

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - IS INTEGRATION THE ANSWER?

6.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to reiterate that the focus of this study has been on the learners' lived experiences of diversity and integration at a former Whites-only Afrikaans medium high school. As a way of positioning these experiences within the ethos of the school, I have used an ethnographic approach in terms of which I interviewed both the learners and the principal at this school. Since an ethnographic research often goes beyond searching for intellectual knowledge and involves the researcher in other ways (Prowler, 1998), I cannot deny my own personal involvement in shaping the process and outcome of this study (Klaas, 2004:237), and this factor is elaborated on in the section on 'limitations of the study' in chapter 1.

6.2 OVERVIEW

In introducing the thesis, Chapter 1 covered aspects, such as the intention; the research problem; the research question; and provided the justification for the study. It suggests the research approach which was followed in the study - as well as the research site. In a nutshell, Chapter 1 set the scene for the study. Following on the tone set by the first chapter, Chapter 2 argued that the separation of the races in South Africa, in general, and in education, in particular, predated the coming to power of the Afrikaner Nationalists in 1948. An attempt was made to trace the historical roots of what the Nationalists only made worse when they took control of the state apparatus. It was found that racial segregation in South Africa went as far back as the 17th century Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope (Malherbe, 1925). Successive Whites-only governments not only found it viable, but also expedient to govern the various racial groups as separate entities rather than as a homogenous South African nation - albeit with varied cultures. Ironically, it was under the pretext of recognising

this diversity of cultures that the Nationalists justified their introduction of Bantu Education in 1953.

Chapter 3 is the methodology section of the study. It presents a description and discussion of the reasons for the choice of a qualitative research paradigm - together with its theoretical framework. The research design and methodology that were followed during the research process are explained – as is the data collection strategies. The sampling of the school and the selection of participants – together with the reasons for these - were elaborated in this chapter.

In Chapter 4 an attempt was made to demonstrate that the commendable progress towards racial integration at the school under investigation depended, to a greater degree, on the creativity and the versatility of the headmaster. As the key role-player in the desegregation process, the headmaster acted swiftly and proactively to mitigate the impact of transformation on a community that was not yet ready for such radical changes. It was argued that as efforts were made to desegregate, instead of removing their children from the school as it was the case in other desegregating schools, the parents of this school kept them at Van Den Berg High School. The headmaster - supported by the School Governing Body - resorted to increasing the school's enrolment by other means.

I argued that - depending on his convictions - a principal's attitude towards transformation can either advance or impede the transformation process. If the principal is not convinced about the need to transform, it would not only be futile to expect him to lead a transformation agenda, but it would also be irresponsible of the education department to leave such an agenda solely in the hands of the principals - without monitoring the process. The document on the *Strategy for Racial Integration* referred to in this study (DoE, 2006) is a welcome indication of how seriously the department takes the whole process. It is an acknowledgement by the department that racial integration in schools cannot merely happen without intervention by the authorities, or that the school principals can ensure that it happens unaided.

Against this background, one may ask: “What did desegregation and racial integration mean to the principal of Van Den Berg High School and what role did he play in the

process's metamorphosis?" An attempt was made in Chapter 5 to answer this question and to show that part of what made the school a commendable story - what it turned out to be in terms of integration - is the progressive approach of the headmaster, himself. This is, however, not intended to suggest that those schools that have since failed to transform, have failed because their principals did not buy into the integration concept. However, it would not be inaccurate to assert that the active and deliberate commitment of the headmaster - and to an extent the School Governing Body - is critical in determining the success or failure of the whole process. In this chapter, the evidence given by learners shows that - while in other schools it was difficult for African, Indian and coloured learners to be accepted and integrated into the school primarily because of the lack of encouragement of physical interaction - the headmaster of Van Den Berg High School actively encouraged such physical interaction in sport and other cultural activities (SJ2: 26).

As a concluding chapter, an attempt is made in this chapter, Chapter 6, to pool the findings from each of the previous chapters and to make recommendations. In this chapter, therefore, it is argued that the key elements of racial integration and of the desegregation of the learning environment are the headmaster; the School Governing Body; the school community; and the active involvement of the education authorities. However, of all these elements the most critical is the headmaster and the staff- as the people on the spot, they are better placed to influence the attitudes of the learners on a day-to-day basis. It is, therefore, concluded that if the headmaster does not embrace change, the other role-players - referred above - can do very little to bring about such changes. If the headmaster does not actively encourage racial integration, the learners and the educators would not buy into it. In the final analysis, the headmaster, although with the assistance of his staff and the SGB - remains an important factor in the drive for the diversification of education in the country.

6.3 FINDINGS

6.3.1. Introduction

The discussion in this section of the thesis follows the pattern which the thesis had followed. I will highlight the findings from the literature and intertwine the discussion with the data gathered through document analysis, observations and interviews. The recommendations and conclusions will emanate from the findings.

6.3.2. Findings from scanning the literature

Scholars have already pondered the question of inter-racial proximity. However, my findings differ substantially from most of the research already carried out. For example, Vally and Dalamba examined desegregated schools and found that most of the former Whites-only schools encounter many racial conflicts and find desegregation very problematic. According to them, close proximity is more a pain than a joy because learners are almost always involved in racial conflicts aggravated by public resistance to school integration (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). In contrast to this - my examination of learners' perceptions in a former Afrikaans Whites-only school yielded different results, as shown in chapter 5. While the Vally and Dalamba's study show a lack of social integration in desegregated schools, this study found that under particular circumstances - and with the commitment of those in authority - integration of learners from different racial backgrounds is possible. The findings of these earlier studies on integration which, clearly, regard racial integration as a utopian dream for people who had been kept apart by decades of institutionalised racism - this study has found that *racial integration is not only possible*, but is evident at Van Den Berg High School. Of course, one must be careful not to romanticise Van Den Berg High School as a success story in terms of racial integration and, thereby, fail to acknowledge that the road to such integration was not free of racial tensions. As in many schools at the time of this inquiry, the road for Van Den Berg High School was both rough and steep and the school had ups and downs of its own.

Literature on what actually transpired and continue to happen in some US schools and residential areas - with regard to segregation, desegregation and now re-segregation - has been critical in providing the much needed background for this inquiry. This literature reveals a three-stage development which brings into question the whole idea of integration. While many people in the US had fought - and some had died - to end segregation, the majority of the people still prefer living apart. The literature suggests that although the historically legal restrictions on housing are no longer in place - as is much of the outward hostility black people used to face in white neighbourhoods - the two racial groups, including those of equal incomes and same social status, *continue to live separately - albeit out of choice* (Detroit News, 2005: May 25) As one writer so aptly puts it:

From Commerce Township to Cass Corridor, our neighbourhoods are starkly divided along colour lines. Unfortunately, residents accept the divide while the politicians do not, despite evidence that segregation carries financial and social costs (Detroit News, 2005: May 25)

There is an acknowledgement that most US schools have desegregated, but the learners have not integrated and the process is, in fact, in reverse gear towards re-segregation (Kozol, 2005; Orfield, 2004). Although - at the time - she was speaking in her capacity as the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, the present South African Minister of Education's biggest frustration was apparent when she asked the question: "Are we making progress in our schools?" (Pandor, 2004: 11). This question was directed to researchers at a school integration colloquium, to find answers through research into those challenges facing desegregation and integration in South African schools. My study is a contribution towards finding those answers.

Against this background, it is understandable that despite all efforts that are made to desegregate, learners may still not integrate and the process may revert to re-segregation - although I doubt that this scenario will take place in South Africa. Re-segregation in US may be caused by - amongst other things - the fact that white Americans are in a majority. The opposite is the case in South Africa. Although most black people are still concentrated in areas where apartheid put them, they are now found everywhere in the country - this is especially true with the rise of the black middle class who can now afford to buy houses in former white residential areas and

send their children to former white schools. It is, therefore, unlikely that South Africa can be re-segregated.

6.3.3. Contrast of data

There appears to be a contrast between the story told by the school documents and the story told by the sampled learners at Van Den Berg High School. The fundamental reason for this discrepancy is that the documents tell the history of the school *wie es eigentlich gewesen*⁶³, while the learners tell of their own lived experiences of diversity at the school. This argument is supported by data from Van Den Berg High School which took into account the diversity of the learners who participated in the study. The findings were drawn from data from school documents; from accounts by participating learners themselves (Walford, 2001:4); as well as my own personal observations (Franzoi, 2003:5).

While being conscious of the fact that to research ‘race’ is to construct it - the very fact of using the concept brings it alive - it is also important to realise that ignoring race does not erase or diminish its influence (Clough and Barton, 1995). In fact, for all practical purposes, it could be asked how ‘race’ could possibly be ignored when it continues to haunt the lives of everyone the world over. In contrast to this finding, this study also found that learners from different racial groups at Van Den Berg are able to live together. Although a number of earlier studies in this field seem to exaggerate the impact of the history of racial separateness, in this study I am inclined to concur with Klaas that “*racial barriers based on negative racist stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings can be broken*” if people are willing to establish some common ground as a basis for constructive social engagement – which, itself, depends on greater social familiarity with the ‘other’ (Klaas, 2004:237).

63 As it happened

6.3.4. Shift in mindsets

One of the important findings in this study is the inclusive way in which learners perceive, think and talk of each other as demonstrated by their use of the concepts ‘we’ and ‘us’ to refer to themselves. Quite often when the white learners and the black learners at the school say ‘we’, they mean both the black and the white learners of the school. This was, certainly, not the case during apartheid days and in during the period when earlier studies on school integration and desegregation were conducted. Then, when they talked of ‘we’ they meant only the white learners of the school with the exclusion of the ‘other’ - black - learners. In Naidoo’s (1998) study, the Indian teachers and learners referred to the incoming African learners as ‘they/them’ and to themselves as ‘we/us’. When Vally - an Indian boy - told me about a cricket ball that hit Shaun - a white boy - he said: “We cry when something bad happens to someone” and when I inquired about the meaning of the “we” he said: “All of us - the children in the school” (Vally.txt - 3:64 [71:72]). “‘They’ try to make you feel welcome” (Samantha.txt - 5:36 [74:74]); “but now ‘we’ love each other and ‘we’ are taught that the school belongs to all the learners who are registered here” (Abuja.txt - 8:108 [150:150]). Every time I asked the learners what they were referring to when they said ‘we’, they all answered “the learners in the school – all of them.”

In prior studies ‘they’ were viewed as intruders who had come to invade “our” learning space and, similarly, the use of ‘us’ has shifted from referring to ‘us - white learners’ to include the black learners at Van Den Berg High School. Initially, the use of ‘us’ and ‘them’ referred to us as being the white learners and them being the black learners in the same school. They never saw themselves as members of one big family. Yet, unlike before, today ‘them’ refers to learners of other schools, such as visitors who come to the school to play sports. This is very evident especially during sports (OS⁶⁴ 1: 2004 September 12). This is one aspect that goes a long way to show that - though still a utopian dream in some schools - desegregation and integration is taking place amongst learners at Van Den Berg High School. It may be possible elsewhere - as long as an enabling environment is created for it to happen - which suggests that racial integration in schools cannot happen unaided.

64. Observation Schedule

This is a shift from what Carrim found in his follow-up study. In Carrim's first study, teachers and learners of the host school referred to the incoming learners - who in most cases were black - as 'they', 'them' and to themselves as 'us' which "indicated the racially exclusivist ways in which they defined their own identities and also the predominance of assimilationism in their experiences of desegregation of their schools" (Carrim, 1998: 2). There seems to be a shift from those identities.

6.3.5. Economic impact on the process of desegregation

For economic and other reasons associated with the country's history, only certain schools - the majority of which were former Whites-only schools - have desegregated. Meanwhile all the former Blacks-only *rural and township schools are still racially segregated* in that their learner composition is still entirely black. A conclusion can thus be drawn that *factors other than a government decree to this effect may also account for lack of transformation in many schools*. Of course, such is the legacy of decades of segregation and apartheid that even the most industrious and well-intentioned education ministry can do very little - if anything - to correct the situation.

It would, indeed, be extreme optimism to expect Indian learners, Coloured learners and White learners to move to the under-resourced rural and township schools solely to change the racial composition of schools. Therefore, until the rural areas are developed into economically viable areas to attract Indian, Coloured and White residents whose children would populate the rural schools, there can be no reverse to the trend of rural, black learners migrating to former white schools. The success and failure of racial integration in South African schools must, therefore, take into account factors such as the geographical location of the schools.

In line with the above discussion, the other finding is that learners, who come from racially integrated residences, happen to get along more than those who do not. Similarly, while one could expect that the 'other' learners who joined Van Den Berg High School would want to have their first languages introduced at the school as part and parcel of the department's transformation agenda, the contrary is the case for most learners. (See discussion on 6.3.3)

6.3.6. Resistance to change followed by acceptance of change

Admittedly, the numerous flash points that are identified in Chapter 4 of this thesis, such as the stabbing incident; the case of Mrs Blou; etc., are a reflection of the tensions and the arduousness of the road to integration that many would, otherwise, rule out as a utopian dream. The foregoing are not uncommon hiccups, and could accompany any racial integration process - not dissimilar to the tensions and conflicts in other schools, such as the Babeile case; the Edgemead, Groblersdal and Potgietersrus incidents; and the Richmond, Delmas and Vryburg episodes, referred to in this study (DoE, 2006: 2).

Originally, the approach at most schools was that black learners could not be fully integrated unless they were assimilated into the white culture and white ethos - what Klaas calls “*conservative* multiculturalism, which advocated one dominant culture above other cultures” (Klaas, 2004:241). It would seem that it was almost normal in many schools to expect that only the black learners had to change and be assimilated into the existing school culture for integration to succeed. This perception would not go away unless the leadership of the school played the kind of role that the principal and the staff of Van Den Berg High School played during the critical stage in the school’s metamorphosis process. An example of this is allowing black learners to have hairstyles which white learners could not have. He did not opt to force the black learners to look like white learners; instead he allowed flexibility on the hair issue.

This study has also highlighted the school’s initial efforts to resist change by sticking to Afrikaans as the language of instruction. Some of the strategies to realise this objective included efforts to attract mainly coloured learners to the school. Since Coloureds are Afrikaans-speaking, the implied - yet unstated - intention was clearly to exclude black learners - particularly those from township schools. It was felt that - for various reasons - they would not be adequately prepared to learn the various subjects in Afrikaans. It should be noted that only after the strategy failed to yield the desired results, did the school decide to change to a dual-medium one that included English as the language of instruction. This move was calculated to attract white-English-speaking learners rather than African, Indian and Coloured learners. The switch from

Afrikaans-only to both English and Afrikaans represented a giant leap forward in the school's metamorphosis. This process went a long way to ensuring that - contrary to conventional rhetoric and in contrast to the views of numerous pessimists alluded to in this study - integration was within the realm of possibility.

6.3.7. The composition of staff and the curriculum

Closely analysed the approach to desegregation and ultimate integration - preferred by other schools - only went as far as admitting learners of other racial groups, while the staff composition, the curriculum and the cultural ethos remained largely intact. According to Klaas, this kind of strategy - to admit 'other' learners while maintaining the institutional structure - implied an assimilationist tendency and an unwillingness to embark on complete transformation. The retention of a traditional curriculum embedded in a white cultural ethos was a reflection of the lack of commitment by these schools to bridge the racial divide (Klaas, 2004: 240, 242). This was also the initial approach taken by Van Den Berg High School until student numbers of the 'politically correct colour' or race - i.e., white - dramatically plummeted down and the only practical strategy to boost the school's enrolment was to change the language policy to accommodate African learners as well, whereas the staff remained predominantly white. According to the principal, there are efforts to diversify the staff as well, but they fall short because the teachers of colour who apply for the advertised positions, are excellent teachers who unfortunately can teach their learning areas only in English while the situation at the school, calls for dual medium teaching. A teacher has to be able to teach the same learning area in both Afrikaans and English. This requirement for this school specifically, derails the deracialisation of staff. During an interview with the school principal, he mentioned the fact that he wrote a proposal to the education department proposing the creation of more positions of teachers so that it would be easier to include teachers who could teach learning areas in English classes only> The main aim of this proposal was to diversify the staff, because most black teachers would most unlikely be able to teach through the medium of Afrikaans.

The curriculum is no longer the choice of the school. To a large extent the Department of Education (DoE) decides what the learners must be taught. The constant curriculum changes which have their own unique problems are not the focus of this

study, but the attitude of the school towards curriculum change - as suggested by the DoE – is usually positive because immediately something new comes to the school from the Department of Education, the principal notifies the parents and begins implementing it. An example is the new Further Education and Training (FET) curriculum which - at the time of this research - was introduced in Grade 10.

In a situation such as the one prevailing at Van Den Berg High School during the period under review where learners from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds suddenly came together to share the same learning space - there were bound to be problems to contend with. The issues that gave rise to the petition and memorandum by white and black learners respectively should be seen as unavoidable outcomes of a process which sought to bring together cultures that were legally separated for decades.

6.3.8. Learners think differently from their parents

Learners usually succumb to peer-group pressure even if doing that means discriminating against another person. These behavioural patterns of discriminating against members of other racial groups are normally learned at home. However, the evidence from the learners who were part of this study shows that they view life different from what their parents do. Quite often, they react to their family restrictions and anxieties with a mixture of negotiation and rebellion. The learners are aware of what is happening around them. They know that South Africans were historically segregated according to race in terms of the schools they attended were to attend and residential areas they lived in. They show awareness - across the colour-line - that they are all human beings and, therefore, should be treated as such. For this change in thinking, they commend the principal for his Tuesday assemblies where he taught them the importance of embracing one another, despite their differences. They also commend some class projects which their teachers give them. The parents' perceptions of racial integration were clearly influenced by their past history which had been influenced and shaped by decades of apartheid policies. Hence their difficulty in accepting their children's experiences of integration at the school as demonstrated by Boipelo's friendship with Karen. Their friendship who disproved the

original idea of the school to make racial desegregation a survival imperative and not a social justice response (Jansen, 2004: 2) .

6.3.9. The issue of language

Many of the learners prefer English as a medium of instruction and will not study IsiZulu or Northern Sotho - even if these languages are offered. Katlego - one of the learners - pointed out:

I cannot leave my rural school and pay so much school fee only to learn Northern Sotho - to which I am exposed at home. (Personal Conversations, 2005: April 12)

This sentiment was shared by many other learners, including Malose, Boipelo, Koos and others, who made it very clear that though they would welcome the introduction of their home languages at Van Den Berg High School, they would not be as excited about it as to want to have those languages as their medium of instruction. According to Boipelo, who wants to be a Minister one day, the most important thing was her command of English:

If I have a good command of English, I will be equipped with the ability to choose more careers within and outside South Africa than one could imagine with Northern Sotho (Boipelo.txt - 16:59 [74:75]).

Thus, the continued absence of an African language at Van Den Berg High School may be viewed as one factor that limits the chances of full integration at this school. Ndimande (2006: 12) also found that most middle class African parents' choice of school is influenced by the school's use of English as a medium of instruction.

Despite the learners' comments on the learning of indigenous languages, all learners from all races show an interest in learning one another's languages. Koos - the Ndebele boy - had three friends: one white and two coloured. They often used to visit him at his home and, usually, they would swim together. Koos' dad spoke to them in IsiNdebele – an indigenous language of South Africa - and Koos translates for his friends. As time went by, the friends tried out a few IsiNdebele words. Abuja - from Nigeria - could not speak a word of Setswana – another indigenous language of South

Africa - and her friends are, mostly, Setswana-speaking. She is now able to converse in basic Setswana. All the sixteen learners - especially those who were in the English classes – could, ultimately, speak Afrikaans. Although Afrikaans was included in the school curriculum and they seemed to study it under duress, their attitude towards other languages is good. They generally want to be multilingual.

Another notable fact still on the issue of the medium of instruction is that teaching in Afrikaans in learning areas, like Accounting, is slowly disappearing. Afrikaans-speaking learners are finding themselves in the minority within specific learning areas. If the number of learners within a specific learning area is small, those learners cannot be allocated a teacher. Mostly, this happens to learners who want to study in Afrikaans. They end up choosing to attend the English classes in that particular subject because their numbers are so small that they cannot be allocated a teacher (Principal. 2nd interview txt - 18:8 [23:24]). Although this is against what their parents would wish, it happens and the learners are the ones who make a choice in this regard. Instead of abandoning Accountancy all together - because it is not offered in Afrikaans – Afrikaans-speaking learners choose to attend the English Accounting classes. They still do very well in the subject even though it is taught in English.

6.3.10. The role of leadership in school integration

This study has also examined how micro-level practices facilitate or hinder transformation in a specific desegregated school in South Africa. The education manager and the school governing body - together with the school community - are responsible for developing and encouraging these micro-level practices. These practices have to be in line with the national policies and legal frameworks. I have used these legal frameworks as a lens to discover what experiences learners have of racial diversity in their school.

From this study, however, it has become evident that success or failure of integration in any institution is linked to the quality of institutional leadership. Data from the learners' interviews showed that wherever integration is embraced at the highest level of school management, it can contribute to the elimination of the past racial problems and prejudices. In the case of Van Den Berg High School, *the critical role played by*

the headmaster in ensuring that the school was driven in the right direction in terms of integration cannot be overemphasised.

Usually, the learners do not see themselves in terms of colour - the school speaks of its learners as English and Afrikaans and not as black and white because there are white learners in the English group and there are black learners in the Afrikaans group (Principal. 2nd interview txt - 18:18 [48:49]).

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that emanate from the results of this study are divided between general recommendations and recommendations for further research.

6.4.1 General recommendations

6.4.1.1 Sport

The main contention in this study is that - in spite of what happened in Van Den Berg during the early years of desegregation reflected in chapter 4 above - integration is possible. Perhaps, what is particularly instructive about Van Den Berg High School's willingness to accommodate the 'other' was its active encouragement of learners to participate in different sporting codes, including soccer, which - in contrast to rugby and cricket - was believed to be mainly a black sport. The principal and the teachers recruited black learners for cricket, rugby and hockey. The school recognised the necessity of bridging the racial gaps through sport by encouraging learners to play as a team. Letters were sent to the parents of black learners requesting them to encourage their children to play cricket, tennis, rugby and hockey and to also support them in terms of buying them equipment for particular sporting activities.

The school's two soccer teams, the A and the B teams combined consisted of 27 players which were racially representative. Although the school concentrated on diversity, they encouraged voluntary participation and also opted for excellence from the participants. In 2005, one would still find four white players in a soccer team of eleven players and no Indian player. These figures should be analysed with the learner

composition of the whole school, where amongst the black learners Africans, together with white learners were in a majority.

As demonstrated in the study, team spirit was inculcated in various ways - without making an issue of racial and cultural differences of the learners. Everyone saw himself/herself as a 'Bergie' on whose shoulders the responsibility lay to make the school proud. The following statement by Thando sums this up:

You know it is your school and you want to excel, for your own sake, for your schools' sake and for the sake of the country, or even for the sake of the other learners at the school (Thando.txt - 14:135 [306:307]).

The use of sport in terms of racial integration can be problematic because of its role in relation to assimilation, but sport is, nonetheless, important in that it creates possibilities and moments for physical racial integration (Klaas, 2004:243). All sport codes in Van Den Berg High School were, during the time of this research, desegregated. It is recommended that schools that embark on a desegregation and integration processes should consider using sports as a tool to achieve that goal. Van Den Berg School has demonstrated that, with proper support and commitment from the school, sport can be used as a rallying point for learners to overcome racial tendencies. The schools should encourage learners from different racial groups to participate in sport. The process should not stop at encouragement; the spirit of patriotism for the school should be inculcated into the learners by using rewards for participation while opting for excellence. .

6.4.1.2. Staffing issues and integration

Desegregation and integration challenges can also manifest themselves at the level of staffing where with the desegregation of learners which is not accompanied by desegregation of staff, white staff might continue to exhibit racist practices which might provoke responses from parents of minority groups. In this case, it is recommended that such complaints/concerns be sensitively handled by leadership of the school or the concerned staff. The success in handling these would result in success in mitigating the effects of such complaints.

For practical reasons, the teachers - who had not been taught how to handle and work within a multicultural environment - should be forgiven for failing to deal with a situation which caught many unprepared. In the light of this, I recommend *teacher training that takes cognisance of the student composition* (Nieto, 2006: 9) so that teachers stop operating from an ignorant *perspective regarding learners as the same* and of always blaming the victim (Kailin, 1998: 34). Hence, it is not surprising that failing to meet some of the challenges of an unfolding multicultural environment, the predominantly white teachers at Van Den Berg High School were accused of racism in black learner petitions. What is, in fact, surprising is that such concerns and accusations were professionally handled and dealt with - thanks to the ability of the headmaster who rose to the occasion and resolved the matter to the satisfaction of all parties, although compromises were also made.

Desegregated schools should also desegregate the staff in order to harmonise the different cultures within a school (Sleeter: 2001: 4). I have already alluded to the fact that I do not suggest that only black teachers can teach black learners. If this was the case, it would not have been possible for the white teachers to teach black learners. If white teachers can teach black learners, then black teachers can also teach white learners. Actually, any teacher, with a relevant type of training is able to teach any type of learners. A teacher is also a carrier of culture. The cultural ethos of the school will change if there are teachers from other racial groups. One of the learners I interviewed alluded to this by saying:

I do not want to sound racist here, but I don't know how else I can put it. I think white kids are friends with white teachers and black kids would also, maybe, like someone they will be friends with, the teachers they can be friends with. I really think it will make a difference if there are black teachers (Karen.txt - 12:116 [279:281]).

Karen's statement means that there are issues of culture that may be better understood by a teacher of the same background and culture of the learners rather than by white teachers. Ladson-Billings' research also revealed an important issue to support this argument. She discovered that the best teachers for the kids of colour come from the kids' communities (Ladson-Billings: 1997: 210).

6.4.1.3 School name change

The process of change that takes place against the background of racial oppression and domination sometimes requires changes that could signal a move away from the past to embrace the future. Name change is one of symbolic gestures that could be effected to signal this change. It is recommended that where this is chosen as an option, there should be proper consultation with the relevant stakeholders associated with that institution or process. Once there is support for that change, name change should be effected. It should be further recognised as it was the case at Van den Berg High School that there may be those who resist the process, and may use financial constraints as reasons to block change. In such cases, the decision to effect change should also be accompanied by the deployment of resources to realise that change.

According to the learners a name does not make integration a ‘mission impossible’. Such concerns serve to show that it takes more than just institutional commitment to change in order for change to take place. With regard to change, it is important to note that the school - as an institution - was both willing and eager to change the name of Van Den Berg High School, in line with the political transformation sweeping through the country from 1994. Be that as it may and, perhaps, armed with Mandela’s response in this connection, one parent suggested that the name issue should not - in any way - be viewed as a factor impacting on integration. I recommend that in line with trends in the country, especially where the community agrees on the name change, in the way that the Van Den Berg community did, the name should be changed. Although the SGB gave financial constraints as a reason to not changing the school’s name, it could have been done if there was commitment. This issue raised unpalatable questions amongst the school community.

6.4.1.4 Desegregated residential areas

According to the data, learners who are best friends and play together after school come from same residential areas. Although social transformation is not the responsibility of schools alone, it is obvious that schools play a key role in the process of deracialisation, desegregation and integration. In shared social space which the

school provides, learners are forced to socialise and be exposed to one another way of doing things, values and mannerism. Hence what happens in schools matter, and matter enormously; the choices young people make depend crucially on their experiences of schooling, including the experience of living with others or living with difference (Jansen, 2004: 16).

The school cannot do this alone and requires the community to assist in enhancing the process of integration and attainment of social cohesion. In this case, desegregated residential areas play an important role as the experiences of learners in the school could be extended to their communities and vice versa. Although it may seem out of reach of this research, it is recommended that South Africa should create systems that cater for residentially mixed communities. Communities should be mixed in terms of race and class where possible.

6.4.1.5. Diversity learning programmes

Diversity programmes play an important role in desegregation and integration processes and they expose learners to all kinds of experiences and inculcation of values which have not been part of the past experiences. It is recommended that such programmes should not only be targeted to the leadership or Learner Representative Council but should involve all learners in the school. The teaching of diversity issues should also underpin all teaching and learning as well as incorporated in other school projects. The seating patterns in a classroom, which the teachers were encouraging at Van Den Berg, attest to some innovations that could be embarked upon in the quest to promote integration.

6.4.1.6 Virtues in a diverse environment

As Banks (2004) argues, respect, understanding, acceptance and tolerance of difference, celebration of sameness, unconditional love, care, appreciation of the other form the basis of a successful diverse environment. Nkomo *et al* (2004) add social justice to the whole list and a human rights culture in a school to enhance living

together. Desegregated schools should also start with the process of accepting that learners are different and follow up with the inculcation of the mentioned values. If the need arises policies should be drawn at school level to promote these values.

6.4.2 Recommendations for further research

The following recommendations are made concerning further research:

- Research should be conducted into diversity in rural schools which have not desegregated because - even though they are one-race schools - they also encounter problems of discrimination in terms of ethnic stereotypes.
- Another important area for future research should be the role of the manager/principal in shaping a school's desegregation and integration process. There was insufficient time or space in a thesis on "the experiences of diversity in a South African public school" to dwell on the importance of the school management in the entire process - except to show how significant the principal has been in this particular school. Although my focus has been on the learners' lived experiences of diversity, I could not underestimate the principal's role in the process.
- Research should be conducted into the experiences of black teachers who are teaching at former White, Indian or Coloured schools. The experiences of the white teachers, who for the first time have to work with black colleagues, also need to be explored. Knowledge of their experiences will shed more light on the debate on school integration and staff desegregation, in particular.
- Research on the experiences of white teachers who are teaching at township and rural schools and white learners in such schools will shed more light on - and show a more complete picture of - how desegregation is unfolding at South African schools.
- The topic and reasons concerning African learners who do not want their mother tongues to be taught at their schools, also warrants investigation.
- Learners who are taught in their own language could be expected to pass with flying colours, but amongst the top ten learners in most of the classes at Van Den Berg High School, were learners from the English second language classes. What happened to the learners who are taught in their first language -

Afrikaans in this case - or the English first language learners? Does teaching in one's first language affect one's results? This should also be investigated.