional context

Memories of violence are here linked to the history related to social identities in South Africa. In part this is to challenge stereotyping of violence in relation to race (Valji, Harris and Simpson, 2004). In part it connects memory work to the social, political and economic forces that generate violence in the lives of people: "the method aims at exploring and theorizing how individuals construct themselves into existing social and power relations" (Jansson, Wendt and Ase, 2008, p.231).

This case study was undertaken in KwaZulu-Natal, an area deeply affected by violence in colonial and apartheid times. The military conflicts at the time of Shaka's rule, the conditions of the indenture of Indian labour, the imposition of the patterns of racial control under the British and subsequently the Union governments, and the specific racial initiatives of the apartheid regime, all involved populations in violence (Maylam, 1986). This was not simply the 'founding violence', the imposition of rule by the conqueror (Mbembe, 2001). For example, British rule over Zulu people worked through indirect rule with indigenous patriarchy (McClendon, 2010); there is evidence that gender relations amongst Zulu people became more unequal with time (Hunter, 2005).

The violence associated with racial domination reached far. For example, if one listens to African people speaking of family life, the family divisions and gender violence described often relate to the dislocation of family life that followed from forced labour migration. This reading of historical violence thus is not a simple account of repression of a people; race, gender, age and ethnicity were all caught up within complex relations of inequality. However, the context is also replete with traditions of resistance, many of which involved physical force as well. There was both violent and nonviolent opposition to government. This area was the crucible for the development of Gandhian satyagraha, or passive resistance, for the development of Black Consciousness from the late 1960s, the mass strikes of 1973, and resistance to apartheid that culminated in the late 1980s. This was also a period of extreme repression by the state and its agents, leading to the deaths of thousands of

people.

It is hard to categorise resistance to apartheid in terms of its being violent or nonviolent (Seidman, 2000); resistance also drew for its themes on what Unterhalter (2000) refers to as both 'heroic' and 'violent' masculinities. This history does not comfortably pit nonviolence on one side and violence on the other.

The implications of these histories of violence for the present are first its ready availability. South Africa is a very violent society, with, as one example, unusually high rates of homicide (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011) and of domestic violence (Vetten, 2005). Violence in schools includes corporal punishment, sexual harassment, and attacks on scholars and teachers (Burnett, 1998; Vally, 2002). Secondly, it is vital to note that individuals' experiences of violence are very different depending on their social identities. Violence in schools, for example, may take very different forms depending on one's race, gender and class.

Pedagogies to address violence

Writing on pedagogy seldom assumes that the experience of violence will be addressed within education. For example, Arnot (2006, p.83) notes that "the mass violation of women's human rights through. . . gender-based violence is . . . not generally considered an appropriate topic for citizenship education in schools".

Two approaches foreground within their theory the need to address learning in relation to societal violence. Gandhian education treats violence as a

central problem that education must address. The development of young people as just and nonviolent citizens is a central aim. However, there is little account of how the experience of violence is addressed; rather the emphasis is on overcoming violence through such methods as "the teaching of world religions, service learning, and setting an example" (Damm, 2011, p.3). Within schools, an emphasis on craft work and engagement with the physical world is also important in such pedagogy. Similar approaches deal with the problem through the use of contemplative approaches (Zajonc, 2006). Missing in descriptions of Gandhian education (Pillai, n.d.) is the Gandhian sense of nonviolence as struggle (Terchek, 1998).

Within critical pedagogy, violence is acknowledged as an integral part of the problem of domination. "Critical pedagogy keeps at its center the need to problematize both the overt and covert exercise of domination–subordination in social structures. . . " (Nagda, Gurin and Lopez, 2003, p.167). Accounts though of how such pedagogy addresses the specific experience of violence are limited.

Pepinsky (2005) gives an account of a university course that focused specifically on memories of child abuse with the aim of advancing healing and peace-making. He acknowledges the difficulty of doing this, not least the uncertainties around accuracy and honesty. Central to this was the creation of a teaching environment that acknowledges emotional struggle.

A similar approach was adopted by Hollander (2000), who invited students to keep a journal of experiences of fear, violence and safety and to discuss these within class. Her approach enabled students to move beyond a view of violence as individual experience to understanding it as a form of social control. Skumsnes (2007) analyses her teaching of a course for social professionals which brought into group discussion students' anonymous narratives of experiencing or witnessing violence. The effect was to enable students to make explicit the links between theory and their practice as professionals. Waterston and Kujac (2007) describe the teaching of a student-centred and critical 'co-investigation' course that addressed a range of violence from genocide to 'everyday violence', including the writing by students of 'intimate autoethnographies'.

These are diverse accounts, but have in common the pedagogical use of memories of violence, the measures that need to be taken within such

education to ensure safety, and the links that emerge between violence and social identities.

Such accounts also make a point that while including such work within education requires ethical care and may provoke difficult reactions, its exclusion has serious ethical implications. ". . .we must question the ethics of ignoring the emotional and psychological (while privileging the intellectual and abstract), even as we consider the challenges of bringing wounds to the surface". (Waterston and Kujac, 2007, p.514)

Theoretical framework

This article takes as a framework for exploring and reflecting on the data the work of Valerie Walkerdine (2006, 2011) on border crossing. Her specific account of border crossings as transformations in the world of class of work (Walkerdine, 2006) deals also with the broader issues of how subjects are expected to make transitions smoothly, but are always constrained by the burden of emotions and practices of the past. In reality, such transitions are fraught with pain and grief (Hey, 2006) because they require the leaving behind of memories, of connections, of embodied responses. In relation to her own experience, Walkerdine states of the working class, "they lived it [class] all the time, they understood exactly what class meant. They experienced it in the body, they experienced it socially, they experienced it emotionally. . ." (Walkerdine, 2007, p.189).

Such a theory extends its reach to a range of identities (Walkerdine, 2007). It addresses the capacity of people to make changes that they desire and hope for, including for social change. Such change needs to engage with the kinds of knowledge that are most difficult to work with – the affects, practices and habits that are built up over time, that become ingrained in social identities. In a South African context, for example, social change requires that white people leave behind the expectation that their needs will be prioritised over those of others. Potentially, in such transitions subjects can mourn what needs to be left behind and move on, developing new capacities. Potentially, also, the new learning is limited and caught by unresolved attachments to the past.

How would this apply to transitions related to violence? I take as an example my own memories in which violence is implicated. As a youngster growing

up in apartheid South Africa, the child of middle-class parents from the UK, English heritage was constructed through images of the British national anthem, and the smells and sounds on a visit to England. It became evocative of peace, in contrast to my gathering awareness of violence in South Africa – and despite my knowledge of British imperialism. However, later I visited Winchester Cathedral, the ancient seat of English heritage. As I walked through it I began to read the memorials to British soldiers who died fighting for Empire in wars designed to subjugate local populations. I could not but recognise how my own sense of self had been caught up in memories, of sensory impressions, which silently drew me back to colonial relationships. Violence had been mediated by social identity, and social identity by violence, for myself as much as for the young people in this study whose experiences were so very different.

Unless such memories are addressed afresh, and there is grieving over what needs to be left behind, tradition and culture are invoked in ways that do fresh violence (Moletsane, 2011).

Walkerdine's framework was drawn on for the analysis of data in this study. Transcripts of the actual discussion, notes made by the researcher, newsprint written and presented by participants, and written evaluation comments were the data sources for the discussion. The data was scrutinised to identify in particular those points where there was reference to transitions, to comparisons between past and present understandings, for points of conflict where the generally unsaid was raised into specific focus.

Background to the case study

This study focuses on the use of the pedagogy outlined above within a workshop held in December 2010 with ten participants. To understand the context and the ethical implications of this work, it is necessary to describe the preceding events.

A student leader had approached the researcher in 2009 with a request that the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON) teach nonviolence to members of Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) from three schools, two from a working class township near central Durban, and one closer to the city centre. All students in these schools were African. As a result of this approach, I and five co-facilitators, mainly student teachers, led a three-day residential course with 30 student leaders, selected to represent a range from Grades 9 to 11, and to provide a balanced gender representation. The fact that all participants were African reflected how this developed and was not a purposeful choice.
The initial session of the course developed through prolonged discussion a set of guidelines for the work, such as confidentiality and respect. Immediately participants wanted to speak about their experience of violence, some of which had been traumatic. I introduced the participants to peer counselling as a way for them to speak about violence within a supportive environment. As part of the workshop, groups also developed and presented short dramas of school situations, in which both violence and the resistance to violence were depicted.

A specific problem in the process emerged when the researcher required that the choice of a partner for counselling be made first by the youngest girls and last by the oldest boys. Many of the girls selected girls, leaving older boys

with little choice but to work with other boys of their age. This revealed that some older boys had wanted to select as their counsellors girls in whom they were interested; they then protested that "if I listen to another boy carefully people will think I am gay", and "he will not be serious, he will want to make fun of me".

In this case I insisted that the boys not give in to these assumptions, and that they could work effectively with boys. After that session of counselling some volunteered their perception that their fears were shown to be incorrect. There was other evidence that some boys handled the peer counselling supportively with both boys and girls as partners – a girl revealed an incident of serious abuse to a boy in the counselling and he asked if she wished to report it formally, which she did with his assistance. I was left with a sense that tensions around gender were left unresolved. A disquiet heightened by a girl's comment on an evaluation form that she had been subject to harassment despite the aims of the course.

In the period after the 2009 course, there was further engagement – a one day workshop, and about ten short meetings at one of the schools in the township with those who chose to attend. These events focused mainly on the use of peer counselling around current issues facing them.

In mid-2010 there was a development involving one male participant, whom I refer to as Dumisani. My godson was at the one school that had sent leaders to the workshop, and I had been elected a member of the school governing body (SGB). A group of girls had written to the SGB accusing the principal of sexual harassment, an issue that was referred to the provincial authorities and the police. Their response varied from inaction to outright blame of the girls. According to evidence presented later to the SGB, Dumisani had found a girl crying. She said that her hand was bleeding as the principal was hitting latecomers at the gate with a stick. Dumisani asked the principal to stop. There was no response, so he stood in front of the principal and told the latecomers to go past him.

The reaction by the principal was to summon the chairperson of the SGB to interrogate Dumisani as to what he had done. Under pressure, he repeated the allegation by girls about sexual harassment. The principal and chairperson then brought the matter to the SGB and insisted that the boy be expelled, a move successfully blocked by other members of the SGB, including myself. The events led to further pressure on the provincial authorities, and the principal resigned.

This account serves to indicate why gender became a particular focus. It indicates also the diversity of boys' handling of gender issues – the public assertion of a stereotyped homophobic, 'hegemonic' masculinity, as well as a direct challenge to patriarchy and sympathetic listening.

The case study focuses on a three-day workshop which was intended to provide more understanding of how young people from the same group would develop if work on the memory of violence was more intensive. Selection of participants was undertaken on the basis of who had shown leadership in the earlier workshops (such as Dumisani). The age range was from 15 to 19 years. Those invited readily agreed to participate; the period was just after the end of their examinations.

Ethical clearance, which included the possibility of referral to expert counsellors, was granted by Durban University of Technology. In the event such counselling was not needed.

Findings

This section presents an account of the workshop, focusing primarily on those aspects where there was contestation over issues of gender. It organises the findings by the stages of that process.

Introduction: The workshop began with an explanation of the purpose: ICON wished participants to become leaders of nonviolence, and to think of themselves as leaders in an international context. Time was spent on formulating guidelines for the interactions within the class; this was a familiar issue with those present. A particular debate was explored about publication of their images; they were emphatic that they wished to appear on the ICON website. I explained that, as before, much of the work would be undertaken in groups and pairs; one advantage would be that this would give ample opportunity to address the issues in their first language, isiZulu (though most spoke English with facility).

Division: I then referred back to the earlier workshop and the issue of gender in relation to violence, and asked them to move into a boys' group and a girls' group. This was an intervention drawn from the use of caucus groups in social justice education, where it has been used as a way of enabling freer discussion (Adams, 1997). The task was first for each person to speak about an early

memory of violence, secondly for the group to prepare a report on what it was like doing this work in a gender-based group and on what needed to be communicated to the other group. The youngsters complied readily.

I posed the question to the boys about whether I should join as a male or not join as an adult, and they indicated the latter. Thus the separation was not only on the basis of gender, but also age – and perhaps also on the basis of my professional status.

Assertion: It was immediately evident that the girls were very happy in the group, with animated and responsive speech. In contrast, the boys seemed to be uncertain and to lack direction. At the conclusion of the group work, I asked the girls and then the boys to talk first about what that experience had been like.

The girls commented thus:

> *'It was nice and helpful chatting with the girls: we got straight answers that we would not have got if boys had been there.'*

> *'Some of things that we were going through, other girls had also been going through.'*

The boys' views the separation was more equivocal:

> *'Boys are confident with boys, we are scared when with girls.'*

> *'The disadvantage was that we need to focus on what girls' experience has been. We need to combine.'*

The girls then presented what they had written on newsprint [spoken comments in brackets]. It expressed assertiveness, an understanding of violence as caught up in the sense of self and of others, and references to painful emotions:

> *Men use their power to take advantage of women's vulnerability [our experiences were similar, where men used their physical power to make women be afraid of them, and fear them]*

> *Secrets do contribute towards violence*

> *Starting point for men to be violent is the anger they carry inside them, because they say men don't cry, so by them distressing they cause violence to women. . .*

> *Never trust people who are close to you cause they can frame you to violence*

> *What I have realised is that women are the ones who are the number 1 victims...*
>
> *How does it feel like when you are causing violence?*

Contestation: This portrayed men very much as the source of violence, and drew a defensive reaction from the boys, who swung into a defence of their socialisation:

> *Boy 1: Men don't cry – we are too secretive, it is not easy for us to show our feelings to a woman, or to our friends.*
>
> *Girl 1: What is the reason as to you not expressing what is eating you up inside?*
>
> *Boy 1: It is the way we are built. . . Dumisani can't talk to me and tell me has a problem, and start crying, whereas for a female it is easier to do this, because we are built like this.*
>
> *Boy 2: It is for pride, you are showing weakness.*
>
> *Girl 2: What feature says I am built to cry and you not?*
>
> *Boy 1: You are soft.*
>
> *Girl 2: We are also proud. We are all built to cry.*
>
> *Girl 3: It all goes back to the old stereotyped thing, we as Africans especially, men are supposed to be stronger than women. . . I don't understand the material, 'we are built like that'. Men are supposed to be in rehabilitation centres? When men are angry, they are meant to sit alone? You are shutting me out, isn't that related to violence? . . .*
>
> *Girl 4: I don't think it is the way you are built; it is from that culture thing.*

In this tussle boys initially present masculinity as essentialised – "it is the way we are built" – while the girls insist that masculinity is a cultural formation, one caught up in racial history: "the old stereotyped thing, we as Africans especially". It is subject to criticism and change; girls use the term 'violence' here as *cultural violence* (Kent, 1993). The stance over the nature of masculinity taken here by the girls parallels that taken by scholars of masculinity since Connell's seminal work (Connell 1987, 1995). What they are faced with is a particular kind of masculinity that was formed under specific historical conditions and is failing both them and boys. However, the boys' response can be seen not just as assertion of traditional superiority; the socialisation makes things 'not easy' for them; there is vulnerability and implicit loss.

Walkerdine describes how "particular constellations of feelings and ways of being become quite sedimented within our bodymind" (2006, p.34). The sense here is of girls' using the workshop structure to claim new ways of relating, while the boys demonstrate an attachment to the old. They might also, in terms of the sequence of the workshop, be preparing a defence of the image that they knew they would next be presenting.

Their newsprint presented a drawing of the face of a young woman, rather European in features, with long eyelashes and jewellery. Next to an arrow to the eyes was 'inner attraction'; 'outer attraction' referred to the lips. Elsewhere on the sheet were statements like 'In order for communication to happen between the genders, both must be able to reach a common understanding/interest.'

> *Boy 1: This is the lady we came up with, her name is Bridget, she says, hi!*
>
> *Boy 4: When a man and women are sitting together, the common thing is love between them. This is how communication happens. The second is money, girls love money and guys have money [outraged laughter from women].*
>
> *Girl 2: You are insulting us.*
>
> *Boy 4: . . .after the conversation between them, what is meant to happen next? The guy will not be saying what he meant, he will be speaking just to impress. . . That one is not so good, she can be my friend and she can bear my secrets.*
>
> *Girl 3: . . .It all goes back, it is easy for you to communicate with a lady friend if she is not attractive...*

Here the boys become tied up in a dilemma: on one hand, they articulate the need for 'a common understanding', on the other they present relationships with women as driven by physical appearance and men's money. That these boys are unlikely to have money may be one reason for the laughter from the girls.

At the same time there is an expectation that girls will be emotionally supportive, but that can be realised only when she is 'not so good', i.e. in appearance. The form of masculinity being expressed here is that of the *isoka,* the 'player' who pursues sexual relationships with women. This is the 'sedimented' masculinity that reappears, and the boys seems constrained to articulate it despite an implied ambivalence – their acknowledgement of the need for partners to provide emotional support to each other; there is a need for someone to 'bear secrets'. Hunter, in his study of Zulu masculinity in a

nearby township (2005, p.220) writes: "Gender is more than simply the one dimensional expression of male power but, as historical analysis of the isoka masculinity demonstrates, embodied in male vulnerabilities and weaknesses."

Resolution: The tussle continued in the discussion, until the boys began to shift their ground:

> *Boy 4: What we know in a relationship is that the guy should be a stronger partner in the relationship.*
>
> *Girl 2: How does this 'stronger part' go? You are meant to carry all the burden? . . . sengidiniwe [I am angry] now.*
>
> *Boy 3: The frustration we get from our inner part is part of the violence you see. This thing refers to our pride, that we need to be respected by a woman, to be [his own name]. . . We need self-introspection before communicating with women. We don't know what we want and what we have. . . I don't know myself and I don't know how to solve my problems. Here this situation tells us, we need to clear our minds and clear ourselves before communicating with women.*
>
> *Girl 1: Bravo, bravo!*
>
> *Boy 3: It's educating both genders. We cannot educate women about what we need until we have done some introspection.*

What started as an assertion of masculine power turns to a recognition of confusion and acknowledgement of weakness. Yet this is not simply retreat; the boys end with a reference to reflection; they are humans with needs, and the lack of understanding across genders may be mutual. What seemed at one point the assertion of an entrenched notion of masculinity now seems to be part of the process of what might be read as 'grieving' for it. It is as if the boys needed to demonstrate just how difficult it is to abandon an attachment to what had cast you as being in command. Walkerdine (2006, p.25) discusses the task of mourning as "to gradually adapt to the reality of the situation and to move on." Here the boys start to cut adrift from an old way of relating and in the process open up new possibilities for moving on.

This contestation thus involved conflict, but it was conflict of a kind that served to clarify, rather than a conflict that fed into violence. Kent (1993) refers to conflict as the 'incompatibility of preferences'; here the point expressed by a boy about the need for communication opens up nonviolent ways of handling conflicting preferences, or possibly even reframing them to find areas of mutuality with girls.

The claim I make here is not that the boys went through some permanent

conversion to a more sensitive masculinity. There was though some specific evidence of realisations that they saw as significant. In the evaluation comments, one wrote: *. . .there were things that we didn't know about ourselves as boys that we realised. . .* Another: *I definitely had a different mindset about the girls/women, and learnt more about them and also about how us boys/men think and feel about our emotions.*

Further application: After this interaction, the workshop moved into further work in memories of violence, using drawings, undertaken first in pairs and then in the full group. There was at this point a marked shift to a more balanced and easy process in the group, in which gender was no longer a point of tension. There was an atmosphere of mutual support and a sense of shared pain that crossed genders.

Finally the group developed a statement about their work to go onto the ICON website. Some elements of this statement addressed issues of tradition in relation to social identities, others more current concerns:

> *It was fun for us to work in separate gender groups. . . Stereotypes that classify men as powerful and women as weak are wrong and contribute to violence. We challenge the idea that women must stay in the kitchen and do chores. If we could swop jobs, it would be fun and cool.*
>
> *There are attitudes that certain crimes done by men are 'cool', such as hijacking, or that it is OK for women to do things like shoplifting. This is completely wrong.*
>
> *Unemployment is the cause of insecure citizens with no respect for others, resulting in xenophobia and discrimination.*
>
> *It is hard for some young people to have self-acceptance given their backgrounds and the ways they are living. Some of us pretend to be rich when we are poor. . .*
>
> *We have a cultural value of respect, and the way we do things should reflect the respect we feel for others. Sometimes this idea has been misused by older people to justify abuse. Younger people and older people should respect each other. The domination of English excludes our language. . .*

This discussion criticises existing practices related to gender, class, nationality and age. However it reframes instead of discarding older values and associations. Respect *(ukuhlonipha)* is a traditional value, but is here extended to addresses inequality of age; the domination of English is challenged. Instead of the attachment to established practices and attitudes, here is a freshness as sedimented practices are brought into scrutiny and new

relationships formed.

Shortly after this I and a co-teacher used a similar strategy of gender-based groups in a class on violence – again with African students, but all adults. This led to quite emphatic statements that those present would not have been able to speak freely in the presence of the other gender. However, in this class there was much greater difficulty in continuing the discussion outside the gender groupings. The younger group had demonstrated greater facility and flexibility in making shifts in their way of handling gender, an indication perhaps of the advantage of youth in addressing social identities. The comparison points also to the value of further studies that draw on multiple cases.

Discussion

Walkerdine (2006, 2011) accounts for the difficulties people have in breaking away from established ways of being. Developing young people as leaders who can work for nonviolence within a violent society requires a difficult transition. She argues that we need to create sufficient safety in education to enable such transitions; here I maintain that the pedagogy described in the case study is one way of doing that.

The pedagogy in use in this study had these central elements: it focused on the memories of violence as a way of developing a commitment to nonviolence, it involved measures to build the safety necessary for open discussion about painful memories, and it used gender-based discussions as a specific measure to enable greater safety. Use of this strategy of division led into a period of assertion, followed by contestation and finally a resolution. In turn there was further application of the development to other areas of social identity.

It is argued that such a pedagogical approach can provide the safety and opportunity necessary to support the complex and difficult transitions needed if we are to address the violence caught up in social identities and in our attachment to associated practices and ways of thinking and feeling (Lucey, Melody and Walkerdine, 2003, p.293). The point is not that work with young people and memories should always be based on a gender division, but rather that the strategic use of separate groups at one stage enabled a discussion that would otherwise probably not have occurred.

The implications of this approach are thus that any work on the memories of violence should take into account the specific social dynamics that constrain

free discussion. For example, if this group had included disabled youth as well as able-bodied, or not only African youth, the specific dynamics around ability and race would need to be addressed. To assume that discussion on violence can take place freely across the divisions that are connected to the violence is naïve.

Conclusion

When we work with ourselves and others for nonviolence, we confront the many ways in which our social relations have been caught in violence. A pedagogy for nonviolence needs to work with awareness of the attachments that we carry, and the difficulties of simply moving on from them. Using memories of violence can, it is argued, provide the possibility of freeing oneself from those attachments.

The act of speaking one's memory of violence though presents both opportunities and constraints. It takes place in the present social context, and can be shaped or silenced by the dynamics of that context. It is this challenge that a pedagogy for nonviolence must address.

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Memories of their mathematics teachers: implications for pedagogy

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Abstract

The future teachers in this study were asked to tell the story of their engagement with mathematics, beginning as far back as they could recall, and ending with the present which was as they were about to begin a module entitled Mathematical Literacy for Educators. The narratives contained accounts of their struggles (many) and successes (few) with learning mathematics. The focus of this paper is on their memories of their mathematics teachers who feature in most of the autobiographies. The purpose of this memory work was twofold: to provide a starting point to overcome mathematics anxiety which had the potential to inhibit their engagement with mathematics, and to inform the selection of pedagogical practices in the module. Selected memory narratives are presented and the themes of teacher memories are discussed. Finally, four pedagogical purposes for memory narratives are identified and discussed.

> *I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*
>
> Maya Angelou (Kelly, 2003)

Background and context of the study

Teacher education in South Africa has been governed by a national policy document that sets out the norms and standards for educators (Department of Education, 2000). In order to comply with the requirement of 'being numerically, technologically and media literate' any future teacher at my institution (intending to teach subjects other than mathematics at the secondary level) without having passed Grade 12 school mathematics would be required to pass a foundational module in Mathematical Literacy. Consequently, in 2003 I took charge of a new module, *Mathematical Literacy for Educators* (MLE), introduced with the aim of developing in the students appropriate mathematical literacy skills, and engendering self-confidence in their ability to deal with quantitative situations that might be encountered in daily life, or more specifically, in their future professional lives as teachers.

The two main reasons for future teachers returning to mathematics in this

module were (a) their poor performance in mathematics precluded them from studying it in the senior school years or (b) they had attempted and failed the final Grade 12 mathematics examination. Both these reasons were expected to have a left a bitter taste in the mouth and so I considered that my first task as the lecturer of the module was to begin to address possible negative views of mathematics. To this end the introductory week of this module was devoted to surfacing memories of school mathematics and trying to encourage the future teachers to overcome their mathematics anxiety and to reconceptualise themselves as people who could deal with mathematics in everyday situations.

Several activities were planned to encourage the future teachers to talk about their school mathematics experiences. First, the future teachers were given a questionnaire in which they were asked to circle two words, from a list of ten, which best described their experience of school mathematics. These words, which from my previous experience are used by people to describe mathematics, were equally divided into positive words (useful, easy, relevant, fun, rewarding), more negative words (difficult, humiliating, frustrating, irrelevant) and challenging which I considered a neutral word as it can be construed either positively or negatively. In this same question, students were asked to write one or two sentences summing up their school experience of mathematics. The qualitative analysis of the sentences written confirmed the quantitative counts of the words chosen, i.e. the future teachers began the MLE module with a school mathematics history that they described as difficult, frustrating and challenging. The 'positive' words, (useful, relevant, fun, rewarding, and easy) accounted for only 12% of the choices (Hobden, 2007).

The second introductory class activity was based on a Math Anxiety Bill of Rights, created by Sandra Davis and described by Tobias (1993). This is a list of fourteen rights regarding mathematics learning, such as: I have the right to say I don't understand; I have the right to be treated as a competent adult. The purpose of this activity was to engage the preservice teachers with the rights as a first step towards taking charge of their mathematics learning and ceasing to be intimidated "both by their own lack of confidence and by hallowed traditions in the maths classroom that stop them feeling good about themselves" (Tobias, 1993, p.226). The future teachers worked in small groups to select and rank eight of the rights. Over the three years of this study, the top two ranked rights were consistently *I have the right to learn at my own pace and not feel put down or stupid if I'm slower than someone else* and *I have the right to feel good about myself regardless of my abilities in maths*

(Hobden, 2007). I felt that this was indicative of a group of hurt and anxious learners used to lagging behind.

The third activity, writing mathematics autobiographies, required the future teachers to purposefully remember their school mathematics experiences. These memories, and in particular the memories pertaining to their teachers are discussed in detail in this article.

The problem of mathematics anxiety and mathematical avoidance and why it matters

Folk wisdom tells us that it is not so much what people can do, as what they are willing to do that determines their success. Tobias (1993, p.100) claims that "negative attitudes. . .can powerfully inhibit intellect and curiosity and can keep us from learning what is well within our power to understand". The presence of maths anxiety is thought to interfere with the working memory – as noted by Sparks (2011), mathematically anxious people use up the brain power needed to solve mathematics problems on worrying. Willoughby (2000) at the end of a list of fifteen mathematical skills he believes all people should possess, cautions us: "None of the skills above will be of any use if the individual who has learned them has also learned to avoid mathematics whenever possible. . . If the student has learned to hate mathematics and the learning of mathematics, then I believe the schooling has done more harm than good" (p.10).

Ashcraft (2002) found a lack of empirical evidence on the origins and causes of mathematics anxiety but suggests that there are some strong hints. These include exposure to teachers who were impatient with errors and held learners accountable for their lack of understanding and subjected them to public displays of their incompetence. Ashcraft (2002) concluded that "it is entirely plausible. . .that such classroom methods are risk factors for math anxiety" (p.184). This view is supported by Michael Goldenberg who, in response to the online version of Sparks (2011), wrote "math anxiety is not something people are born with: they catch it from others. However, there are carriers who are not themselves suffering from the disease. Contemptuousness from mathematics teachers can readily drive someone into math anxiety, I strongly suspect".

Duffin and Simpson (2000), suggest that it is important to move adult learners for whom mathematics has been a struggle, to see maths as a goal (i.e. a state

learners want to be in, and through their actions try to approach) rather than an anti-goal (i.e. a state learners wish to avoid, and through their actions, try to move away from). They warn that: "the fact of that failure is often, of itself, sufficient to have made mathematical situations anti-goals for the learners involved and this brings with it emotional indicators which can prevent an otherwise intelligent adult from attempting any form of mathematical task. The development of the anti-goal nature of mathematics has come from their learning in school and, perhaps from a mismatch between the learner's way of thinking and the teacher's style" (p. 97).

The future teachers in this study had a compulsory module *Mathematical Literacy for Educators* to pass, but the motivation for trying to alleviate some of their mathematics anxiety went beyond the short term goal of module marks. It is evident that mathematics anxiety and mathematics avoidance coupled with poor mathematics ability will impede the development of the mathematical (or quantitative) literacy needed to function as a self-managing person and a productive worker. In the seminal article making the case for quantitative literacy, Steen (2001) described in detail how "professionals in virtually every field are now expected to be well versed in quantitative tools" (p.12) and how almost all fields of education now require some quantitative literacy. Personal management of health and finances is also increasingly dependent on sophisticated understandings of number and statistics. Statisticians have joined in advocating statistical literacy and Schield (2002) noted that "anybody lacking this type of literacy is functionally illiterate as a productive worker, an informed consumer or a responsible citizen" (p.41). The latter role suggests a second motivation for a mathematical literacy programme, i.e. to develop the quantitative literacy required for responsible citizenship in a democracy. Cohen (2003) contends that dating back to the early 19th century the links between democratic government and political arithmetic have been threefold: (a) the political legitimacy of a representative democracy rests on counts and proportional reasoning; (b) a government needs good aggregate data about its citizens to make policy decisions for the greater good; and (c) the citizens in a democracy need good data in order to judge the decisions made by the government and express this judgement through their vote. Citizens who wish to participate fully in a democracy cannot afford to refuse to engage with numbers.

Memory work as a feature of mathematics autobiographies

Memory work has been successfully used in teacher education and teacher development (see for example Pithouse, 2011; Cole, 2011; Mitchell and Weber, 1999) typically in the context of developing teacher identity and influencing future practice. In contrast, my focus in the context of the MLE module was not on teacher development but on personal empowerment through the development of some degree of mathematical literacy. The memory work in this module was an attempt to deal with the legacy of mathematics anxiety – for the future teachers themselves to face their negative memories. It was also an opportunity for me, as the lecturer to adapt my pedagogy to take their remembered experiences into account. At the outset of the module the future teachers were asked to write their personal story of 'Maths and me' – in other words, to wilfully remember the path their mathematics learning had taken and to pen their mathematical autobiographies or life histories.

Mitchell and Weber (1999) regard memory work and the domain of autobiography and life histories as distinct yet related. Memory is a feature of autobiographical writing.

> [Memory texts]. . .are driven by two sets of concerns. The first has to do with the ways memory shapes the stories we tell, in the present and in the past – especially stories about our own lives. The second has to do with what is that makes us remember: the prompts, the pretexts, of memory; the reminders of the past that remain in the present (Kuhn, cited in Mitchell and Weber, 1999, p.220).

The study of mathematics life stories has its roots in the larger research methodology of life history research. "Life historians examine how individuals talk about and story their experiences and perceptions of the social contexts they inhabit" (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p.1). Mathematical autobiographies (or mathematical life stories) are the personal recollections of a person about their experiences with mathematics as far back as they can recall. The use of mathematical autobiographies is widely, but not exclusively, cited in the context of mathematics anxiety, (see for example Benn, 1997; Tobias, 1993). Adults are encouraged to focus their attention on their "personal mathematics history and the forces and contexts that have patterned the way [they] see and do mathematics" (Benn, 1997, p.107). The hope is that mathematically anxious people will be able to face their demons as it were, and move on.

Goodson and Sikes (2001) draw attention to the transient nature of the stories told by informants in life story research projects since "they are telling their

story in a particular way for a particular purpose, guided by their understanding or conceptualisation of the particular situation they are involved in, the self/identity/impression/image they want to present, and their assessment of how hearers will respond" (p. 41).

It could be argued that when adults construct their mathematics autobiographies, current self view clouds the memory and past events are interpreted from an adult perspective. All life stories, by their very nature, are "already removed from life experiences: They are lives interpreted and made textual. They represent a partial, selective commentary on lived experience" (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p.16). Furthermore, the process of telling about themselves, allows people to construct an identity and to add meanings and explanations to their actions in their retrospective narratives so that events seem more coherent and rational than may have been the case at the time (Convery, cited in Walford, 2001, p.91). Hauk (2005), however, contends that whether the events described are real and accurately described is not the crucial issue as these personal memories "shape the way a person perceives experience, conceives the world, regulates cognitive and emotional responses, and interacts with others" (p.39). What endures, is the student's perception and interpretation of past events, and so this is what is reported.

Gibson and Costello (2000), in the context of student autobiographies that seem to indicate either a decision that mathematics is an unattractive subject, or that they had incompetent teachers, warn that the "stories may be a vehicle for external attribution of lack of success in mathematics rather than as a means of self-disclosure" (p.38). Furthermore, "dwelling on the past is not always useful in and of itself – indeed it can become obsessive or self-destructive. It is possible to take refuge in the past, living in memory in order to forget the present" (Mitchell and Weber, 1999, p.5). Despite these caveats, the negative memories of mathematics and mathematics teachers that people retain can influence their lives in ways that matter, and so they are best articulated and dealt with.

Memories of school mathematics - three narratives

Memories of their school mathematics experience were collected from 245 future teachers in three successive cohorts of students doing the MLE module as part of the introductory module activities. They were given a page to write the story which had to begin as far back as they could recall and end with the phrase "and now I am doing mathematical literacy". This followed some class discussion around the Bill of Rights activity described previously but it was emphasised that these were to be their personal stories. Permission was obtained for the use of the memory writings for academic research purposes. Three of the memories are reproduced in their entirety below in order to provide a sense of the responses. These were selected because they contain clear memories of their mathematics teachers – not all mathematics autobiographies included specific reference to their teachers.

Thandiwe's memory

> *When I was young, I went to primary school where I enjoyed calculating and adding numbers. I was getting along with it and also doing well. My trouble started when I was doing Grade 8 at high school. . . I was very shy in class and that made me not being able to write and calculate sums on the board. To him [the teacher] I looked stupid and not capable of doing sums. But when it comes to homework I could do my homework correctly without any help. So my teacher thought I cheated. I became very angry every time I attend maths and was also humiliated. There for I decided that maths is not my thing, I started hated everything about maths. Now I'm still angry that I have to do maths. Something that I told myself that I will never do in my entire life* (Thandiwe, 2004). Thandiwe went onto complete her Bachelor of Educaton degree and qualify as an English, Technology and Life orientation teacher.

Craig's memory

> *Many many moons ago in the valley unknown, a little boy named Craig would be going to school for the first time. He was so excited and eager to learn but he did not know that this was the beginning of a thirteen year struggle against a mathematic hell. It was a new mathematical system that would give Craig nightmares in the deep dark night. The mathematic system eluded him. He was taught to calculate in a card format and the way of the soldier sum. He never understood the concept of the quantive (sic) value of a number. Then came the crippling blow that would forever be a mental scar for him. He sat at a white claustrophobic cubical where he stared blankly at a mathematical test. It laughed at him, it made him feel like a fool. Thus it resulted in him shedding tear and think this happened to him in the first two years of his school career. The next five years mathematic hide its ugly face as it did it damage in his. Mathematics raised its head once again but in two forms. The first*

was the new mathematics teacher and secondly the class he was in. The new mathematics teacher did not know how to control his students. Thus the class took advantage, therefore mathematics got another upperhand on Craig. The next year Craig would get his own back. As a mathematic wizard known as Mr. B would help him conquer his fear. Unfortunately the wizard had to retire. Craig soon had to leave that school and was moved to a rural school. Here would be the final show down between Craig and his eternal enemy mathematics. Mathematics beat him down and down until Craig fell. His body bent and spent he said pantingly "You win, I quit". But now it is the return of Craig and he will be victorious against his mathematic enemy (Craig, 2004). Craig successfully completed the first year of a Bachelor of Education degree and then abandoned his studies.

Maree's memory

When I was young I started school with an open mind, excited, expecting the unexpected and unjaded view of ever of everything, since I had no frame of reference, it was all new and exciting to me. But as the days went by, my Grade 1 teacher was so mean and impatient, she started to warp my ideas on how maths was looked at. Then year after year, I continued to get a cruel and evil maths teacher slapping of hands, standing in the corner, ripping out pages and of course the ever dreaded public humiliation of "Maree, tell us how it's done"– you name it, I've experienced it all!! Naturally I got a mental block about maths and the two of us, just do not mix. . .nevertheless teaching is what I am passionate about, and this is what I have to do to achieve it. . .just one more hurdle in a long line of hurdles in life. . . To be where I need to be I must do maths and now I'm doing Maths literacy (Maree, 2004). Maree passed the Mathematics Literacy module with high marks and went onto achieve a Bachelor of Education degree with merits in her specialisations of English and Drama.

Memories of their teachers

The memories recounted by the future teachers provided peepholes into the classrooms of South Africa and some indication of how mathematics learning can come to a standstill, often quite abruptly (Hobden and Mitchell, 2011). The focus of this article is on their memories of their school teachers and the effects of these memories.

The future teachers whose stories are presented above had spent at least twelve years at school and their teachers must have said and done so many things. Yet they remember most how they were made to feel – Thandiwe was angry and humiliated by being thought a cheat, Craig was made to feel a fool, and Maree felt publicly humiliated. While it has to be understood that these products of

deliberate remembering do not necessarily reflect the way it really was, as much as the way it appeared at the time or even now appears to the person in hindsight (Mitchell and Weber, 1999), they are the memories affecting the person's life in the present. I was surprised to see many instances in the memories where the students reported the actual words of the teachers. Some of these were oft repeated clichés such as *practice makes perfect*, intended to be positive and encouraging; some were discouragements – words that were meant to dissuade the students from continuing with mathematics; and finally there were dismissals – words that were used to dismiss requests for help from struggling learners. It is the professional duty of teachers to advise learners about their choice of subjects and learners are often unhappy to hear that their marks do not qualify them to continue with mathematics. The examples of discouragement in this context and cited below clearly caused lasting offence to the people involved: *Come end of the year, my Bible education teacher called me into the office and told me that God does not intend for me to be a doctor and that I was not allowed to carry on with maths* (Myra, mathematics autobiography, 2005); *she told us that we had no hope so instead of wasting our time we should quit* (Zami, mathematics autobiography, 2004). Some future teachers retained the memory of disparaging comments made by their mathematics teachers, usually in the context of declining to help them further. Some examples are: *He used to said that he is here to teach not to change a fool to become smart* (Phiwe, mathematics autobiography, 2004): *If you asked her to explain further and said you don't understand. She will answer by saying "If you don't know, it is not my baby to feed, I'll move with those who wants to go with me."* (Vallencia, mathematics autobiography, 2005): *My math teacher could actually tell us that he doesn't care. His usual term was "You snooze you lose". I tried to cope with the situation until I couldn't get more than 20% correct. After that I said to hell with maths* (Gladness, mathematics autobiography, 2004). Sometimes, as in the case of Maree, it was the actions such as slapping or tearing up their work that was remembered. And finally, as postgraduate lecturers we have to feel a little ashamed of the postgraduate student referred to by Zami in her mathematics autobiography: *When my teacher taught Maths I couldn't understand her. . . The most thing that she use to say was that she has her 'honours' and now she was doing her Masters.*

Memory narratives for pedagogical purposes

The narratives produced by the future teachers reflect their memories of their

school teachers. I will argue that written memory narratives can influence mathematics pedagogy in at least four ways, namely (a) laying the memories out for adult consideration and evaluation, (b) by providing specific background information on a cohort of students which can inform the selection of pedagogic practices, (c) by broadening the understanding of the work of mathematics teachers to include the development of positive attitudes to mathematics, and (d) by providing a methodology for use in mathematics education research. These are discussed in the four sections that follow.

Using memory narratives as a starting point to new beginnings

I collected all the mathematics autobiographies and read them immediately. I tried to respond to each future teacher's story in an encouraging way, typically with a note that now as adults they might find the mathematics made more sense and that this was an opportunity to succeed in a mathematics module. Although the personal stories of their mathematical experiences were not explicitly discussed, the future teachers soon realised that they were in a class where many of their peers shared similar backgrounds. *So when we were in Maths literacy class for the first time and I saw there were lots of white people, I thought that if they had the same problem then why not me. I came to realise that Maths is actually everyone's problem. Nobody in this class has passed maths in Grade 12* (Gabi, interview, 2003). The three memory narratives reproduced in a previous section illustrate the different attitudes that the future teachers had towards the compulsory MLE module. Thandiwe was angry at the requirement, Craig felt he could possibly conquer mathematics and Maree, although not keen to engage with the module, had the maturity to view it as a step towards her greater goal of becoming a teacher. To emphasise the point that surfacing their memories should be a positive step in their mathematics learning journey I usually engage the future teachers in a follow up activity to the mathematics autobiographies. They are asked to write down, on a small piece of paper, the single best thing they can remember about their school Mathematics experience and the single worst thing they can recall. All the slips of paper containing bad memories are then burnt in a container in front of the class. The ashes are preserved and displayed on a poster entitled 'bad memories of maths R.I.P'. alongside a poster containing all the good memories. I hope this helps to provide a concrete reminder that negative memories need not inhibit their engagement with mathematics and that they can, as adults, begin to develop the mathematical skills that will enable them

to become self managing people, productive workers, and responsible citizens.

Using memory narratives to direct pedagogic practices

Reading the memories of the future teachers, it is clear than many of them were exposed to several of the risk factors for mathematics anxiety identified by Ashcraft (2002) and discussed in a previous section of this article. The memories also alerted me to the sensitivity of the future teachers about their mathematics ability and their low confidence levels. It seemed important to be encouraging and affirming wherever possible. My efforts at motivation towards clear goals seems to have some success as indicated by the strong mean agreement in the final module evaluations with the composite factor statement "*the lecturer motivated and encouraged me*" (Hobden, 2007, p.218).

It was a challenge to select pedagogic practices that would not touch raw nerves. I took notice of the comments made regarding the humiliation of public disclosure of assessment results, for example: *When I got to high school my teachers just discoursed (sic) me. They would make jokes about my marks instead of helping me and what happened on Grade 9 was more humiliating, devastating and shamefully because the teacher puts me under pressure. She always wants to show off what a fool I was in front of the class.*

In addition to refraining from mentioning marks in any public forum, I altered the usual format of test papers which have the marks recorded on the front page of scripts, to have the mark recorded on one of the inside pages. This way when test papers are handed out or left for collection, the individual marks are not visible.

I think as teachers we often fail to understand what students hear when we speak, especially when idiomatic speech is used. For example, the phrase 'You snooze you lose' could have been a jocular encouragement to use an opportunity to learn, but seems to have been interpreted by Gladness in her memory of her teacher as an indication that the teacher did not care. On a personal note, I have reverted to plain speech in my interactions with students after reading in a particular module evaluation that I was regarded as rude and dismissive because I referred to students as being blind and fools. I couldn't imagine when I would have said such things but on further thought I recalled my interactions with students working in groups. I often ask if they are sure about the answer and receive the reply that the other members in the group agree with them so it must be correct. To which I might have replied "I hope it

is not a case of the blind leading the blind", or "Indeed great minds think alike, but it could also be that fools never differ."

Using memory narratives to inform thinking about the work of mathematics teaching

After surveying the field, Maass and Schloglmann (2009) conclude that "affect has come to be seen as having an important influence on mathematics learning" (p.vii). Kilpatrick, Swafford and Findell (2001) reminded us that "motivation for school mathematics learning depends primarily on the interaction of students with teachers and of students with mathematical tasks" (p.339). The memory narratives clearly indicate that the former interaction is long remembered by the students. There has been recent attention given in the international mathematics education literature to the notion of productive disposition as a feature of mathematical proficiency (Kilpatrick, Swafford and Findell, 2001). This has the implication that in addition to developing conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, adaptive reasoning and strategic competence in mathematical content areas, a significant part of the work of mathematics teaching is the development of a belief in the value and coherence of mathematics, and of a sense of self-efficacy in the learners. Following international trends, the South African school curriculum (Department of Education, 2002) highlights the skills, knowledge and values (SKAVs) required in each school subject, and specifically in mathematics. The inclusion of the values is an indication that the teachers need to go beyond providing mathematics knowledge and skills to develop positive values and attitudes towards the subject. The newer Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011) commits teachers to a curriculum that is "sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors" (p.6). I would argue that one of the 'other factors' would be differences in mathematical aptitude. The teaching work of engendering positive feelings towards mathematics, and of approaching struggling mathematics learners with sensitivity would be informed by the insights gained from the memory narratives of those who had passed through the schooling system.

Using memory narratives in mathematics education research

The written mathematics autobiographies in this study were written mainly for the first pedagogical purpose – to assist students to overcome their personal mathematics anxiety. It was never intended that these stories be shared with the group, partly because they were personal and partly because time within the module did not permit any peer discussion of the narratives. The only interaction was in my written comments on each person's autobiography. Formalising the process along the lines of the steps for memory work advocated by Onyx and Small (2001), seems a promising way for small groups of particularly mathematically anxious future teachers to explore their feelings in community to and take control of their past. This methodology requires adherence to a series of prescriptive steps such as writing in the third person, using pseudonyms and refraining from interpretations and explanations in the written work (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Goult and Benton, 1992). Thereafter the participants meet in a group together with the academic researcher who assumes a peer position within the group to analyse the written work with a view to theorising their memories, and viewing them in the light of the wider academic literature. While I am convinced of the value of the group interaction and collective work in making meaning of the individual memories, I concur with Onyx and Small that "in practice, it is usually one particular researcher who uses the method for the purposes of gaining a qualification, or in order to publish a paper" (2001, p.780), raising ethical issues with this methodology. I suspect it would be difficult to sustain the participants' interest past the general discussions and into the academic arena, but I have not as yet attempted to engage the future teachers in this way.

Conclusions

I have provided some examples of the narratives produced by future teachers after a request to specifically remember their experiences with mathematics. The memories provided pointers to pedagogical approaches that might be successful with people who had been exposed to negative experiences of mathematics and were very likely to suffer from some degree of mathematical anxiety. I think the process of bringing the memories to the surface was helpful to the students who could sense that their feelings were being acknowledged, and that they were in a safe space to try again to succeed at mathematics. The memory narratives were certainly a reminder to me to tread sensitively in my pedagogy, to be affirming, and above all to avoid public discussion of individual achievements. Perhaps as teachers, we should think a little less about exactly what to say and do in the daily lessons, and a little

more about how we are making the learners feel – this could well be how we are remembered.

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Using memory as a resource for pedagogy: fashioning a 'bridging pedagogical moment'

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Abstract

In post-conflict societies teaching and learning happens in contexts that are heavily influenced by incidents and atrocities of the past. In higher education, such pedagogical contexts are fraught with tensions and contradictions. These tensions and contradictions are in a sense unavoidable as they reflect what happens when multiple memories are brought to bear in a pedagogical space. In this article, I problematise my practice as a teacher educator as I work with pre-service teachers of Business Education. In my attempt to trouble my pedagogic practice, I reflect critically on how I use memory as a pedagogic trigger in preparing my students for the world of teaching. In particular, I reflect on how multiple memories (mine included) intersect in a sensitive, dynamic and scaffold pedagogic space, a 'bridging pedagogical moment'. Drawing on elements of self-study methodology, I attempt to interrogate my practice with a view to refining and exploring new possibilities for engaging with painful memories of the past that threaten to disrupt our future. Drawing on hooks' (1994) "Engaged pedagogy" I explore how memory can be harnessed as a pedagogical resource in the teaching of Business Education pedagogy. I explore how students, dehumanised and objectified by hegemonic race, class and gender regimes, can use memory to decentre powerful social constructions and reposition themselves as ethical subjects in the social realm. As with any pedagogical strategy, there will be several tensions that are likely to emerge that the teacher education pedagogue has to manage.

Introduction

After a mere seventeen years into its young democracy, one can expect that memories of the past remain fresh in the cognitive frames of South Africans, especially those who personally experienced various traumas under the apartheid order. New post-apartheid memories have also been created. Perpetrators and 'bystanders' (Murphy and Gallagher, 2009) who had to forego privileges have also had to deal with a different kind of trauma, namely that of having to inhabit a world where the fundamentals have altered radically. It is clear that there are distinctively different memories simultaneously at play in South African society. How then can these different memories be brought into productive dialogue? How does a society in a post-trauma era heal itself? As the national euphoria of the new rainbow nation

dissipates, the hope of any immediate, automatic and harmonious co-existence dangles precariously at the precipice of a South African society that is competing aggressively for the continuation and restoration of particular memories. Anderson cautions that, in a quest for a new nationalism, societies undergo a process of selective memory and forgetting (Anderson, 1991). Essentialised notions of nationalism and sameness have inherent fractures and have potential to rupture and reveal the fragility of a false nationalism, especially in contexts emerging from decades of relentless trauma.

Post-apartheid South Africa continues to be plagued by a deeply entrenched patriarchal value system that finds misguided rationale in religion, tradition and culture. In nations like South Africa where the tapestry of poverty, violence and oppression are indelible design features that have fashioned the fabric of society in last century, it can be expected that memories of this tapestry are deep in the sub-conscious and affect the way we currently act. Rothenberg reminds us that, as much as we have tried to change the world in which we live, poverty, violence and oppression continue to plague humanity – if anything we have been woeful at making any kind of impression on altering the condition of those marginalised by society (Rothenberg, 2010). This is particularly true in a young democracy like South Africa, where evidence of our failed attempts is starkly overt.

How then does the ordinary citizen deal with such issues and how does schooling equip individuals with tools for dealing with such issues? Given that individual views on an issue are immanently linked to their historicities and memories in particular, how then can such memory data bases be utilised and exploited as a pedagogic resource? How can teacher education harness such contrasting and contradictory memories? How do we move beyond the rhetoric of nationalism, towards theoretically informed pedagogic practice in a South African context; towards a 'pedagogy of discomfort', one that troubles learned beliefs and habits and emotionally charged nationalism and blind patriotism (Zembylas and Boler, 2002). These are indeed weighty questions, the answers to which have remained largely elusive.

In this article, I present an account of how I attempt to trouble my intellectual project as teacher educator. I reflect on how I use memory as a powerful resource in the pedagogy programme I design for teacher trainees in Business Education. In the last decade of my teaching of pedagogy as it relates to Business Education, I have engaged elements of memory work in my practice. However, these efforts were driven by my personal intuition and as such were not substantively theoretically informed. In recent years, however, I have drawn on a body of critical scholarship (Bourdieu, 1986; Freire, 1998; Giroux,

2004; hooks, 1994, 2009; Lebaron, 2003; McLaren, 2003; Peterson, 2009) and on what is emerging as a powerful and influential field namely that of reconciliation pedagogies and pedagogies in post-trauma contexts (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2009; Jansen, 2009; Jansen and Weldon, 2009; Waghid, 2005). From an Economics disciplinary perspective, I draw inspiration from theory that disrupts canonical neoclassical and neoliberal economic thinking and explanations of the economic world (Bauman and Rovirosa-Madrazo, 2010; Harvey, 2006, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Leander, 2001; Pogge, 2010).

Methodological orientation: a brief note. . .

In an attempt to trouble and reflect on my own practice in a rigorous and systematic way, I engage the tenets of 'self-study' as I research my enterprise as a teacher educator (Kosnick, Freese, Samaras, and Beck, 2006; LaBoskey, 2004; Lassonde, Galman, and Kosnick, 2009). My objective is to improve on my practice. In this article, I reflect on how particular kinds of improvements are likely to manifest as I engage the critical curriculum spaces that present themselves in the pedagogy courses I teach in a teacher education programme. Self-study as field of study and methodological approach is at an embryonic stage in its development and as such needs to be embraced with circumspection and caution. While I am mindful of this, I also view this as an immensely liberating opportunity to indulge in this creative enterprise of problematising myself in practice ". . .with the goal of reframing . . ." my practice (Lassonde, Galman and Kosnik 2009, p.5) for the advancement of student learning. I firmly subscribe to the self-study tenet that the self is implicated and complexly connected to the research process and educational practice, allowing me to examine myself from the perspectives of 'the self in teaching', 'the self as teacher' and 'the self as researcher of my teaching' (*ibid*.). Drawing on Feldman's work, I value the position that self-study posits, namely, that of making the". . .experience of the teacher educators a resource for research. . ." (Feldman, 2009, p.37). Data for self-study research can be generated from diverse sources, including curriculum documents, student reflections, interview transcripts and personal reflections. For this article, I draw on thoughts captured in my reflective journal in which I document my experiences with my pedagogy classes; critical incidents in my teaching and learning experiences with my students as we engage a social justice agenda.

Arguably, the most endearing feature of self-study research is the potential it offers for developing a constantly evolving personal living pedagogical theory

(Whitehead, 1998). I am of the view that self-study has enormous potential to constantly produce new theory and as such is consonant with the work of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic theorising – a kind of production of the new that disrupts, and discourages thinking and theorising that defaults to existing pedagogical canons (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Using memory as a resource in a pedagogy class

While there is some value in working intuitively with memory as a resource in teaching, it is imperative that a pedagogue understands the theoretical foundations that inform the pedagogical strategy that she applies. Theoretically informed pedagogy has potential for offering conceptual tools for making sense of particularly fraught and complex teaching and learning contexts and content. To this end, I draw on the principles of critical pedagogy (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres, 2009), reconciliation pedagogies (Jansen, 2009; Jansen and Weldon, 2009) and hooks (hooks, 1994, 2009) and the philosophical influences of Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 2006, 2010, 2011) and Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 1998, 2006). These perspectives have particular resonance with the objective of my teacher education pedagogy programme that is to create spaces for Business Education teacher trainees to critically explore the contested nature of the disciplines they have consciously selected to teach and the pedagogical approaches that may apply. These perspectives also offer rich theoretical insights into memory as a phenomenon and its potential for creative and imaginative use. While Arendt and Nussbaum do not allude directly to pedagogy per se, insights from their sophisticated expositions on human capacity for action, human plurality and capabilities, faith and hope have immense potential for pedagogy.

In the discussion that follows, I present instances where I have attempted to use memory as a resource in my pedagogy classes. Historically class sizes in these programmes have averaged between 15 and 20 students and comprise a racial and gender mix of graduate students whose ages range from 25 to 50 and older. In introductory lectures, I apply activities that require students to reflect on memories of personal school and life experience, including teaching and learning and resource contexts. While this first exercise may appear as a strategy to simply reflect on memories of being taught in schools with the view to reflecting on such practices, this somewhat innocuous delving into the past (retrieval from memory) has enormous potential for flagging a wide-ranging social justice issues, which are then infused into the teaching programme. Given the diversity of the student sample signalled above, one

can expect that recollections of school experiences were textured by histories as they unfolded in the decades or eras within which each student personally experienced schooling. As students tell their stories, differences in memory accounts as they relate to school and life experiences become stark. These have been fashioned into two narrative vignettes presented below. While the vignettes below may appear to essentialise the affluent class and poor and indolent class, and may represent a polarised dichotomy of the context of student experiences, I acknowledge that several blends of experience are real on the advantage-disadvantage continuum. In a country like South Africa where the Gini coefficient is 0,67, it is not unreasonable to infer that in the main student experiences are likely to be closer to that portrayed in the latter vignette, namely, one of disadvantage. The vignettes do, however, attempt to capture powerful contrasts in schooling that past and present day South African schoolchildren experience. It provides a useful resource from which to launch the pedagogy programme as it starts with an acknowledgement of difference. Below are two narrative vignettes constructed from students' descriptions of their personal schooling experiences over the last decade that I have taught pedagogy courses in Business Education. The storied accounts of students have been classified into two main broad descriptive categories, namely, memories of advantage and memories of disadvantage.

Vignette 1: Memories of advantage
Business Education students from affluent, middle class contexts describe, for example, being taught by competent, qualified teachers, class sizes of under thirty learners, having access to four to five different textbooks, reams of worksheets, model answers, a data bank of past examination articles from their school as well as from other high performing schools, structured assessment and feedback regimes, extra tuition after school, the ability to purchase study guides, three to four-day excursions to the business capital of country (the Johannesburg Securities Exchange and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and importantly, socioeconomic security provided by stable family and community structures. In the main, these students would have been taught in their mother-tongue in racially homogenous classes where their home languages and cultures would have been affirmed.

Vignette 2: Memories of disadvantage
In contrast, poor and working class students describe a different picture. I describe the experiences of African students in particular as the Indian and Coloured communities, while politically disenfranchised under apartheid, did in fact enjoy significantly better educational resource contexts (both physical and human) than their African counterparts but not quite at the level of lavishness of the White community. Business Education students typically

recall being taught by under and unqualified teachers who were frequently absent, class sizes that exceeded sixty, limited access to textbooks (often just a single textbook kept by the teacher), limited print materials like worksheets and other study materials, school developed assessment protocols that did not prepare learners for the high stakes matric examination, reliance on peer study groups to master requisite disciplinary knowledge and skills without the certainty of the accuracy of peer generated understandings, limited external stimuli like excursions or guest speakers, being taught in mother tongue indigenous language but assessed in English, having to live with the instability and vulnerability that poverty brings. A striking feature across the memory accounts presented above is the way patriarchy is tightly woven into the fabric of education in both contexts.

The memories presented are rich with potential and possibility for creative and imaginative use in a pedagogy classroom. For many students, especially those who have completed their undergraduate degrees at racially homogenous tertiary institutions or who reside in racially homogenous areas (still a significant feature of South African society as reflected in the mono-racial populations particularly of poor townships in South Africa), this is often their first close interpersonal encounter with the other. The challenge then for me as teacher education pedagogue is to harness these memories in particular ways to achieve the objectives of the pedagogy programme I teach. An important starting point is the development of relational empathy through the facilitation of shared meanings through interpersonal engagements. This entails reconceptualising how students see each other, how they communicate and how they feel. The reconceived vision must be different to what it was in the past and requires an understanding that trauma has been experienced on both sides and that all are in search of security and basic rights in the new framework. Empathetic communication that encourages dissent is a necessary precondition. (Broome, 2004).

In an attempt to infuse memory accounts into my teaching, basic principles of critical pedagogy and engaged pedagogy have particular appeal. Historicity of knowledge as a principle alludes to the notion that the creation of knowledge happens within a particular historical context (Darder *et al.*, 2009). The knowledge that students own and their being at a particular point in time is product of historical events that were shaped by past human action. In the very same vein, such knowledge and personal self conceptions have potential for change. This principle speaks strongly to the power of human agency to disrupt historical continuities, and foregrounds historical contradictions and tensions. Dialectical theory as a principle foregrounds human activity and

human knowledge as powerful determinants of the social order. From a critical pedagogy perspective, human activity is dynamic and fluid and as such, it is necessarily uncertain, contradictory. It therefore implies a scrutiny of how traditional theories of knowledge are presented especially since knowledge is associated with a diversity of human conditions that is culture, norms and values and as such cannot be objective. Yet, historically particular forms of knowledge have been packaged and served as objective and neutral.

In the discussions that follow, I illustrate the troubling of disciplinary knowledge in Business Education. Critical pedagogy argues for the use of ideology as a pedagogical tool to trouble what looks normal and commonsense, to identify the dislocation of dominant ideology in education and the lived experiences and knowledge of those exposed to this contradiction. Ideology can therefore be used as a tool for critical self reflection by pedagogues with regard to how personal ideological positions play themselves out in pedagogic practices and how such practices are likely to reinforce dominant race and class ideologies (Darder *et al.*, 2009). hooks' re-conceptualisation of knowledge has particular resonance with my work as teacher education pedagogue working in disciplines that have been shaped by a canonical neo-classical world view (Florence, 1998). hooks' engaged pedagogy urges us to question the legitimacy of the knowledge that is prescribed. This prescribed knowledge is predominantly middle class knowledge and privileges certain memories. As such, we must contest the notion of knowledge as established facts to be mastered and not to give authority to the knowledge but to the nature of the teaching and learning relationship as a process. This kind of orientation opens the door to sharing of experience and of memory on the phenomenon being studied.

Although hooks theorises in an American context, her insights have profound resonance with the South African context. In the discussion that follows, I present an account of how capitalist ideology through decades has been reified into the psyche of human beings and how such ideology has come to shape economic knowledge (Harvey, 2007). Of importance is the manner in which the memories we create as human beings are shaped by the market, by economic rationality, self-interest, profit maximisation and the survival of the fittest. As Bauman aptly reminds us, the capitalist system has created what he terms 'a race of debtors' (Bauman and Rovirosa-Madrazo, 2010). With regard to the disciplines within Business Education (Economics, Accounting and Business Management), there is little debate that neo-classical thinking has strongly influenced the nature of knowledge that has accumulated over time in these disciplines. Neo-classical economics is so deeply entrenched and

institutionalised that society has come to accept it as the norm. A capitalist, market oriented social order is a given, something that we have to live with, something that governments of the world encourage, support and perpetuate in active ways (Bauman and Rovirosa-Madrazo, 2010; Harvey, 2006, 2007, 2010b; Pogge, 2010). The mantra in the neo-liberal world is, how do we create the climate or the conditions for business to thrive, prosper and grow? In other words, what should we do to ensure that the capitalist class is able to accumulate more profits and become stronger? The discourse and neo-liberal ideological stance is unambiguous (Harvey, 2007). With regard to the poor and working class, it is hoped that some of this capitalist income and wealth will trickle down to these marginalised classes. From a South African perspective, evidence from the last decade indicates that the proportion of the nation's national income that accrues to the capital has in fact increased. In other words, the poor and working class now earn or enjoy a smaller percentage of the country's income. Wealth accumulation by the capitalist class has made little impact on poverty and employment levels in South Africa, with current unemployment in excess of 30% in the last decade. We also have to remember that, while apartheid had a dehumanising racial element to it, it also created conditions for the advancement of capital. In particular, apartheid manipulated the South African economic context for the advancement of capital. Capital was allowed to grow and flourish. A reflection of who really owns the wealth of a nation is not to be found in the number of small street traders and corner shops; it is to be found on its stock market. In South Africa, this would be the Johannesburg Securities Exchange. While media makes a meal of newly listed black companies that make it onto the JSE, it does not draw attention to the miniscule fraction that black capital represents on the JSE. More importantly, there is a silence and acceptance of the disproportionate ownership of wealth by a small capital class.

What then are the implications for the Economics pedagogy classes I teach and what does this have to do with memory? Postgraduate students that enroll for the Business Education pedagogy modules, join the programme having completed an undergraduate commerce degree. These students would have been subjected to a particular economic knowledge. In the main students would have been presented with this knowledge as uncontested and would have internalised it as such. They may also have had mentors who were disciples of neo-classical economics. In a cohort of mixed race, class and gender, it is clear that students would have experienced the social order differently. Some would have fond memories of how their families, friends and communities may have thrived under such an order, others have memories and current lived experiences that tell the stories of deprivation, inhumanity,

and suffering. Poverty remains a huge challenge for many South African higher education students; a recent study reminds us about the vulnerability of our students and the strategies they employ to as they attempt to mask their poverty (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010). These are heart-wrenching experiences – experiences which I know my own students endure on a daily basis. These very same students will become specialist commerce teachers expected to teach a given body of economic knowledge that is likely to perpetuate and reinforce the existing economic order. In order to disrupt this cycle, I turn to political economy as a principle of critical pedagogy which contends that we need to contest the manner in which education serves the economic imperatives of the market. Vulnerability caused by economic and political disenfranchisement is perpetuated in subtle ways by the schooling system and the knowledge domains schools advance (Darder et al., 2009). The challenge then in my pedagogy class is to create spaces to examine how the values and aspirations of dominant classes are upheld and how dominant groups continue to enjoy the privileges that come with asymmetrical power relations.

The enormity of the social justice project in my Economics Education pedagogy programme is daunting and often overwhelming and I sometimes doubt whether my efforts in a year-long pedagogy programme will make any significant impact on the unflinching canons that can go unnoticed. Arguably, the most challenging aspect of my work as teacher education pedagogue is helping student teachers deconstruct the normalcy of the social order that the canon has created, to interrogate dominant knowledge and the memories that they have created. Again I draw inspiration from hooks (1994, p.202) who urges that we have to "choose between a memory that justifies and privileges domination, oppression, and exploitation and one that exalts and affirms reciprocity, community, and mutuality" University academics have to take necessary risks in order to transgress and contest the canonicity of existing knowledge and approaches to curriculum. Knowledge transfer through transmission stifles creativity and the ability to challenge existing power relations in society (Florence, 1998), especially as it relates to a dominant curriculum that foregrounds patriarchy and capitalism. hooks implores us to challenge middle class male experiences and cultural histories that remain unnoticed in the school curriculum. It is not unusual to find that masculine traits, for example, are portrayed as the norm in economics texts and curricula. School knowledge is likely to favour a bourgeois value system and perpetuate a western women's value system. In a South African context, school knowledge as it relates to economics is not neutral or objective; if anything it is value laden (Maistry and David, 2011).

Troubling the epistemological foundations of the discipline and how this facilitates a particular social order that manifests in rampant capitalism, asymmetrical power relations in society, poverty and unemployment, necessarily requires that we challenge institutionalised memories that signal what the world should look like. hooks suggests that a problem-solving methodology that encourages dialogue and a healthy balance between content and process is a useful way to proceed with this kind of troubling. The economics pedagogy course provides a rich and dynamic space where attempts at such reconceptualisations are possible. As teacher education pedagogue involved in preparing teachers of Economics I recognise the importance of modelling pedagogical strategies that I would want my students to become competent at. Complex processes are simultaneously at work in my pedagogy courses. Students learn pedagogic skills related to the teaching of the discipline of Economics, that is, to develop pedagogic content knowledge in Economics. At the same time, they undertake a complex process of deconstructing canonical economic thinking that they have acquired in their undergraduate degrees and demonstrating evidence of this competence in the development of learning programmes for high school economics. Such evidence is reflected in the way lessons plans and teaching resources reflect a social justice orientated agenda. The challenge I encounter as a teacher education pedagogue is to provide spaces for students to develop dispositions towards social justice as it applies to race, gender and class oppression. What kinds of tools can they be equipped with? Is there a vocabulary or a language that they could use as they plan and prepare for their enterprise as teachers?

As self-study researcher, I am acutely aware of the central role I play in both the pedagogic spaces I develop and the research into my practice I undertake. This necessarily requires pedagogical processes that diminish my positional authority as academic and lecturer. In as much as I wish to draw on my students' memories to help make meaning of our social world, I have to share and expose my own memories and how these have come to shape my thinking. Just as students share memories (painful and pleasant), I too engage the sharing process. I find dealing with issues of racial prejudice and economic oppression in a cohort of diverse students as described earlier extremely traumatic and emotionally taxing. Several sensitivities are at play. I need to create safe spaces for students to articulate memories, as well as to develop the conditions for what I term 'compassionate listening'. Compassionate listening here is a special kind of listening, a kind that necessarily requires the delaying of judgment and hasty formation of opinions and views on others' perspectives. It is a high-level meta-cognitive competence that demands

restraint and temporary suspension of opinion formation. This is an inherently difficult skill to learn, believe in and to practice, because it entails standing outside of oneself to be able to 'see' and 'remind' oneself of the act of undertaking compassionate listening. Once teacher educators and student teachers begin to understand and practice this skill, it explodes the possibilities for unrestrained memory sharing.

How then can we harness the memories described in the vignettes above in ways that contribute to the objectives of this special Economics pedagogy course and at the same time bring to the fore, in constructive ways, issues of social justice. Pertinent issues of race, class and gender oppression are complexly connected to Economics and are implicated in almost every facet of neo-classical economic theory. In my early days of teaching Economics pedagogy, I learnt that a head-long plunge into these sensitive social issues created much discomfort and at times a genuine reluctance by students to engage constructively. In recent years, I have been guided by writers like Murphy and Gallagher (2009), who argue that the use of cases outside of the students' lived experience (the experience of another country or community for example) can be a useful way to approach the teaching of these issues. The idea then is to use material that is real, but not South African – material that is historically and psychologically removed from the immediate cognitive frames of students. This strategy may eliminate defensiveness and allow for communication in a fairly safe space. It allows for and facilitates confident participation. Examples of materials I employ include case studies that bring to the fore tensions and contradictions as they apply to women in business, values and beliefs about gender equality in other countries, globalisation and its effects on marginalised communities of the world, dehumanising labelling of people who cannot find jobs as 'unemployed ' and 'human waste' (Bauman and Rovirosa-Madrazo, 2010; Pogge, 2010), child labour, the exploitation of migrant workers, xenophobic attacks on refugees across the world, natural resource exploitation by multi-national corporations and its effects on indigenous populations of less-developed countries and affirmative action policies in countries like Singapore, Malaysia, the United States and Zimbabwe. It is not possible to provide an analysis of how I engage all these stimulus materials in this current article. However, in the discussion that follows, I illustrate how I have used and reflected on the concept 'affirmative action' in my pedagogy classes over the years.

Affirmative action as policy is a germane subject and has particular currency in a South African context. It is a highly contested policy and has potential to generate heated debate. As such, it presents with enormous possibilities as a 'site' for dialogue. In the cases of Malaysia and Singapore, affirmative action

policies were adopted to address economic imbalances that were created by prejudicial policies that disadvantaged certain ethnic communities. The histories of such prejudice are varied and often related to the policies of the regimes that occupied these countries. Capitalist classes came into being as a result of privilege and artificially construed enabling economic mechanisms. As can be expected, this kind of 'neutral', non-threatening context is easier to discuss than the current South African context. It is however necessary that the stark and painful realities of the South African context has to be dealt with at some point. As teacher education pedagogue, I attempt to use the material to develop what I refer to as a set of consensus principles that a typical teacher of Economics may have to consider when teaching such a topic. These would be basic pedagogic principles that are likely to guide the teaching of controversial subject matter. Such a set of principles have to come about through a deductive process that entails student engagement and dialogue. The challenge then is to move the debate closer to home.

The 'ideal type' vignettes (Weber, 1949) that capture the contrasting memories that prevail in South Africa are lucid representations of the effects of race gender and class prejudice that continue to strangle South African society. Over the last decade that I have worked with the topic of affirmative action in my pedagogy programme, I have had varying experiences with different cohorts of students. The extremely contentious nature of the topic and the changing cohort of students make each encounter with this topic a unique one. I have found that sharing of *my* memories (personal and family experiences) as they relate to this topic is what I coin as a powerful 'bridging pedagogical moment' as I move students from the 'abstract' and somewhat 'distant' cases on affirmative action to South African cases. This imagined 'bridging pedagogical moment' is what I describe as a sensitive, scaffolded teaching and learning space in which the pedagogue infuses *her* personal memories as a resource for making meaning. This bridging pedagogical moment has a twofold effect. Firstly, it serves as a vanguard to access and surpass the threshold phenomenon being addressed. Secondly, it reorientates and reinterprets power relations between pedagogues and their students, a principle advocated by hooks' engaged pedagogy; a breaking down of the power relations between pedagogues and their students. This kind of dissolving of power can only happen if pedagogues create spaces for their students to empower themselves in a classroom context and if pedagogues themselves adopt approaches that require the exposure of personal experiences and vulnerabilities (Keet, Zinn, and Porteus, 2009). As teacher education pedagogue, I draw on a wide range of memories and experiences, which I selectively bring into my class as I attempt to strengthen the meaning making

of particular aspects of the course. In my early days of working with pedagogy courses, I did in fact make use of several personal experiences (anecdotal reflections) in my teaching. However, in recent years, I consciously select particular personal memories in planning for teaching. I present below an account of the personal memories I share with my students to scaffold a bridging pedagogical moment when dealing with affirmative action as a content topic in my pedagogy class. As a self-study scholar, I start from the premise that the self is complicit in educational practice, that is it is not possible to separate the self from one's practice. As such, the nature of the (my) self, my value system, aspirations, memory and theoretical orientation infuse and permeate every aspect of my practice. Having been schooled in resistance politics as a youth activist and as a teacher activist, issues of equity, redress and transformation are central to the work I now do as a teacher educator.

Vignette 3: Sharing personal memories
As a non-white male growing up under apartheid, I attended school in a homogenous Indian only school, and attended an Indian university. I was aware that the resource context of my school was different to that of other races, that Indian schools were better resourced than African schools, but not as well resourced as white schools. I hail from a working class family that was displaced by the notorious Group Areas Act. My father worked as a garbage sorter on a municipal dump site in Pietermaritzburg. He later sold ice cream on a bicycle and in the last 15 years of his working life, he held the job of driver of a light delivery vehicle for a local manufacturing business. He often related incidents of abuse and racial discrimination at his place of work, incidents which riled me and developed in me over the years a deep sense of resentment and antagonism towards white people. My Mom worked as a 'tea girl' (making tea for staff) for a large department store and in the last 15 or so years of her working life, she remained a low-level sales assistant in the same department store. Her rank was not related to her lack of competence, but to the fact that she was not 'allowed' to apply for senior positions. These were exclusively reserved for whites. As with my Dad, my Mom also experienced similar experiences of prejudice; in her case, both race and gender. In recent years, I have become more aware of my own prejudices and the extent of my distorted socialisation. I also struggle to understand and not judge the raced memories that several other close relatives articulate. Ironically though, these relatives yearn for the times when we were ruled by a white minority government and are simultaneously vehemently critical of current affirmative action policies.

For inspiration on how to deal with the demons I carry, I draw on the work of Hannah Arendt. Arendt rejects both revenge and forgiveness as proper responses to crimes of the past. Revenge is premised on natural law, that is, the natural equality of pain and suffering. It assumes that a person is able to feel the same degree of pain and suffering if revenge is meted out - based on animal-like tendencies and therefore has no currency in human society Arendt, 1998). Similarly forgiveness, also rooted in human equality 'destroys the relationship between the forgiver and the forgiven and therefore is based on a negative solidarity (Lavi, 2010). Arendt suggests reconciliation as a response to wrongful deeds. "Reconciliation entails a willingness on the part of the wronged to carry the burden together with the wrongdoer" (Lavi, 2010, p.231). "To become reconciled with a wrong does not unburden the wrongdoer. Instead of attempting to undo the past , reconciliation encourages the acceptance of the past as given . . . harbours an element of renewal and spontaneity . . . reconciliation is an active gesture of acceptance that must be regenerated anew each time" (*ibid.*). Reconciliation as a phenomenon is powerful when dealing with memory because it assumes the premise that the past is exactly that, an era that has in fact passed by and beyond the powers of present human control. A pedagogy of reconciliation opens up spaces for multiple memories to be acknowledged and validated. It is about imagining spaces where healing is infused as a productive outcome in the pedagogy programme I fashion for my students. Again, I turn hooks' insights. Drawing on the teachings of Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, hooks suggests that pedagogues (like me) have to look to themselves first and focus on personal well-being and personal peace and contentment before they can effectively present as healers and or create classroom conditions that are likely to therapeutic for their students. This is a profound insight as it suggests deep inner peace as a pre-requisite for a healing pedagogy (hooks, 1994). Teacher educators have to exercise self-reflexivity. Teaching for self-actualisation requires sharing one's own stories with students. It is about creating classroom environments where this might happen. It has to be more than simply searching for bland commonalities. The challenge is to harness diverse memories with a productive intent.

The outcomes are that students get to explore their own memories and how they are likely to influence their understandings and practice of teaching economics. They also engage with the memory accounts of their fellow students and that of their mentor (me). Importantly, they get to experience firsthand a pedagogic encounter in Economics pedagogy where memory is used as a resource for teaching. This kind of pedagogic modelling is particularly useful to apprentice teachers. Equipped with this experience and a

discourse of reconciliation, students are then encouraged to explore how such strategies could be applied to school contexts. I am acutely aware of not falling into the trap of romanticizing and celebrating my own practice. Such precocious self-aggrandising is furthest from the social justice enterprise I infuse into my teacher education programme. I am also loath to attempt to measure and quantify the impact of my attempts at improving my practice. I can, however, reflect on how self-study as a methodology has heightened my awareness of my pedagogic interventions. It has propelled me to search for a theoretical and philosophical rationale for my actions and to refine my social justice agenda with greater care and sensitivity. More importantly, I am beginning to understand in profound ways how my personal reflective writing activity can be therapeutic in helping me deal with my own distorted socialisation as I continue my journey as a developing teacher education pedagogue.

Conclusion

In this article, I shared the experiences of my work as a teacher education pedagogue as I attempted to harness memory as a resource for teaching and learning in my pedagogy courses. I argued for how students and societies, previously dehumanised and objectified by hegemonic race, class and gender regimes, can use memory to decentre powerful social constructions and reposition themselves as society's subjects. I drew attention to the contested nature of the knowledge that presides with clandestine neutrality in Business Education subjects in schools and how such knowledge is a source rich with pedagogical potential. Teacher education pedagogy courses present as opportune spaces for the troubling of administered knowledges and the creation of alternate ways of thinking about the economic world. I outlined the theoretical influences that shape my classroom interventions and how these particular appropriations have potential to unearth the subtext of the normal and taken for granted.

I make no claim to grand accomplishments of my pedagogic interventions and am mindful that I have limited control over the effects of my actions. I do however introduce two exploratory constructs ('bridging pedagogical moment' and 'compassionate listening') as exploratory tools for pedagogy that have potential for further research and development. Given that each new pedagogical encounter is different and that I cannot foresee the effects of my actions, I reflected on how theory has helped me learn to become more

comfortable with plurality and my own personal troubled disposition. Finally, I signaled the enormous potential of self-study as research methodology for the continuous theorisation of personal pedagogical theories and the production of the 'new'.

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Strutting and fretting, a drama education retrospective

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Abstract

This article views through memory work my own practice as a Drama Education lecturer and how it has come into being and evolved through the impact of influential teachers, events and processes. The theoretical basis is an existential one as I interrogate what it means to be – to be who I am, to be a teacher educator and to be a teacher educator in drama. I use a narrative inquiry approach, drawing on constructs of narratology in my methodology. A narrative approach recognises that identity is not constructed autonomously, but in relation to others (Nicholson, 2005). Now on the brink of retirement, I look back at my career and bring memory forward to try to arrive at an understanding of the forces that shaped my work and how the critical emancipatory pedagogy that I now espouse was an unforeseen yet logical outcome of my life's influences and my constant yearning towards self-improvement and self-awareness. I make use of a self-interview as a means of shaping memories into a story that captures significant periods and people in my education. Elements of critical events theory are employed to ask what I did, why I did it and what the implications of those actions are for my current and future practice and for drama pedagogy in general.

> **We shall not cease from exploration**
> **And the end of all our exploring**
> **Will be to arrive where we started**
> **And know the place for the first time.**
>
> **(**T S Eliot)

Introduction

Using the metaphor of photography, the novelist Isabel Allende says of memory, ". . .memory prints in stark black and white, the grays get lost along the way" (Allende, 2002, p.227). If this is the case, I believe that it is those shadings of gray that sometimes stir the mind to begin to focus and look more closely at what is remembered in black and white. I suppose this is what leads to focalisation in a story – the 'prism' or perspective through which the events are presented (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). A choice is made from the various points of view from which the elements of a story can be presented. This focalisation can be seen as the relationship between who perceives and what is

perceived and colours the story with subjectivity (Bal, 1997). My focalisation in this article is that of remembering in story form why I do what I do as a drama educator and what I care about (doing). This narrative is an explanation and a sharing of my education*al* influence in my own learning (Whitehead, 2009, p.103), the kind of teaching I do and the field I contribute to and learn from.

The narrative approach

In this narrative inquiry, I have used the method of a self-interview to tell my story. I did this because, I needed to organise and structure the memories that flowed once I began to question why I do what I do. A self-interview can be used as a tool at different moments in an inquiry process – as preparation, documentation or as a reflection tool once the work has been completed (Everybody's Toolbox, 2007). The self or auto-interview as it is sometimes called, is used by artists as a self investigatory tool to explain various influences and movements in their artistic development. I have used it as reflective tool to look back on my learning experiences in drama. It served as a technique to keep me focused on "critical events" (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.71), selecting people, events and places that I believe have shaped my teaching style and my educational persona. "Specific events (and I would add specific **people**) are key determinants in how we recall our life experiences" say Webster and Mertova (2007, p.71). My evolution of self as educator is the aspect that I have focused on and tried to excavate. My intention is not just to tell my story, but also to show how educators can play a crucial role in what we choose to become. I anticipate critique that will help strengthen, challenge and develop my drama pedagogy even further as I see myself on an unending quest to "improve what I am doing" (Whitehead, 2009, p.106).

In the story below, the sense of place and time emphasised by narrative researchers such as Connelly and Clandinin (2006) is evident. I focus on South Africa in the 1960s and 70s to paint the landscape for the story. This provides a situated-ness to my experience. The trustworthiness of my story must lie in the 'fabula' – the actual events and real people used in the story (Bal, 1997). Since I am the researcher as well as the 'researched', the self-interview strategy helped with the question of trustworthiness or validity. Feldman says that issues of validity are important because when we engage in reflective processes that focus on ourselves (as in the construction of autobiographical narratives), we cannot be sure of the accuracy of what we see. That is because when we reflect, we do not know if what we see in the mirror is accurate or

the distorted view provided by a funhouse mirror. Our new knowledge, understanding, or insight may be flawed because it is based on a distortion of the world (Feldman, 2003).

In novels, says Carolyn Ellis, "you have the freedom to construct your own plot and character rather than the responsibility to connect your writing to your memory of actual people and events" (Ellis, 2004, p.333). Since this is not a novel, I had to be responsible by trying to recall events and people as accurately as I could, given that I am relying on my memory. I tried moving 'beyond nostalgia' (Mitchell and Weber, 1999) or self-indulgence and stayed within an academic parameter, hence the interview format. I have used my memory of poetry in the interview as it expresses better than I could the feelings and emotions that my memories of the past evoked. The academic quotations in the interview highlight the 'then' (experience) and 'now' (reflection) aspects.

The stylistic narrative decision to move between first and third person in the self-interview (being both interviewer and interviewee) helped me find what Ellis describes as a demonstration of "both strength and vulnerability" (Ellis, 2004, p.53). Writing about one's own memories exposes one and leaves one feeling extremely vulnerable, particularly when writing for an unknown audience. The device of the interview provided the security of academic structure and the opportunity for reflection. Writing this article has helped me make my tacit knowledge explicit and therefore accessible for future use. As Perselli (2005, p.29) explains, "in autobiography. . . where the protagonist and author are the same person, it would seem as though the opportunity to stabilize these elements and make them knowable is maximized, so that the act of writing becomes the opportunity eventually for greater self-knowledge."

Reflecting on my practice

I am at a personal crossroads now since I am on the brink of retirement. I find myself asking questions about who I am or who I am still becoming. Palmer (1998, p.7) asks, "Who is the self that teaches?" This introspection has led me to ask what it means to be – in my case, to be a teacher educator involved in Drama Education. Why did I choose Drama and why did I want to teach it? So, I draw from my memories to find answers. At the same time, I examine the kind of teacher educator I have become. What prompts me to support students in the way I do, why is it important to me to ensure that my students feel secure and affirmed and free to say whatever is on their minds? I also ask

why I have moved away in my teaching from a rather colonially inspired approach to Drama in Education (DIE) to a more fluid, constantly evolving, contextually based methodology.

My recent publications in the field of Drama Education have made reference to an applied theatre (Nicholson, 2005) approach and the emergence of a critical emancipatory pedagogy. I refer also to the need to make space in my drama work for the voices of my students to emerge more constructively than I have before. Like bell hooks, I want to teach in a manner that "respects and cares for the souls" of my students so that I can "provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (hooks, 1994, p.13). I try to open young minds to the infinite possibilities of the world and their own ability to achieve so much. The content and theory of my teaching is of necessity discipline and curriculum driven, but the topics for drama exploration allow for much student input. I should feel ideally placed, and most times I do, but I came to realise that, although my students are very well prepared for their teaching careers (this is corroborated by reports from schools), there is often a lack of independent thinking and a poor commitment to social action. I saw that being compassionate and caring, allowing students to speak their minds and to have fun in my classes was not enough. They needed to be freed in other ways.

It was when the topics I chose to explore through drama making lay outside of my experience (risky sexual behaviour in young people, xenophobia amongst students, teenage pregnancy, etc.) that I found that I had to reverse the roles in my classroom in a way that I had not experienced previously. Heathcote's (1995) 'mantle of the expert' belonged to the students in a totally different way. I had to trust my students implicitly when it came to selecting the content and the message of the plays on HIV and AIDS for example. It was the only way to arrive at knowledge that was situated, relevant and real (Nicholson, 2005). At the end of an article I wrote (Singh, 2011a), I confessed how difficult it was for me to let go the reins but how well the students picked them up and how glad I was that I stepped back from the playmaking process when I did. Abandoning my missionary zeal to help students meant I learned more about students' attitudes towards HIV and AIDS than I would have in my own research endeavours as a middle-aged Indian woman lecturer. By resisting the impulse to censor or moralise about their main character's sexual permissiveness, I allowed the play to be truly their work and represent their take on the topic.

Looking at a book chapter I wrote earlier (Singh, 2011b, p.44), I noticed that I had used "we" quite frequently – as in "reflecting critically on the stories we encountered helped us understand how to use them creatively and responsibly". But I was writing on my own about my own use of narrative inquiry. As I read further, I realised that the words 'we' and 'our' featured quite prominently. I saw that I had located myself in the midst of the young people with whom I was working and writing about. I could not separate myself from my students.

Recently, while working on a short arts-based project with a group of mature in-service teachers with little arts experience, I found that I had to forego the usual developmental approach to building confidence about performing. This is contrary to my usual (DIE) step by step process of play-building. Instead, I provided some clear cut performance techniques without too much 'process' input. I said to the class "you are all experienced and competent teachers with a wealth of knowledge. Just use the drama techniques I have introduced to help you tell the story." They were very nervous about working on their own, but I quite literally walked away. When I returned, the piece had taken shape and was ready for refining. Why did this work? I had trusted in my own drama teaching and in my students' ability to make the connections themselves. This trust freed me and the students to produce creative and thought-provoking drama. I moved my focus from perfecting the piece for the examination to allowing these adult learners a chance to 'play', to experiment and find a new way of expressing themselves. I believe that contextual conditions must be factored into outcomes. I had to allow adult learners the space to learn at their own pace and in their own way – not imposing my 'standards' of performance work at the cost of dignity and self-fulfillment. The 'A' or 'B' assessment was not as important as the freedom to make choices (and mistakes) and to take responsibility for their own learning. Had I insisted on polishing the piece, the joy of performing would have gone and the resulting stress would probably have reduced the good assessment they did finally achieve.

To sum up my practice, I would say that I have developed over the years a personal set of values or a "living theory" if you will (Whitehead, 2009, p.107) that informs and guides my teaching and social interactions. I espouse what I call my 'ACTS' as my personal pedagogic philosophy. This means I **affirm** my students in every way possible; I **care** about my discipline; I **trust** in my own ability and that of my students; I see education as a **service** to all.

Focalising

These reflections on my pedagogy – the ability to 'let go' at the right moment, the curbing of my insistence on top marks for assessment and the location of

myself in the midst of my students' work made me think about what I do and why. In taking an existentialist stance towards this retrospective of a career in Drama Education, I am guided by Feldman's three characteristics of personhood, viz. situatedness, the emergence of the self and freedom (Feldman, 2009). These three strands of enquiry flow through my story as I examine how I have constructed myself, the choices I have made, the beliefs that have sustained me and the values that underpin my teaching. I understand in this examination that it becomes necessary to know yourself and to make that knowing visible. I do this through the self-interviews that follow. Palmer says that this knowing of self is neither selfish nor narcissistic, and is as crucial to good teaching as knowing one's students and subject (Palmer, 1998). Indeed, as Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2008, p.17), highlight, "addressing the self can contribute to our understanding of teaching and teacher education". Further, "removing the self from teaching makes it difficult if not impossible to theorize or understand teaching in any meaningful way" (Pithouse, Mitchell, and Weber, 2009, p.47). So, I embark on this "intentional reflective process" or narrative inquiry into self, as a way of "gathering up knowledge of practice, a way of knowing", and of knowing that I know (Lyons and LaBoskey, 2002, p.3).

The story

Interview 1

<div align="center">

I remember, I remember
The house where I was born. . .

(Robert Hood)

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So tell me Lorraine, when did you first become interested in Drama?

My interest in drama was born in the so-called elocution lessons that were given at primary school by a visiting specialist speech and drama teacher. I was fortunate I suppose that the colonialist mind set of the time made it important to the nuns who ran the school I attended that little 'Indian' children learn to speak 'proper' English. Middle class Indian parents were also anxious that their children had every opportunity to improve their chances in a world where race, ethnicity, class, academic prowess and language, especially pronunciation, defined success. Cultural assimilation was not contested or even understood by my parents' generation. Were we conforming to a colonial mindset or trying to change our Indian identity by learning to speak standard English? Or was this an attempt at a kind of resistance by showing that we could speak the language of the 'oppressors' as well as they could? I am not

sure but I do not regret my 'English' colonial-style school education. Because it was here in the elocution class as a shy ten-year-old that I first found (almost literally) my voice.

Zimbabwean poet, Fungai Machirori (2011), writes of her remorse as she looks back at her early schooling which excluded African literature, philosophy, politics and history. But she says she does not regret her private school privileged education because in later years it helped her appreciate her African identity even more.

What was the teaching of elocution like?

That one class was the highlight of the week, a space where we made lots of noise and learned through laughter and games – an unheard of concept in the 1950s in an Indian Catholic primary school in South Africa. Furthermore, the visiting teacher was someone who seemed happy to be there, who encouraged you to talk and who actually listened to what you said. This was even stranger and set her apart from the everyday reality of school. What was most strange was the fact that although she was a 'white lady' – a figure associated with fear and power, these were never evident in those classes. It was for her sake that I worked hard at my oral examination pieces. My first attempt earned me a B+ instead of the A the teacher expected. I felt her disappointment, although she said nothing. But to disappoint her was to reduce the joy we experienced in her lessons, so I had to succeed. It was because she believed I could get an A and not because I believed I could, that I made sure I had an A the next time – and all the times after that.

Teachers, says Palmer, "possess the power to create conditions that can help students learn a great deal – or keep them from learning much at all" (Palmer, 1998, p.6).

You mention the issue of race difference. How significant was this for you as a child?

It had a tremendous effect on our lives in terms of identity and how we saw ourselves. The subliminal message of our 'inferiority' was pervasive. It came through to us in our education via our teachers and the curriculum content as it did in the laws and regulations of segregation. Whiteness meant superiority, knowledge and power. Anything else was second rate. Yet, in ourselves, privately, in our families and communities we knew we had knowledge and ability. So as children we began to develop that two-ness of being, the double consciousness that Du Bois (1903) wrote of. The danger remained of

becoming what others perceived you to be.

What was the lasting effect of the elocution teacher on you?

It was in the last class at the end of grade 10, when she asked what some of us who were moving on to senior high school what we intended to do in the future that I found myself blurting out – much to my friends' surprise and my own consternation – that this was what I wanted to become – "a Speech and Drama teacher like you". And I did.

Did you continue with Drama at high school?

There was no formal Drama at senior high school, but there were two strong influences that made an impact on the values I espouse as a teacher today and also helped me on the way to achieving my immediate goals. One was my teacher of English who inspired by her deep knowledge, her poise, elegance and confidence. Her English literature class introduced play readings to me – we went through our Shakespeare texts by reading aloud so that metre and rhythm and meaning became one. I can still quote lines from the plays and poems we studied – the written word and the spoken word came alive.

The second influence was the teacher who prepared the debating team and helped me through my public speaking events. Yes, 'my public speaking'! – what a long way from the 10-year-old who froze on stage in her first oral exam. Gently, effectively and with great compassion she coached and tutored, all the while opening our minds to new thoughts and different perspectives. Our education at that time was still of the 'banking' (Freire, 1970) or transmission variety. We were empty vessels to be filled with the 'right' knowledge and the right forms of behaviour. But these two teachers opened a tiny window onto another world where our abilities and thoughts were sought after, valued and respected.

"The power of our mentors is not necessarily in the models of good teaching they give us, . . .their power is in their capacity to awaken a truth

within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives" (Palmer, 1998, p.21).

But the battle was far from over and the butterflies in the tummy before a speaking event were more like clawing dragons that I had to slay. I remember being physically sick many times before an important inter-school debate or speech contest, but there was always this compulsion to go on because people

expected me to succeed – the teacher who gave up her time to help me, the friends on the debating team and my family who supported all my endeavours.

"As we live our situated existences and construct ourselves, we have an existential freedom to make choices about what we do, even when our ability to act is constrained" (Feldman, 2009, p.39).

There were many constraints to overcome, personal and political, yet the greatest was my own fear – of failure, of inadequacy or public exposure.

Interview 2

It seemed that out of battle I escaped. . .

(Wilfred Owen)

How well did your university training equip you for a career in Drama?

Emerging from the confines of high school to university did not automatically bring the kind of freedom enjoyed by varsity students today. In apartheid South Africa, every aspect of life was prescribed and proscribed. So, I was forced to attend the university for Indians, located at that time on Salisbury Island in the middle of Durban bay. . . I thought I wanted to become a speech therapist but the university did not offer it at the time. I enrolled for a BA degree majoring in English and Speech and Drama with a teaching diploma to follow.

The Drama department on Salisbury Island was headed by the renowned Durban actor, David Horner, who was as humane and urbane a man as one could hope to meet in that drab and desolate setting. The Island could only be accessed via a ferry across the harbour or a long car trip through insalubrious docklands. Very few students owned cars. As the ferries did not run all day, one could easily be marooned on the island if one (literally) missed the boat.

Speech and Drama was one of my major subjects, it was also one of my teaching methods and it was the subject I chose to take an Honours degree in. I say I chose this subject but I think I must agree with Palmer (1998) that we don't find a subject to teach – the subject also finds us. I knew very little about drama, about the world of theatre and performance, yet it drew me and I responded on an instinctual level – it seemed to fill a gap in my life somehow.

"We were drawn to a body of knowledge because it shed light on our identity as well as on the world" (Palmer, 1998, p.25).

What did you enjoy most at varsity?

Whilst I enjoyed many of my lectures and the new awakenings that came with academic learning and socialising with other young minds, it was the Speech and Drama department that became again the 'safe space' for me. I was in a place where creative engagement was encouraged, where fun and enjoyment accompanied learning and where the body, mind and soul were involved. A spirit of camaraderie developed amongst the students in that class which was not possible in other subjects. It was no wonder that I met my life's partner in that drama department. Love was a natural consequence in that atmosphere.

Students in the class were accepted as individuals and their uniqueness was recognised and affirmed. In this period I discovered that apart from my public speaking voice, I also had an actor's voice. The more roles and characters I played, the better I became at controlling the fear of performance. The more stage fright I experienced, the more exhilaration I felt when I overcame it. I discovered the value of good acting technique and preparation which hold a performance together whatever else may be going on.

What motivated you during this oppressive era?

Our hunger for knowledge, for a glimpse of the world outside our own confinement, made us accept many indignities that today we would question. All public entertainment, transport, education, places of worship – everything in fact, was organised along racially separate lines. The university staff controlled how we dressed, what we studied and who we associated with. Any deviation targeted one as a troublemaker – a candidate for expulsion or worse – investigation by the police Special Branch. The motivation for a good education included the idea that one's qualification could provide a 'ticket' out of this cycle of oppression.

Were there other lecturers who influenced you?

My other major and teaching specialisation was English. It was the professor of the English method class, popularly known by his initials ptp (always in lower case), that contributed much to my style of teaching in the classroom and made me persevere as a novice teacher to challenge and stimulate my pupils' writing skills. He wrote poetry and very soon we were all writing haikus, his favourite form. All our experiences as students, and as people,

became the content of the creative writing class. And he shared his own experiences with us, wrote about himself as well and taught that we should never ask of our students what we ourselves are not prepared to do. Every class became an adventure – we could never predict what would happen in his lectures. How lucky I was to have such a mentor. He said of marking our pupils' work that 'remarks' were more helpful than marks. It is something I still practice to this day.

Like bell hooks, "I have been most inspired by those teachers who have had the courage to transgress those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning" (hooks, 1994, p.13).

Interview 3
New York, New York, it's a wonderful town. . .

Why did you go to New York?

In 1978, after a year of teaching and four years as a junior lecturer, I won a Fulbright scholarship to study for my Masters at New York University. Having the opportunity to take a bite of the 'big apple' for almost two years remains one of the most rewarding events of my career. I could write volumes on my experiences there and what it was like to be in a class with an author like Nellie McCaslin whose work I had used in my own teaching. Drama teachers would be very envious to know that I saw people like Richard Schechner and Jersy Grotowski. The 'big names' in Drama were all at NYU in the late 1970s. It was the right place at the right time.

What did you study?

Doing a course work Masters gave me an opportunity to attend a range of classes with a number of experts. I soaked up every elective I thought would help fill the gaps in my training. I took courses in puppetry, creative drama, special needs drama and a wonderful course on Indian Theatre and Dance with a visiting Professor from India that made me reflect on my 'Indianness' in a new way. All of this enriched and illuminated my Drama knowledge immeasurably. And I saw every play I could afford.

So it was a wonderful experience?

It would be wrong to present my New York experience as all smooth sailing without any "narrative wreckage" (Whitehead, 2009, p.116). I did experience

isolation and difficulties with the new ways of learning. Culture shock permeated every aspect of life and the rudeness and indifference of the people would have sent me back home within a month if I was not there with my husband. We expected a warm reprieve from apartheid, but often found unfriendliness and arrogance. Together, we struggled to find our way and so supported each other. Being naturally shy and reticent was not helpful in that environment – even in educational Drama, there was a competitiveness that I found disturbing and destructive.

"everyone has encountered difficulties that have required spiritual resilience and a connection with a loving energy to move beyond the difficulties" (Whitehead, 2009, p.116).

Did you have any particularly difficult moments in your study?

My worst moments came when I went in as a student drama teacher once a week to a school in Greenwich Village. This was an 'alternative' school where there was no set timetable; children as young as six could choose what they wished to do and when. The learners in my class were not accustomed to being told what to do and they just wander away if they were bored or could not do a task. I soon became adept at not just having a plan B, but a plan C and D as well. I had to be on my toes to interest, entertain and extend these children whose ages ranged from six to nine in the same class. I told myself that if I survived that one semester in that school, I would be able to teach anywhere in the world. I re-thought all my idealistic notions of education. I began to see the merit of a structured curriculum and thought about how I could marry the chaotic 'freedom' of this open school with the stifling rigidity of the 'normal' schools I was used to.

Do you have any regrets about New York?

I wish now that I was more assertive and took more advantage of my foreign student status to network. But, I had a degree to achieve and a baby to care for, so my life was pretty full.

Did you want to remain in New York or come back to South Africa?

I wonder now how my life would have turned out had I accepted the offer from the university to complete my doctorate. It was tempting – we had grown to love New York – the heat, the cold, the glamour, the dirt, the constant noise and throngs of people. I am so grateful for that experience and the assurance it gave me. I began to feel that at last I knew my field well and could lecture from a secure basis. I had learned so much. But for all that, New York was not

home and so we returned to start our careers all over again – where it really mattered.

Interview 4

**And that's why I have to go back
To so many places in the future
There to find myself. . .**

(Pablo Neruda)

Was it difficult to adjust when you returned?

Yes, I missed the freedom of New York and the countless number of things to do and see. But, I saw also when I returned how connected to life and each other people here are. I felt a tremendous pride in my heritage both as a South African and as an Indian, which I had not felt before. I realised how my double consciousness was strength to be used as resistance. I need no longer judge myself by others' standards and be found wanting. I cannot describe how liberating this near epiphany was for me. It certainly inspired a more critical approach to my work and my interactions with others.

You must have been eager to return to lecturing then.

Since I had to resign my position at the university (married women were appointed on a temporary basis only) when I left for the US, I had no job to come back to. I found temporary lecturing posts, and then finally I was appointed as a subject adviser for Speech and Drama in schools. I worked for almost twenty years amongst in-service teachers bringing this new subject into schools and seeing its many incarnations through new curricula, some of which I helped design. My stint abroad had given me a new confidence and belief in myself. I became friends with many of the teachers with whom I worked, in spite of difficult relations between the Department of Education officials and teaching corps. I tried to establish the *bona fides* of Drama as a school subject in the province.

Why did you leave this post?

There were a number of reasons I left the Department of Education, the main one being that I often felt an internal conflict between the policy I was forced to represent and what I actually believed in. Then I began to feel a little redundant as the Drama exam results were good and I could see the development and growth at all levels. Only very new teachers really needed me. The rest of the time, I was merely repeating the same work every year. I

needed to grow. Finally, I saw an opportunity to lecture again in Drama Education – my first love – and prepare teachers to teach the new Further Education and Training (FET) Drama curriculum for schools. I thought I could offer something worthwhile based on my experience in the schools system. In addition, I had embarked on a PhD and felt I would like to test myself in an academic context. I am constantly driven by a need to learn something new.

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
(T S Eliot)

Thank you Lorraine, for sharing your story.

Analysis of the story

Why did I write this story? Why did I choose certain people and periods? As I said at the start, I needed to come to understand how my current pedagogy evolved. I asked, "Who is the self that teaches"? To answer this question, I used memory to explore my early formative experiences. Telling the story through the device of an interview helped me step away from a purely subjective recounting. I was obliged to cast myself as an interviewer/ researcher and think about the questions that I would ask a person with my background. The self-interview method "[facilitates] a stepping back, a reading of our situated selves as if it were a text to be critically interrogated and interpreted within the broader social, political, and historical contexts that shape our thoughts and actions and constitute our world" (Pithouse *et al.*, 2009, p.45). The interviews brought forward the "shifting aspects of self" and showed how the "othering" I experienced in the apartheid situation and my sojourn away developed my resistance and self knowledge (Hamilton *et al.*, 2008, p.22). In many ways, the title of this article indicates the contradictions in my personal and public life. Whilst I have to 'strut', that is, perform as an actor, a teacher, an academic; I am constantly 'fretting', that is, consumed by insecurities. It also refers to my introspection about what I have achieved in my career.

The choice of questions for the interview is linked to Feldman's (2009) notions of personhood – situatedness, emergence of self, and freedom. The situatedness or context comes through references to race and the Dickensian style of teaching in the 1950s and 60s, negated by the 'elocution' class. It also arises in the repressive atmosphere at university, again countered by

experiences in Drama. The emergence of self comes from my account of the people whose personalities and practices had a profound influence – either on my self-esteem or on my teaching style. Lastly, the notion of freedom is found in the questions that allude to choices I made. I chose to teach Drama and not English, I chose not to continue as a school teacher (which then led to the Masters at NYU) and I chose not to remain in New York but to return to South Africa. I exercised the freedom to give up a career as an education official in my fifties and begin (again) as an academic.

Webster and Mertova (2007, p.73) note that "a critical event as told in a story reveals a change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller". The only clearly delineated change experience for me was the effect of my stay in the USA. All my experiences there crystallised within a few days of my return into a newfound confidence and sense of worth. The other episodes in my story are not single events as such. The childhood influences were gradual and related to extrinsic events which refer to historical and political events (Webster and Mertova, 2007). If I question why I chose these early memories it becomes clear to me now that it was the larger context of the apartheid era oppression exacerbated by the strict Indian Christian cultural setting that made the contradictory experiences the more significant. Everything that occurs in the educational situation is "affected by the educator's past and present. . . and of course the students with which they are engaged" (Feldman, 2009, p.39). I believe all of these factors, the repressions of apartheid included, have converged to form my pedagogic identity.

Conclusion

Embarking on this retrospective narrative inquiry has led me to a better understanding of my practice and how I can still develop it. I have come to understand the effects of the repressive age I grew up in and use this as a means of connection with my students. I understand the tremendous influence certain people had on shaping my self-image and my choice of career. The compassion, friendliness and difference they represented helped me develop these qualities in my own teaching. These qualities formed the basis of my own living theory. "Knowing more about ourselves as teachers and teacher educators changes us, provokes growth, jolts us out of complacency – and sometimes radically, in ways that can seem transformative" (Pithouse *et al*., 2009, p.48). Self-knowledge gives me the ability to empathise more with my students and feel their uncertainties and so I constantly adjust the curriculum to be more inclusive.

What does it mean to me to be a Drama teacher educator? It means that one applies the techniques of Drama in Education in a way that releases the students and motivates them rather than reifying the theory. It means I push students to look "beyond my traditional notions about the learning-to-teach process" (Hamilton, 2006, p.113). It means that I have arrived at a way to help students "discover and explore educational issues that they genuinely care about and identify some practicable ways in which they might translate this concern into action within their own school and community settings" (Pithouse *et al.*, 2009, p.56). It means I know that I can find a balance between the ideas of world-renowned theorists like Heathcote, Bolton and O'Toole and the South African context. Moving constantly between content and context, my greatest satisfaction comes when I see the excitement and enthusiasm in my new students after a Drama session. I am re-affirmed by their awakening and joy in their own achievement.

More importantly, it also means I understand how the teachers who helped me 'find my voice', the lecturers who became the role models for my teaching style and my 'exile' away from South Africa, which helped me see so clearly who I really was, helped shaped the person I am now. But, I am able to resist being a composite or clone of others as much as I was able to resist what apartheid would have made me. In telling my story, I become more aware that I am responsible ultimately for who I am and what I have become (Feldman, 2009).

Looking back on my career, I feel a sense of self-worth, a pride in my pedagogy which takes the sting out of my concluding quotation:

> **…………………………a poor player**
> **That struts and frets his hour upon the stage**,
> **And then is heard no more**;
>
> (Macbeth Act V Sc V).

Epilogue

"Memory is fiction. We select the brightest and the darkest, ignoring what we are ashamed of, and so embroider the tapestry of our lives" (Allende, 2002, p.303).

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An enquiry into the effects of my early learning experiences on my current teaching practice

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Abstract

As a South African educator, I am haunted, positively or negatively, by my own early learning experiences during Apartheid. In this article, I explore my early learning experiences and my current teaching practice through a reflective journey. Firstly, I consider the need to be reflective as a teacher. Then I weave a narrative of personal learning experiences through my early school days and current teaching practice, using the school context, pedagogy, socialisation and discipline as categories of investigation. Lastly, I critically contrast my past learning experiences with my current teaching practice. In exploring my past experiences and reflecting critically on my current teaching pedagogy, I have come to see how I was able to dispel anguish and become an optimistic teacher. In order to realise the change we desire, we as teachers have to embrace change and that can happen.

Memory is the weapon![1]

Introduction

South Africa has shared a past history of unprecedented violence towards the majority of its citizens. This period of brutality by the state towards the majority of its populace was globally deemed as a crime against humanity. However after being the pariah of the world, South Africa underwent a miraculous regime change, which made us the envy of the world. This duality of despair and hope is my memory of a past that has impacted on my learning and influenced my teaching, respectively. In this article, I explore my early learning experiences and my current teaching practice through a reflective journey. In doing so I hope to be the change my country needs to dispel despair and to instil optimism for the future.

Firstly, I deliberate on the need to be reflective as a teacher. Then I weave a

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[1]   Courtesy of Don Mattera's classic book with the full title of: *Minnet är mitt vapen/Memory Is the Weapon*

narrative of personal learning experiences through my early school days and
current teaching practice, using the school context, pedagogy, socialisation
and discipline as categories of investigation. Lastly, I critically contrast my
past learning experiences with my current teaching practice.

Reflection as a meaning making process

I am interested in how we make sense of memories. Descartes' proposition:
cogito ergo sum "**I think**, **therefore I am**" intrigues me (Newman, 2010). To
me, this suggests that our memories are fashioned by thought. John Dewey is
an important scholar in the area of thinking. Rodgers' (2002) paper on Dewey
is testimony to that and delves specifically into reflective thinking.

> Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the
> next with deeper understanding of its relationship and connections to other experiences and
> ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of
> the individual, and, ultimately, society. It is the means to essentially moral ends (Rodgers,
> 2002).

My first encounter with reflective writing was triggered by my participation in
a recent university tutorial based on four self reflective questions from
Allender and Allender's (2006) paper. I wrote a letter to my son, an
undergraduate student teacher in his second year, using the following
questions to frame my narrative: "(1) What did [I] like about school as a
child? (2) What bothered [me] in school? (3) What aspects of [my] schooling
did [I] always say [I] would change if [I] were [a] teacher? And, (4) what
influence does the way [I] were taught have on how [I am] teaching now
(Allender and Allender, 2006, p.14)?" This was a sobering experience which
put me in touch with deep-rooted memories, which in turn exposed my
perpetual optimism about my chosen career.

For me, this duality in sense making of memories and reflection is best
understood by drawing upon Pithouse's (2011) conception of 'narrative
inquiry' which Pithouse sees as ". . .a mode of thought that understands the
self as situated by the storylines and setttings of an unfolding life story. . ."
(Pithouse, 2011, p.178). A deeper impetus for reflective writing or historical
storytelling is encapsulated in what Pithouse refers to as 'self-study' which

points to teachers examining their own teaching and learning through their

memories, with the aim of improving their own pedagogy. This view is supported by Cole (2011), who draws our attention to memory as much more than mere reflection of one's past; Cole sees it both as a study discipline and a method to construct one's identity. In the narrative I present in this article, I attempt to make sense of the duality of 'memory work' and 'memory studies' through remembering of my early 'childhood' learning experiences (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnutt, 2011). I am however not narrowing the meaning of memory, on the contrary I adhere to the 'embodiment' of the broader use of the term 'memory' (Cole, 2011). My pedagogical narrative is interspersed with the broader meaning of memory work, which is interrelated to the vast themes of remembering spaces as both study and method (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnutt, 2011).

An example of reflective remembering that has influenced my own meaning making process is Kunene's (2009) exploration of her lived educational experience as she relays and reflects on the South African Education reforms post apartheid which are closely linked to her own growth during the tumultuous time of change. Kunene's reflective thinking is intense and poses deep cutting introspective questions on her, and in fact every teacher's, consciousness by asking whether we are being "educative or miseducative" to others (Dewey, 1963, as cited in Kunene, 2009, p.140). Her story from primary through to high school is reminiscent of my own.

Makhanya (2010) refers to reflection as a means of recounting a journey through life in order to effect changes in current practice. As a Department of Education subject advisor researching her own practice, Makhanya's deliberate intent is to encourage her teacher participants to reflect on their experiences and to share these with her and each other. Her expectation is to understand what shaped the teachers' lives and how it has impacted on their practice. Furthermore, she is interested in understanding their experiences in the light of possible connections with her own past experiences. Both Kunene, who states, ". . .I began to teach the child rather than the prescribed curriculum. . ." (Kunene, 2009, p.145) and Makhanya, who explains, "I found myself moving away from being a researcher and I discussed about how to teach reading, referring the teachers to. . ., which the teachers claimed they had never seen. . ." (Makhanya, 2010, p.57) make profound critical decisions to teach, respectively. I draw heavily on both Makhanya and Kunene's experiences to make the assumption that good teachers are made and seldom born, because the more I read about lived experiences and self reflection and how these impact on the present practice, I am convinced that best practice is

begotten from remembering what was done right in the past or from making a conscious decision not to repeat what was done wrong.

Thus, I have come to understand how Mitchell and Weber (1998) actually use the phrase "recuperating memories of school" (Mitchell and Weber, 1998, p.46), suggesting that reflective memory accounts of our early experiences of school can lead to a beneficial improvement in our work as teachers. I see this as crucial in any teacher's awareness of self reflection in order to bring about change in terms of how we ourselves learn and teach, which must in essence radically differ (or rather be positively influenced) from (by) past experiences, this is what I understand by 'usable past' (Zandy, 1995, as cited in Mitchell and Weber, 1998).

My early learning experiences

School itself was a blur, especially the junior grades

School has been an integral part of my life. From an early age, I remember waiting for my older friend to return from school and to replay his entire day at school with me, which demonstrates ". . .how children imitate or 'play out' [authoritarian roles] where they can impose school work on the less powerful. . ." (Mitchell and Weber, 1998, p.46). I made his experiences mine. Learning from him was ". . .about power and control. . ." (Mitchell and Weber, 1998, p.50) and the subjection to authority was due to his age and access to knowledge. I was able to read and count before I met teachers! I recall reading everything: magazines such as 'Drum', and even the photo novel, the craze of the time. It was the time of separate education, of growing up in a Coloured[2] community. I was vaguely aware of being 'mixed'[3] because we were a potpourri of different hues in my family, as well as in the greater community. Though the country was burdened with undue violence such as forced removals, oppressive laws and police brutality; I experienced corrective guidance at home, in school and in the community. I attribute this deliberate communal shielding from the ". . .restrictive, unresponsive, oppressive education. . ." to teachers that will ". . .rather than emulate[e] traditions, try to be humanistic. . ." (Allender and Allender, 2006, p.14). In my opinion it is plausible to be consciously shielded [by teachers] from the

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2   A racial annotation to people of mixed lineage

3   In response to White, African or Asian

absurdity of an abnormal reality [education] of poverty.

The senior grades at primary school are indelibly etched in my memory

Our primary school for Coloureds was in an urban setting under the then pennant of separate development. Even though the senior grades at primary school are indelibly etched in my memory, I developed an early desire to move to high school from standard 4 (grade 6). The nearest high schools were about a kilometre away. One was in town, where the streets were kept tidy by Africans. The other was in the location, where Africans' own front yards never received the same care they showed to the houses in town. Neither the high school in town nor the one in the location was an option to attend for me, due to apartheid.

I can still hear Mr. G.[4] relating the story of Harry de Strandloper, who engaged the Dutch on their arrival in Table Bay in 1652. During these animated story-lessons we were intermittently asked for clarification – and probing questions to construct a deeper understanding of the lesson (Kunene, 2009). This is significant because it was my earliest encounter of race tensions in South Africa. I vividly recall memories about being taunted and teased about my colour and my short curly mop, and Allender and Allender (2006, p.16) aptly describe these as ". . .the wounds we experienced as children". My love for reading was unintentionally fired up by Mr. T.,[5] the choir master and English teacher. An educational deed which I cherish happened when I was quietly denied singing in the school choir, and assigned a school library responsibility that changed my perspective forever. I remember reading Dickens[6] and Shakespeare[7] in the library while others were in choir. Both teachers were interspersing the realities of the day subtly in lessons and depicting the 'hidden curriculum' to us (Kunene, 2009), which were the unspoken and unintended knowledge, values and beliefs we were taught in school.

I lived for the school holidays when older children returned from high school

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[4] Name shortened for anonymity

[5] Name shortened for anonymity

[6] *Tale of two cities*

[7] *Romeo and Juliet*

with stories, books and radio plays to listen to! I relished listening to the radio description of the moon landing in 1969 and knew that learning was important. This was the epitome of what pleasant school days were all about.

I hardly ever recalled being disciplined for frivolous misdemeanours. Specific historical incidents can imprint early memories collectively in groups. In the South African context, a political entrenched social system socialised entire generations collectively with early memories of worthlessness, brutality and poverty, which became the usable past of our recent times (Mitchell and Weber, 1998). To illustrate my contention in the 2011 Teacher Education and Professional Development BEd (Honours) class that I have recently taken, the racial demographics of KwaZulu-Natal is represented by the following groups African, Asian, Coloured and White (the lecturer) (58%, 21%, 14% and 7% respectively). The significance of this is that the African students had horrid recollections of their earlier learning experiences, while the Indian, Coloured and White (lecturer) had, to some extent, gradually more positive recollections of their earlier learning experiences. This could be because teachers whose ". . .earlier experiences were similar. . ." (Makhanya, 2010, p.52) most likely shared the worst atrocities during South Africa's turbulent past, and were thus more inhumane towards their students. Incidentally both Kunene (2009) and Makhanya (2010) depict their early learning experiences, also as negative due to being subjected to harsh corporal punishment. Thus, in my experience, the shared insecurities of a community and in particular a teacher's, could result in teachers being caring and protective, that is 'humanistic', as opposed to unresponsive and oppressive (Allender and Allender, 2006).

The four years at high school were demoralising

I attended the only high school for Coloureds in Bloemfontein, the capital city of the Orange Free State. All my beliefs of race and identity which I had carved carefully for myself at primary school were systematically demolished by the teachers I encountered at high school.

The principal was an extremely authoritarian Afrikaner nationalist with strict Calvinistic educational views. His mannerism was usually mimicked or played out by students to intimidate or bully others. Being different, made me a perfect target to be taunted and used as the hapless one in the mimicry where ". . .children imitate or 'play out' authority structures where they can. . . on the less powerful. . ." (Mitchell and Weber, 1998, p.46). The teachers, the majority being white females and only two reticent coloured teachers, feared

the headmaster's authoritative style and were collectively quietly submissive in his wake, but equally mordant towards us.

Similarly to Kunene (2009), I learned no meaningful skills from my high school teachers who were for the most part disinterested in our lives and shared no meaningful experiences as to where we lived or who our parents were – it was so detached and for the same reason, their names have not remained even vaguely in my memory.

Living in the school's boarding establishment meant that I was infused with the experiences of peers who hailed from distant places. Most of my learning I gained from my peers; I listened to their stories about visits to seaside resorts and mountain lodges, concepts of which I had no idea, but which remained memories that will forever be part of what influenced me later to become a teacher. In addition, my love for reading increased and I gained insight from experiences from the books I read. These processes became important aspects of my own learning. Jarvis (2004) refers to this type of learning as experiential learning and defines it as:

> [A] combination of processes whereby whole persons construct experiences of situations and transform them into knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, emotions and the senses, and integrate the outcomes into their own biographies (Jarvis, 2004, p.111).

In order to gain optimal cooperation from us, excessive punishment was meted out for not regurgitating tasks precisely. High school teachers' were under tremendous pressure to produce a 100% pass rate in matric and this was normally enforced with brutal subjugation and an abnormally high drop-out rate, especially in standard 9 (grade 11). Kunene (2009) described similar experiences of total disregard for critical thinking or original thought at the convent school she attended. The four years at high school were demoralising and were aimed at making us nothing else than 'yes men' for the oppressive social system. It is thus not surprising that very few institutions of higher

learning existed, but also that very few students could attend, and of those the majority lacked critical thinking skills and a propensity for self-discovery, important for university study. Bunting (2006) makes a significant analysis of the hamstrung academic output of the ten historically disadvantaged universities and seven historically disadvantaged technikons designated for the use of black (African, Coloured and Indian) South Africans, whose drop-out rate was extremely higher than the historically white universities and technikons (Bunting, 2006).

Unprecedented learning at tertiary institutions

I attended the only university for Coloureds, which was 1600 kilometres away from my home. I spent three years at the University of the Western-Cape and another four years at Rand College of Education and obtained no qualification (on hindsight the dismal preparation I received at high school and the political agenda thereto attached was solely to blame) at the former and a higher teacher's diploma at the latter. Despite the political turmoil of the 70s and with no qualification, my learning escalated to unprecedented heights and through the turmoil of the 80s I was able to cope well with college life and study while teaching, thereafter.

My current teaching practice

Teaching at an idyllic school for the first 15 years

My teaching career started in idyllic conditions. The school was in close proximity to the sea, had sprawling grounds and no lack of amenities to amuse and inspire primary school children. I was fortunate to know teachers and community leaders that identified the need to intervene in the lives of the inner city children, whose parents were mostly jobless, drug addicts and substance abusers. A school away from home was established to provide regular meals, adult involvement and supervision through caretaker parents and an intensified schooling system based on remediation and improvement of curriculum gaps in the children's lives.

I consciously decided to involve myself in the teaching of underprivileged children. This awareness developed from observing poor children becoming increasingly uninvolved in mainstream education. I learned from the onset, as a newly appointed teacher, that the needs of the children and not the syllabus (Kunene, 2009) were at the forefront, in terms of play and learning. These children seldom coped in the school due to malnutrition, overcrowding at home and persistent harassment through the aforementioned factors.
The duration of the intervention was for three months only and required a degree of urgency and empathy to bring about a change in the children. Some of the redress was easily observable, for instance, children, who were malnourished, regained strength in record time and their concentration improved and they became adept at their school work.

The teacher/pupil ratio was very manageable and optimally designed for learner involvement; there was at least one professional teacher and two non-professional members available for every twenty children. The need seldom arose for the children to be admonished and if it did occur it was always done with due care that the teacher or caregiver was the substitute parent and that the discipline should be tempered accordingly. Later being senior, and the more experienced teacher, I assumed the role of acting principal, and planned various activities, which eliminated idleness amongst learners, and lessened the need for unsolicited discipline even more. However, when the new winds of change swept across South Africa our school was deemed too exclusive, especially in view of the total degradation of other schools in the newly formed KwaZulu-Natal Education Department.

A complicated dysfunctional inner city school

During the restructuring of the provincial education system in the 90s, I was moved to a newly formed KZN administered school in the Umbilo area. The school was a recently vacated Afrikaans medium school, which closed due to dwindling pupil numbers. Having taught in a school geared to change the lives of others; I felt suitably capable dealing with children from informal settlements and underprivileged city dwellers.

Unfortunately the school culture, especially amongst staff, was from the onset a difficulty that I did not anticipate. The racially mixed staff had different views, and being acting deputy head in the school management team, the principal and I found it difficult to get the school to function. We were forever embroiled in energy depleting conflict situations, such as absenteeism,

unprofessional conduct and sheer neglect of professional duties. For the learners, who were in such need, it was a constant struggle just concentrating in class, as they were presumably hungry and had walked long distances to get to school. The teachers were demoralised; their needs in terms of remuneration were always on the agenda. Obviously this impacted heavily on the teachers' work ethics and manifested in unpreparedness, reluctance in attending after school in-service training and a flagrant disrespect for authority.

Neither the school nor the teachers were really ready to deal with the newly formed diverse cultural mix. These unresolved differences eventually permeated down to the learners, being abetted by teachers I believe, who

demanded that the principal and I leave the school. The school was closed, for an indefinite period due to strike action by the learners, at the end of the second term of 1998.

Teaching and managing, both learners and teachers respectively, at the school was both challenging and scary. With an unwilling work force it was extremely difficult therefore to have a semblance of decent discipline amongst the learners, and teaching and learning became a challenge. This resulted in flagrant disregard of directives regarding corporal punishment, and when disciplinary action was instituted, further polarisation amongst the staff occurred. Fortunately these untenable working conditions came to an abrupt end, albeit with much sacrifice on my part and a severe loss of quality education to the maligned learners, when both the principal and I were seconded to other schools.

A well-resourced culture-rich school

I was seconded to my current school as a specialist media teacher/librarian, with no ties to the school management team (SMT). The multi-ethnic school in Durban North provided a space to work with the child. Collegiality, a management perspective that emphasises that power and decision-making should be shared (Bush, 2007), is the operative description of my current teaching experience. The school operates within a "shared vision" and a "rich culture" (Leithwood, 1994, as cited in Bush, 2007, p.396). The surroundings are meticulously kept. In the same way, is policy about how the school is run,

imbedded in the daily routines, to provide quality teaching and learning to its valued clients.

I am experiencing what Allender and Allender (2006, p.16) suggests as the communal respect for another's commitment to the common purpose – 'humanism' at this school. I am experiencing "learner centered practice rather than theory", which Kunene (2009, p.149) desires to be developed for teachers.

The school has an aura of professionalism cloaking it and the intensity of striving for the best is almost tangible. As an educator, my awareness is heightened in being meticulous in delivering the curriculum and to engender a

sense of cohesiveness and collaboration. This is comparable to my senior grades at primary school and the current use of my past experience is indeed informing my current practice (Mitchell and Weber, 1998). The culture of the school values the involvement of parents, teachers, administrators, and even the learners in solving problems, which are seen as social, not individual, challenges.

The school allows everyone enormous opportunities to grow and to contribute to its growth. Various codes of conduct for teachers, learners and other professionals are in place. Learner discipline is based on privileges and penalties – negative behaviour earn demerits and positive deeds are rewarded. This cooperative approach allows each teacher to teach and each learner is provided with an optimal learning experience.

Comparison of past learning experiences and current teaching practices

My experience of an idyllic junior school as a learner and an idyllic school as a teacher

My indistinguishable junior school years were in a sense a realisation of who I was. I think I am mostly moulded around these years in terms of my deep-set caring nature and unrivalled sense of optimism. My experience suggests that there is truth in the fact that we can emerge from our uncertain pasts as optimists, even as humanists (Allender and Allender, 2006). This is juxtaposed with my idyllic first teaching post where I made deliberate changes and planned meticulously what type of teacher I wanted to be. This corresponds to Makhanya's (2010) belief that deliberate reflection about our past experiences is bound to make us better teachers. We experience realities differently and I was aware that change, insignificant maybe, but life changing to the children I taught at the idyllic school, is what we should stand for.

My experience of a demoralising high school as a learner and a dysfunctional school as teacher

Memories can be utterly painful and dealing with them can lead to a catharsis which focuses a new direction when encountered again. This 'usable past' that Mitchell and Weber (1998) refer to is in my case pertinently envisioned by my

demoralising high school years. During my high school years, power and authority, as well as a sense of helplessness, played a major role in my socialisation. At the dysfunctional school, I was not able to exert power over subordinates and hence could not cope with what is termed 'playing school' (Mitchell and Weber, 1998), which hints at various forms of authoritarian and power struggles in education. My present position deliberately avoids being authoritative or submissive, which is a learned response and is early memory dependent or part of the 'usable past' (Mitchell and Weber, 1998). This knowingly steering clear from leadership is what presently urged me to register for a Bachelor of Honours Education Leadership, Management and Policy programme. I am keen to uncover effective principles that are necessary in creating a coherent balance between leadership, management and policy implementation with the aim of creating sustainable schools for success. I am ultimately motivated to find a lasting solution to eliminate barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, incongruent teaching spaces as well as unmanageable large class sizes which still exist almost 17 years into reform. I therefore realised that ". . .this deeper understanding of teachers' past experiences has helped me to understand my own responsibilities and roles. . ." (Makhanya, 2010, p.65).

My experience of memorable senior grades at primary school as a learner and a well-resourced culture-rich school as a teacher

My early recollections of school are about constructing my own learning and delight in learning from others. Kunene (2009) points out that constructivism, the development of higher order thinking and problem-based learning, is what we should teach our learners. I happened to read and count before school. In my current teaching practice I actively, and with great encouragement from the environment I teach in, seek that learners learn from their own ideas and make meaning from their own experiences (Kunene, 2009). This correlation between my early learning experiences and the teacher I am now is supported by the belief that influences of our past learning experiences impact either positively or negatively on our present teaching practice (Allender and Allender, 2006). I see neither the learners as entities belonging to a different race, nor do they see me as teacher belonging to a specific race, the racial 'wound' (Allender and Allender, 2006) of my past has healed.

I am teaching information communication technology, where the rules are determined by just-in-time learning (Taylor and Sheehan, 2010), which is the learning of a required skill when needed and at an appropriate ability level.

This is what Kunene (2009) terms teaching the child and not the curriculum. I find it exhilarating when a learner's sense of inquiry is triggered to become active learners. This sense of learner involvement in learning experiences is what is yearned for by Kunene (2009) in her endeavour to entrench learner-centeredness as a Curriculum Education Specialist (CES) in her sphere.

Conclusion

In exploring my early learning experiences and my current teaching practice through memory work, I have gained a deeper insight into my life. Our country is still in a transformational state and the education sector, and by implication teachers, are tasked to change it from hopelessness to optimism. We do need to draw from how it was in the past so as to know how it should or should not be in the present and the future. It is only through undertaking this reflective journey that we will arrive at the point of complete transformation – change for the better. In order to realise the change we desire, we have to change and that can happen.

Memory is the weapon.

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Journeys to self-knowledge: methodological reflections on using memory-work in a participatory study of teachers as sexuality educators

Lungile Masinga

Abstract

This article draws on aspects of my participatory PhD research study, *Journeys to self-knowledge of teachers as sexuality educators*. In the article, I share and reflect on the methodological experiences of the study, with particular focus on working with memory related data generation activities. I explain how story-telling, audio-recording of sessions and keeping a reflective journal were used as methods to reach the stories that would best assist us come to some understanding of who we are as sexual beings. I also reflect on some dilemmas and discoveries I experienced when using memory work to generate data for the research. The article highlights that memories and stories are an integral part of our existence as they give meaning to our past and influence our future actions. It also shows how, through collective examination of our stories, new perspectives and meanings can be given to the stories to allow learning and reflection to take place.

Introduction

"Memory-work enables people to make explicit the ways in which experiences and identities are constructed within particular socio-cultural settings" (Hamerton, 2001, p.414). It is within this context that the PhD research study, *Journeys to self-knowledge: a participatory study of teachers as sexuality educators* (Masinga, in process) I draw from was conceptualised. For the purposes of this article, I draw on aspects of the research that has been done, to share and reflect on the methodological experiences of the study, with particular focus on working with memory related data generation activities. I first outline the purpose of the study and describe the participants. I next discuss how story-telling, audio-recording of sessions and keeping a reflective journal were used as methods to reach the stories that would best assist us come to some understanding of who we are as sexual beings. I then reflect on some dilemmas and discoveries I experienced when using memory work to generate data for my research.

The 'journeys to self-knowledge' study

In the study, I was a co-participant as well as a researcher. I worked with eight other Life Orientation teachers within the Intermediate phase (grades 4 to 6) and Foundation phase (grades 1 to 3) in black South African schools. Life Orientation is one of the eight learning areas that were introduced to schools as Curriculum 2005, with sexuality matters being part of the content taught (see Department of Education, 2002). The participants are all black female teachers ranging between 30 and 39 years of age and are all working within the townships around the Durban area. The intentions of the study were to engage in a process of collaborative inquiry (see, among others, Bray, 2002; Kasl and Yorks, 2002; Zelman, 2002) and self-study (see, among others, Loughran, 2007; Mitchell, Weber and O'Reilly-Scanlon, 2005) with the teachers to explore how we saw ourselves as sexual beings and how that self-knowledge might translate into how we interpreted and taught sexuality education and related to the learners. We aimed to explore how our personal histories affect the kind of teachers we become as we engage with the curriculum of the day, in particular, with sexuality education within Life Orientation. As suggested by Kehily (2002, p. 215), "teachers' biographies and personal experiences play a significant part in shaping and giving meaning to the pedagogic styles they adopt". Thus, we wanted to also engage in a journey of increased self-knowledge within the context of sexuality, thus leading to beginning a process of changing what needs to be changed to become effective teachers of sexuality education.

To achieve these aims, the method of memory work (see Ovens and Tinning, 2009; Balli, 2011) was employed through various activities that saw us engaging with our past 'selves' to reach those memories that are part of our existence and history and have contributed to shaping the present self that we know ourselves to be within the context of sexuality.

Methods for memory-work

Story-telling as a tool for memory-work

In attempting to answer a critical question in the study, 'How can teachers better understand their own sexual identity?' we employed storytelling as means of memory-work to re-experience and reflect together on our experiences. We started with the notion that "subjectively significant events,

events which are remembered, and the way they are subsequently constructed play an important part in the construction of self" (Onyx and Small, 2001, p.774). As means to introduce stories and explain how they would be used within the study, I started us on a walk down memory lane, to reminisce on the time when we were little girls. We talked about how stories have played a part in our lives as black people and also as women, growing up within a black culture that is rich in folk-stories that have been passed on from generation to generation. Together we reminisced about what happened when we received our first periods (menstruation). What did our parents (particularly our mothers) do? We spoke about how most of us were sent to our grandmothers for the 'talk'. We all told of the stories that some of our grannies related to us, to teach and make us understand what was happening to our bodies and what it meant to how we related to the opposite sex. We had some great moments of laughter and coming to a common understanding that, although some of the stories may have sounded ridiculous, the way they were told made us understand what message they were intended to convey. However, we were not saying that we remembered any of those teachings when we had to.

We discussed how stories actually played a role in the passing of educational messages in our black culture and have been a part of our lives and history. We talked about how we learned to understand the world, respect and people through stories that were told. We spoke of what role stories might play in today's world in educating young people and coming to understand life as we live it. This process was intended to bring the participants to understanding what role stories can play when one intends to relearn and try to understand the past and its meaning and also understand the world we live in. However, for the purposes of the research, it was our own life histories that become the source of information for the stories we were about to tell.

This was crucial to the process, to make us understand that as we live life through experiences, we are creating our own stories, which have some valuable lessons to be learned for us and those around us. I felt it was important to discuss as participants how we felt about putting our own lives into stories to be told. In my view, it is sometimes easier to talk and relate to the story that is not your own as you can be objective. While, when it is your own story, subjectivity may become a problem. To give participants a chance to come to some understanding of the implications of the story to be told, we first wrote the stories in our journals and engaged with our own inner selves and judges that we knew ourselves to be when it came to our own actions. It was important to allow us the opportunity to reconnect with the emotions that may go with the story and be able to come to terms with them. A common

feeling, as related by one of participants in one of our reflection discussion was:

> It took me longer to complete . . . in fact, I completed the story the day before . . . not that I have not been trying to write my story . . . it just felt . . . I don't know guys . . . wrong. Revisiting the past . . . looking at my past experiences . . . felt like I was writing my own movie . . . me being the bad character. I have done things that were stupid in my life . . .going to those stories now . . . just . . . it's uncomfortable.
>
> (Azande, discussion, 10 September 2010)
> (all names of the participants have been changed for anonymity)

This feeling of discomfort had to be discussed and we related and re-emphasised that only those stories we wanted to share would be told and those that we did not want to talk about, but were willing to write about, would remain in our journals for only the researcher (me) to read. That seemed to work for the participants, however, in the end all the stories were told due to what I believe was the positive atmosphere that was created every time we met. I believe that it was also due to the genuine feeling of caring and understanding that appeared to be always present in the sessions.

Something that became interesting about the teacher stories was that the issue of discomfort never materialised when they were asked to relate their classroom experiences as teachers of Life Orientation. There was a sense of disassociation from the causes of the problems. There was a lot of outside blame that went with the stories that they told. This included learner behaviour in the classroom when specific topics were discussed which rendered the teachers to lose control of the class or feel so embarrassed that they never touched on the topic again. As one of the participants recounted in some parts of her story:

> I stood in front of that class frozen …. You know I have never wanted to smack somebody so badly in my life. . . mantombazane (girls)!. . . you know that boy looked at me and asked how many times do I remember to use a condom?. . . or . . . do I even use one. . . Of course there was laughing in the class as he asked . . . remember these are grade 9s and some are way older in their age to be in a grade 9 class. . . you know lezizingane (these children) that were not taught by their parents not to talk anyhow about such things…
>
> (Lihle, discussion, 10 September 2010).

We asked ourselves questions such as what had been significant events in our lives that in one way or the other may have influenced us. We needed to look deep into what underpins our beliefs pertaining to sexuality. On what or on whom do we model our lives and beliefs resulting in our actions towards certain issues we have to deal with in our lives and as teachers of LO?

Through talking and discussion we came to some realisations about the impact those events had in our lives. We realised that we had blissfully glided on with life, not admitting we have issues that may one day need to come out to allow us to continue living in awakened state. Thus, we are now conscious of what was then hidden.

To start us off on writing these stories I would, while we were home, send each participant triggering reminders through sms (short message service), such as:

> Thought for the day: How did I come to know my sexuality? Hey girls, what is that one thing that we will never forget that changed the way we look at ourselves as sexual beings? THINK HARDER GIRLS! Night.

These messages gave us an idea as to what we needed to think and write about. We wanted to use the privacy of the home and the duration of the time that was within the sessions that we held to write the stories. During that period each participant would battle with her own thoughts and memory while she went into her past life to look for that story that would best relate to the set task for that period. The session that followed would see each participant that was willing to share her story retelling the story in an oral form while others listened and made interjections through questions to get more understanding of the story that was being told. This rendered an opportunity for a "collective examination of the memories in which the memories are theorised and new meanings result" (Onyx and Small, 2001, p.775).

To illustrate the type of stories that were told, I will use Zama's story, which was taken from the recorded storytelling:

> The big incident happened one day I got home, I had bought some veggies which I forgot to take out from the car. When I needed to cook . . . I remembered the veggies. I said to him, "I am going to the car to get something." He looked at me and said "You are going nowhere" I said, "Ok go and get it then." He said "No . . . We are all staying in the house today, nobody is going anywhere" . . . I just said "Fine . . . I will cook something else . . . later I asked him if he will eat . . . that day he said yes. I had started a habit of asking him . . . as every time food was dished out for him . . . he would not eat.
>
> That day he said "Yes . . . I will eat 'cause I'm eating for the last time today." As he said it, it did not record in my mind what it meant . . . oh . . . I sat down to watch TV and Generations [a local soap opera] highlights came on and I laughed. He said, "What are you laughing at? I said I am laughing at what I saw on TV. He said "You are laughing with your men . . ." I was amazed. . . I would have understood if I was speaking on the phone with somebody . . . I asked, "What men?" He said, "You are thinking about them . . . you are making a fool out of me! . . .you start by giving me food . . . let the idiot eat while you are busy laughing" That went on for a while. . . Then he started other things . . .such as, "Why did you use my phone

yesterday . . . Why didn't you ask for it?". . . I just said, "What is wrong?!". . .Do you want to pack?!". . ."I will help you this time!" I went to the wardrobe and started pulling down his clothes. At that time I was also very angry . . . and shouting . . . pulling down clothes . . . at that time he is pushing me and trying to throw me down . . . you know . . . that day I got a punch in the face that I have never received in my life . . . we lived on the 6th floor . . . he dragged me to the window trying to throw me out . . . I fought him and held on the frame of the window . . . He is a small built man, so I was able to struggle him to the floor.

Both my kids were in the other room. . . He said, "I am finishing everything today". . . He said, "I will start with you". . .meaning me . . . Then he pointed at the direction of my eldest daughter . . . "Then end with you". . . he said pointing at the baby, "Then kill myself . . . I will finish all today." When he said that, he pulled the footstool to reach to those top shelves . . . I knew there was a gun on top as there was a safe. He pulled the stool and started climbing up. I started trying to push the stool as he climbed to stop him getting the gun . . . and reaching for it . . . until he managed to get his gun.

I jumped on him and there was a struggle . . . We fought pushing and pulling . . . During that time my eldest daughter . . . was busy trying to open the door by breaking it with an iron . . . The keys to the flat and the car . . . he had already thrown them outside the window to the streets . . .by that time . . . the door was already open . . . I could not see that . . . She managed to open it . . . and . . . she ran out with her baby sister . . . him and I were still at it. I was trying to get hold of the gun, it went off three . . . four times hitting the ceiling . . .We both were shocked . . . the gun flew to the floor and went under the sofa . . . as we had made our way to the opening leading to the sitting room. He dived trying to get it out . . .it was one of those low ones . . . and it was heavy . . . as he was trying to reach for the gun . . . I saw the open door and I ran outside . . . my clothes were all tore out . . . outside people were all over the place . . . people were shouting . . . some went inside the house . . . they grabbed him . . . I ran to the nearest police station, with my clothes all tore up . . .

It was important that we listened as the story was being told so we could assist in the telling of the story. As we asked questions, the memory of the story was assisted and that allowed coherence of the story for the listeners to take place. For example, with the above story, questions and interjections were made such as:

Participant 1: *"It never occurred to you that he was a little bit disturbed?"*

Participant 2: *"What did his family think of this whole thing?"*

Participant 3: *"But what does it have to do with you changing boyfriends as you say you now do?"*
As we listened, questioned and related some reasoning as to how we understood the story, the teller of the story gained the opportunity to see the other side of the story and meaning.

As Lapadat, Black, Clark, Gremm, Karaja, Mieke and Quinlan (2010, p.78) explain, "the telling of one's story is both a construction of self and a performance of self, in which the listener/reader/ viewer is implicated as witness, audience, collaborator, and co-constructor". Hence, as we

reconstructed our own history, we became the actors while the other participants became the listeners with views and opinions on what they are listening to. In memory work, personal experiences "are theorised as a cross-section or example of common (social) experience" (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, and Benton, 1992, p.49). As Crawford *et al.* explain:

> What is of interest is not why person X's father did such and such but why fathers do such things. The aim is to uncover the social meanings embodied by the actions described in the [individual accounts of personal experience] and to uncover the processes whereby the meanings – both then and now – are arrived at (p.49).

Hence, another crucial reason for using stories was to find a tool that would allow the generation of common themes for the study that would have evidence embedded within them, as they were stories that were written by us, the people who had lived through the experience (Steiner, 2007).

Audio recording of sessions

All sessions were recorded for the purpose of data storing and reflection purposes. There were times when we replayed what had been said, which played a crucial role in the discussions and clarification of what individuals intended to say. Recording the sessions also became my third ear, which became crucial for me. Being a participant in my own research left me wondering at some points about how much I was missing as I too became involved in the process of finding my own self in self-study within the research. I was able to replay the recording of the sessions after each meeting; in this way I gained more insight into what was happening and further analysed the responses and the discussions that took place. I learned that voice changes as participants spoke also gave clarity as to the emotions that were involved that I may have missed in the process.

As a participant who is also the researcher, I wanted all the voices to be heard and believed that mine did not have to lead all the time. Through listening to the recordings, I could keep myself in check and realise when my opinions might change the flow of the session as the participants seemed to think my opinion mattered more, which should not be the case in a collaborative study. I was also able to gain further insight into the entire process as I went back and listened to how we engaged with each other and the manner in which we responded to the situations that arose within the process of the sessions.

Reflective journal writing

 "How often in humanness, do persons replay situations or events in their minds? Thinking back on what occurred; reviewing relational aspects of encounters, maybe even second guessing what was said or done"(Epp, 2008, p.1380). It is within this premise that keeping a reflective journal was employed as a methodological tool. Each participant kept a reflective journal. This provided moments of reflection and interpretations of all aspects of the experience gained from each session. Since the aim was for us to learn from the experience, keeping of the journal assisted us in making each session more educative (Taggart and Wilson, 2005). It rang true to us as participants that "learning is derived more from reflecting on an experience than from the experience itself" (Taggart and Wilson, 2005, p.77). This can be seen through such stories as Zama's story of spousal verbal and physical abuse (Zama, recorded conversation, 29 September, 2010). In this instance Zama came to the realisation of how her current actions and relationship with men has been changed. Her 'private hell' as she called it in her story was instrumental in her new self. It has contributed to the 'revised' self-identity she has created for herself and chooses to represent herself for all to see. It was truly in that private moment of remembering through journaling that she was able to learn about herself as she reflected on the past through the story.

Through journaling, we learned that the process of reflecting is a difficult one, as it required us to bare our soul for all to see if we were to learn and deal with the implications of what had been reflected on. It prompted moments of true thinking on the part of the participants as we battled with what we needed to write about and how much of our souls we were willing to share and face in the presence of others who may not understand. As one participant reflected during the discussion phase:

> I first wrote it until I said to myself . . . you know what, this is not true. . . All what I have written is not true. I am only reflecting the positive as if my life and experiences have been great. I had to do it all over again . . . Until I realised that now I was hurting as I had to bring my past back. The one I have told myself I am past it. As a result I could not finish, I will have to go back to do it again although it is not easy.
>
> (Zama,10 September 2010)

Through journaling, participants gained the opportunity to be true to themselves and how they chose to remember their past as we were forced through writing to 'keep it real'. Through journaling, we got an opportunity to

'get hold of' the experiences that we had inside, be they positive or negative. Through collaboration as a group, we were able to express those experiences in ways that allowed the other participants to share in the feelings, the experiences and maybe the understanding of the implications of that which we had shared (Beveridge, 1997).

Through journal writing, we came to understand how some of our memories were linked to and interdependent with the emotions experienced during the time of the event. For some of us the pain we had felt during that time was easier to remember and relate than the event itself. Hence the question asked by Onyx and Small, "does the method [of memory-work] always have the potential to liberate?" (2001, p.781). The answer for us had to be no, as we realised through listening to Buhle's story, as she related how she is not yet able to allow herself to remember her early years as they were too painful to remember. As she related in our reflection time:

> I wrote nothing about my early years. I could not do it . . . I started allowing myself to remember when I was a teenager. . . .everything early is too painful . . . maybe I will go back there later . . . for now . . . Now that I am older I am realising who I am . . . this is the real me. I must stop pretending to be what I am not. That is when trouble started for me. . . . again . . . over my choices with my sexuality. I had family members calling meetings. . . .i realised that was when I needed to be strong . . .
>
> (Buhle, recorded conversation, 10 September 2010)

We started to get a feel of how we had lived and acted as sexual beings and how we were maybe oblivious of those consequences in our present self. We were able to find means through writing a journal to ultimately find "a way of getting feedback from ourselves, in so doing, it enabled us to experience in a full and open-ended way, the movement of our lives as a whole and the meaning that follows from reflecting on that movement" (Janesick, 1999, p.509).

Dilemmas and discoveries experienced in memory-work

Which hat am I wearing now?

For the purposes of this study, I worked with two methodologies, collaborative inquiry and self-study. When I conceptualised this in my head it all seemed feasible. Both methodologies aimed at finding some solution to a specific problem in collaboration with others. And there were many other attributes that made them compatible. However, there were many times when I was not

sure which hat I was wearing or expected to be wearing throughout the sessions. At what moments was I to wear the researcher hat and that of a full participant who was on equal footing with the rest of the other participants? These are some of the reflections that I entered in my journal as I engaged in the process:

> Today I don't know how many times I had to halt and explain to the participants that my opinion was not that important! It's what we all agreed should happen that matters. My opinion should be considered in the same manner as that of the other participants. However, I am not sure what I should do when the researcher in me feels we are going way off track. When I try to bring the session on track through a statement or question am I manipulating the flow of the process to meet the needs of the researcher or is it the participant in me that is talking?
>
> (Lungi, Journal, 10 August, 2010)

> Wow! I just listened to the tape of yesterday's session. Boy did I talk a lot in this session. I think for most part of the session I forgot that I was the researcher. I really had strong opinions over a lot of things today. I wonder what damage that made to the process. I need to listen to the tape later and work out how my talking a lot influenced things. I am a participant; I know that, I also know that I'm a very opinionated person in general.
>
> (Lungi, Journal, 7 September, 2010

As a participant, I needed to stay true to my own journey of my memories, my experiences as both a sexual woman and a teacher. When journaling, I needed to reflect on both my journey and also what I observed and thought of the process and other participants' journeys. It was not an easy task. At some point I realised I would never achieve the perfect balance. Hence, I spent most of the day after the session reflecting on the process and later on my journey. This was crucial because, as a participant the writing of field notes was not always possible, due to my own participation.

It also did not escape my attention that I too experienced my own emotional roller-coaster together with my fellow participants. I had not envisaged my own emotional attachment to the stories related by other participants. I had not anticipated that as a researcher I too would experience emotional attachments and empathy for the stories I would hear. Thus 'self-care' became an imperative tool for me (Rager, 2005). I used various methods to put my experiences into perspective for me. The immediate act of journaling after each session was very therapeutic.

Whose turn is it to talk?

When does one say a person is talking too much? I wondered that often in the

sessions. I knew from the beginning that I had one participant who spoke a lot. She always seemed to find difficulty in listening to others or letting an opportunity for her views to pass by. This was a fact that I mulled over a lot in the planning phase when I decided to ask her to be part of the session. I worried for the other participants who were not familiar with her, that they might find her frankness and talkativeness unbecoming. I was also aware of the kind of input she would bring into the sessions and that with her attitude she was bound to provoke responses from the participants which would make for interesting conversation.

In a collaborative environment, equal opportunity for participation is crucial, and all opinions are to be valued and considered. In an environment that had a particular participant that seemed to do the opposite was not easy. In the first session, I really worried when my worst nightmare seemed to be realised as from the start she seemed to set the pace and the tone of the session. However as the session progressed, I realised it was in a good way for me and the type of data that I managed to collect for that day. Her almost 'out of line' use of language (as the other participants seemed eager to let her know) lead to interesting debates. I also under estimated the ability of the other participants to hold their own. My observation on the issue for that first session as written in the journal was:

> Oh my! I knew Jaz has the ability to say anything. I was also shocked when she volunteered to read her definition and the explicit use of words. I saw Zama's eyes almost ready to pop out! I'm glad that she did, it seemed to get all talking except for one. That was expected, I know there is a lot that will be discussed that she will not take very well with her strong religious views. This is going to be interesting.
>
> (Lungi, Journal, 10 August 2010)

Who decides when an issue is deemed sensitive?

Another area that I found interesting in the process of the study was the issue of sensitive topics. In research literature that I had read, issues of sexuality had been identified as sensitive, thus needing extra care of the participants. This was even more so when dealing with memory, where participants will have to revisit certain parts of their past that may have been painful. As the process progressed, I started to wonder, what do sensitive issues mean and for whom is the issue sensitive? Is it for the person talking about the issue or the one listening and imagining that if it were them then it would be sensitive? What does it mean to some participants when I say, "I will provide you with the necessary assistance when the need arises that you as a participant may find wanting of such assistance."

In my understanding of what could make an issue sensitive, is when one speaks of death, abuse, violence in relationships and so on you cannot help thinking of the traumatic nature of those issues. My assumption was that when a participant was retelling that kind of story she would experience a certain level of negative flashbacks that might be harmful to her current mental stability. However, that has proved to not be the case for all participants in my study.

I found myself in the predicament that sometimes it is difficult to understand the complexities when trying to identify issues deemed sensitive. However, I found, that "what is sensitive to one person might not be the same for another" (Hyden, 2008, p.122). Hyden makes the claim that "what is a sensitive topic and what is not is due mainly to rational circumstances, that is, the relationships between the teller and the listener" (p.122). In our case the nature of the environment that had been provided by collaborative participation, and the development of trust and care for all may have lessened the impact of the story. There is also the nature of the "cultural and contextual circumstances and the personal views held by the people involved" (p.122). Some of the stories shared by the participants seemed to fall within the 'sensitive category' such as when Malindi related her story of how her boyfriend shot her and her mother. The intensity and the details of the story, including the responses and questioning by other participants would have made some break down. However, she could not understand why we would think it would be difficult for her to relate the story. What we failed to realise was that for her, talking was what she saw as a beginning to healing. As

expressed by Hyden (2008, p.123), "talk about a traumatic experience, has the

potential to pose a threat and even has the potential to re-traumatise the traumatised, but such talk can just as well have the potential to heal". For me, much depends on the environment in which the conversation is being conducted. The sessions were a safe haven for us all. What could have been the re-traumatisation of the narrator or the listeners became instead a healing tool for all.

Laughter and humour: are we serious?

"Are these people for real!?" I mean really! can we for once focus on what we came here to do and maybe be able to get what needs to be done on time" (Lungi, journal, 6 September 2010). During the sessions we laughed so hard that the researcher in me stated to panic because each time we laughed time was consumed and getting back to the point was difficult. There were times when we laughed at a story that should have been making us cry or feel sad. The tellers of these stories always seemed to lead in finding humour in the horrific stories they were relating. It was in my own private moments as I wrote in my journal:

> It worries me that we laugh so hard. When Zama related her story of how her husband tried to kill her and her two daughters, she found humour in some of the things that took place. Her laughter, although I was grateful that it relaxed the atmosphere that was already beginning to take place as the other participants realised where her story was going, was of concern to me.
>
> (Lungi, Journal, 02 September 2010).

It was in that moment again as I wrote that entry in my journal that this realisation came to me:

> People deal with issues differently. Laughter was the healing tool that was working its magic in all of us. Zama laughed at her story, not that there was real humour to what had happened to her. She however used it to make herself better able to get through the story. In telling the story she was reliving it, she found a way that will make the memory less painful for her and also gave her the ability to have control over how the story will affect her. That's what therapy does for the person, it helps us heal, and that she found in her laughter. (Lungi Journal, 2 September 2010).

During the session, I had typically offered her the use of the available resources such as a private session with the woman counsellor working in the trauma centre as had been offered to them, to assist her. However, she flatly refused saying:

> I am getting it now . . . you know I have not really told the full story to anybody before . . . I have always thought I would break down and cry when I did . . . but I'm fine . . . this is good . . . for me . . . I needed to do this . . . what we are doing here is good . . . besides . . .therapy . . . not my thing.

(Zama, recorded conversation 2 September 2010)

It is then that I realised the important role that collaborative memory-work as a tool of inquiry has the ability to give back to the participants. Little did I realise the importance of those moments when the session seems to be chaotic and not starting well. It was then that the participants' bond was re-emphasised as they caught up with each other and laughter seemed to be the order of the day. It was then true in our circumstance that humour had the means of reducing the levels of effect that any form of anxiety we would have experienced. As humour and laughter could be understood in different forms and relevance to our situation as we got down to the issues (Mallett, 1995).

Conclusion

In this article, I have shared and reflected on the methodological experiences of working with memory related activities to elicit data for my PhD study on teachers as sexuality educators. I have discussed the use of story-telling, audio recording of sessions and reflective journal writing as tools for memory-work. This was followed by a discussion on the dilemmas and discoveries I experienced in working with memory. This article highlights that what is in the past cannot always stay in the past. Our present actions are sometimes linked to our past actions and experiences. Working with memory has potential to evoke reflection for us to be continuous learners within our own different roles and fields.

Important issues to be highlighted in this article are how past stories can be an integral part of our lives as they influence how we are at present-self. That participant can give direction as to how they want to relate their past. For the participants in this research it was the oral form of telling that found favour amongst them. The collective examination of the memories gave new meaning to the memories that rendered some learning opportunities for all. Another issue is that Journaling as a research tool, proved not to be an easy journey for all. It offered a battle of emotions as we tried to reflect on our thoughts.

The process again offered some dilemmas and discoveries for the process. Such as being a researcher–participant is not an easy task. It requires constant reconnection with yourself, through reflections. As you ask yourself 'Am I keeping a balance between the two?' although staying true to your own journey of memories it important; it should be noted that one may have to

make peace with the Fact that you may never find the perfect balance. Again the issue of what renders an issue sensitive? I have realised that sensitive issues are subjective. People sometimes choose how and what they would allow to affect them. Also what they want to do with the issues, something that we as researchers; can never be fully be prepared for.

I have found it true that not all find comfort in tears. Laughter has found a way to have the ability and strength to see us through a lot in life. The trick, I have found, is allowing the owner of the memory to choose how it will play out in the telling of the story.

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