

CHAPTER 5

THE ADULT STAGE: IS CLOSE PROXIMITY JOY OR PAIN?

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, Chapter 4, focused on the metamorphosis of the desegregation process at Van Den Berg High School – based, largely, on document analysis and personal observation. It, therefore, set the tone for the discussion and analysis in this chapter which seeks to draw attention to the issues of desegregation and integration as seen through the eyes of the learners, themselves. I was particularly interested in learners' views on the following questions:

- How do learners experience the desegregated school environment?
- To what extent does prejudice - resulting from the long history of discrimination and racial polarisation - influence learners' perceptions of one another?
- How do such perceptions aid or impede integration?

In the light of the above, the primary focus of this chapter is on the learners' daily experiences at the school - which forms part of their social world. These are, indeed, critical questions that have assumed an increasingly central place in general educational discussion and in academic comment (Kalb *et al.*, 2004:21). Responding to the challenges of racial diversity in schools is sure to raise complex and wide-ranging questions which have general relevance to school management today (Heystek *et al.*, 1999:187). I was not only interested in learners' perceptions, but also in the views of the school management. The data analysed here opens up possibilities for understanding learners' perspectives on different issues of diversity which have a significant bearing on the day-to-day running of the school.

During the data analysis process in this chapter, it was very difficult to separate what the learners said from who they are. For this reason, the ethnographic context of the study signals a relationship between the sampled learners and the context within

which they found themselves. Developing directly from Chapter 4, this chapter - which constitutes the last stage of the metamorphosis process, i.e., the adult stage - not only discusses the emerging themes of integration at the school, but also sets the stage for the concluding chapter that follows.

5.2 THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN INTEGRATION

Perhaps, it is at this stage of my narrative that I should draw attention to the character and personality of the principal of Van Den Berg High School - as the primary agent of change - whose progressive views on issues of desegregation have contributed in no small measure to making integration possible at this particular school. Both the teaching staff and the learners regard him very highly because he leads by example. It is important to understand that education is, fundamentally, a character-forming and developmental activity that often occurs through the values that are consciously - or unconsciously - modelled by the education system. The promotion of values is, therefore, an inevitable function of education.

From the evidence gathered in the course of my research at the school - and based on both personal observation and interviews, the principal of Van Den Berg High School does not only encourage his learners to accept ‘others’, he also makes everyone feel accepted. He played a crucial role in driving this process. I was bombarded with “the principal told me this; the principal taught me this.” One of the learners at Van Den Berg High School was blunt when she said:

I was racist when I came here but the principal taught and helped me to build relationships and to accept other learners different from me. I now have a close friend who is black, and I love her (Karen.txt - 12:106 [268:270])

In Boipelo’s opinion, “he makes everyone feel at home, yet at school” (Boipelo.txt - 16:56 [69:69]). Some of the learners attribute the values of *ubuntu*⁵¹ - which characterise the school community - to the personality of the principal. As Saloosha put it: “The principal taught me to respect other people and to be best friends with

51. Humanness. It encompasses the treatment of other people as human beings or as you would like to be treated if you were in their position.

them - to really like them and accept them” (Saloosha.txt - 17:36 [54:55]). Karen shares Saloosha’s view when she stated - in almost the same words: “The principal taught me to respect other people and not to discriminate or judge them because they are different from me” (Karen.txt - 12:108 [269:270]). Closely analysed, respect and acceptance of the ‘other’ are values that are fundamental to the whole process of integration. Hence, the contention in this chapter - among other significant determinants - is that success or failure of integration in any institution is linked to the quality of the leadership itself. The more the leadership understands and buys into the vision of the education department, the easier it will be for everyone involved to buy into the following mission statement of the DoE:

Our vision is of a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society (DoE, 1996: 3).

It is, therefore, my considered view that had the principals of those schools that dominated the news headlines - because of their inability to handle racial integration - inculcated the values of *ubuntu* in their learners, those schools would not have become the flashpoints they turned out to be. This principal, for instance, removed the old South African flag and put up the new South African flag on the same day that the old one was removed (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:51 [101:102]) - a move that showed a preparedness to not only accept change, but to be its pioneer. Admittedly, reducing the deeply embedded race, class, gender and institutional inequities - which characterised the education system from 1948 - is still a serious challenge, requiring not only the dedication of everyone in school management but, more importantly, requiring the selfless commitment to change from the principal who is the ultimate manager of the school.

The principal’s role in making the conditions at Van Den Berg High School even more conducive to racial integration was captured most appropriately by Kobus: “the principal cannot give you a heart-attack” (Kobus.txt - 10:80 [128:128]). Susan, the learner with disabilities emphasised the atmosphere at the school which is conducive to integration by saying, “It is not like a prison here” (Suzan.txt - 11:38 [73:74]). Hence, Karen’s conviction that - given another chance to decide where she should

attend school - she would still prefer this one: “If I can choose any high school in this area or wherever, I would choose Van Den Berg High School” (Karen.txt - 12:59 [137:137]). Asked what the biggest attraction to this school was for her, she unhesitatingly responded: “The principal makes me want to be here” (Karen.txt - 12:58 [132:133]) As if to concur with Karen, Saloosha pointed out emphatically:

In this school things are more relaxed. I do not mean relaxed in terms of being lazy, but you do not feel like the school is driving you crazy. The headmaster is cool. He makes everyone feel special” (Saloosha.txt - 17:60 [108:109])

Suzan, was even at a loss for words to express it:

Uh! I am not sure what you want me to say but, I like being here. From what I hear from other schools, this is like a much better school than Orentjies and Gladys High Schools⁵². My one friend is complaining that she is very unhappy over there and they are like very strict over there. You won’t find children running around like here. Here the principal and teachers understand that we are children. It is very nice to be here (Suzan.txt - 11:41 [81:81])

Indeed, on the basis of the evidence presented so far, it is hardly surprising to note that the principal of Van Den Berg High School was acknowledged in parliament by the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, as a pioneer of diversity management in this part of the city. “The country would be lucky to have school leaders like you,” said the minister on the occasion of handing the racial integration award to the principal (*Education Dispatch*, 2004: 12). Perhaps, what is even more revealing is the fact that Van Den Berg High School - in collaboration with other schools in the vicinity - has developed a programme whose primary objective is to teach their learners about the different cultures. This is, no doubt, another prerequisite for integration that should be encouraged in all situations where people who have been legally segregated for decades now have to coexist and share the same living, working and/or educational space.

I deliberately draw attention to the character of the principal in this section of the chapter in order to create a better context within which to discuss other aspects of the school with regard to integration. Other factors which are beyond the control of the

52 Pseudonyms

principal also have a significant bearing on the direction that the school takes in terms of these matters. Among these other aspects are the attitudes of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the School Management Teams (SMTs). However, there is no doubt that if all these organs are led by a headmaster who is committed to making desegregation and integration work, it stands to reason that desegregation and integration will become a living reality. However, if they are led by a principal who is himself/herself not convinced of the need to embrace desegregation and integration in the post-1994 era, it would certainly be extreme optimism to expect desegregation and integration to happen without friction - as witnessed in the racial outbursts alluded to elsewhere in this study.¹

5.3 SOME PROGRESSIVE INITIATIVES TO MAKE DESEGREGATION POSSIBLE

The following points are indicative of initiatives that could facilitate the process of desegregation in schools around the country - initiatives which were used at Van Den Berg High School.

5.3.1 A change in the school's language policy

In the previous chapter, I briefly referred to language as the key to educative teaching and learning. In the history of South African education, the importance of language - as a primary determinant of success in one's educational endeavours - was demonstrated by the tragic events of 16 June 1976. On that day students from Soweto - a black township in the Southern part of Johannesburg - took to the streets to protest against learning through the medium of Afrikaans and against general Bantu Education for Blacks. It was on that day that the apartheid police shot students - resulting in student uprisings all over the country and in the massacre of even more people in subsequent unrests. The 16th of June is now commemorated in South Africa as Youth Day. It is, therefore, against this background that the importance of a school's departure from its traditional language policy should be understood.

1. Racial outbursts at places, like Vryburg, Richmond, Delmas, Groblersdal, Potgietersrus and Edgemead, have characterised some of the responses to racial desegregation and integration in the education sector (DoE, 2006: 2).

Prior to the dramatic political developments that swept the African National Congress into office in 1994 and, thus, heralding what became internationally acclaimed as the “small miracle of the 1990s”, Van Den Berg was a single-medium, Afrikaans-only high school. It was a school that served a mainly Afrikaans community in whose midst black people were - in terms of the provisions of the *Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950* - legally forbidden to live. Therefore, it would have been practically inconceivable to expect the school’s language policy to be different.

In the previous chapter I pointed out that in the aftermath of the school’s desegregation – and as happened in other schools - as black learners entered the school in large numbers, there was an exodus of white learners to other white public and private schools that were still racially segregated. This is understandable, because a nation emerging from such a racially divided past as South Africa cannot readily embrace change without some form of coercion. It should be remembered that the apartheid system was intended - overtly and explicitly - to link concepts of ability and potential for learning to culture and race and to build, and reinforce, particular social cultures (DoE, 2006:3) – hence, the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* and its subsequent amendments.

Among the first steps taken by the school to bolster its numbers in terms of learners was not a change in language policy, but its attempts - albeit to no avail - to recruit coloured learners whose first language was Afrikaans, particularly from the Eersterus area of Pretoria to which they were confined by the apartheid laws (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:59 [109:109]). This move was clearly calculated to keep the school Afrikaans.

Available evidence suggests that the recruitment of coloured learners did not yield the expected results (SJ2: 267). The next attempt was the change from a single to a dual medium language policy that included English. The intention of this strategy was to attract the white English-speaking learners to the school. The latter effort was clearly calculated to keep the school white - because the initial objective of keeping it Afrikaans had not materialised (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:59 [110:110]).

Since 1994 South Africa has recognised eleven official languages and, therefore, every learner in South Africa - irrespective of race or geography - has a legal right to receive education in the language of his/her choice. Section 6 of the *Language in Education Policy* states:

The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. This right has, however, to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism; within practical limits a learner shall have the right to language choice in education (DoE, 1997: S6).

Thus, in an effort to implement this clause, Van Den Berg High School's language policy - which was duly approved by the Director of Education - puts an emphasis on the following:

- Teaching is done through the medium of English and Afrikaans - parallel medium.
- Northern Sotho is taught as an extra official language to interested learners.

Closely analysed, there are flaws in this policy because – on the one hand - English and Afrikaans-speaking learners could come to the school and demand to be taught in either of these languages and it would be reasonably practicable to do so. On the other hand, the same could not be said for Zulu, Xhosa, Venda and Tsonga learners whose rights would be limited because they could not immediately exercise this privilege - on the grounds that this “was not reasonably practical.” This explains why most white schools - which did not support desegregation - used language as an instrument of exclusion (Carrim, 1992: 21). In the case of Van Den Berg High School, the learners chose either to learn through the medium of Afrikaans or English and they chose not to attend Northern Sotho classes - which forced the school to cancel these (SJ2: 76).

The introduction of a parallel-medium language policy was not without challenges (Principal. 2nd interview txt - 18:6 [20:21]). The principal's concern was the cost of running a dual-medium school because - as he put it - “is very high because everything has to be done in two languages” (Principal. 2nd interview .txt - 18:26 [61:62]). As a former Afrikaans-medium school, the majority of the teachers are

Afrikaans and, apart from English, they had been teaching all the subjects in Afrikaans. With this change, the same teachers were expected to teach, effectively, in both languages. This was a serious challenge for which many teachers were not ready, while the learners were at the receiving end. One Chinese learner - who had never learned Afrikaans before – maintained: “I do not have any problem, it is just the language that is a problem - they speak in Afrikaans and I don’t understand Afrikaans” (Yang Chuang. txt - 7:20 [39:39]). The teachers agreed to teach in the two languages even though they were not schooled to do so. Evidence displays that the teachers were willing to teach in both languages and would go all out to do their best. One of the teachers - who spoke to me about her experiences - mentioned that she works closely with the Biology teacher at the neighbouring English high school when preparing her English lessons. Another teacher, teaching Social Sciences goes all out, with the help of the Department of Education Social Sciences specialist, to get activities that would be relevant in a multiracial set-up, and also include African heroes in the study of history to allow learners to be open-minded and feel acknowledged. (This is the teacher who established the Awareness campaign where multicultural learners do home visits in order to learn from other cultures different from their own)

Thando - a learner who came from a township school to Van Den Berg High School in Grade 8 - shared the sentiments of Yang Chuang. She complained that at the beginning the teachers were clearly not used to teaching in English and they would revert to Afrikaans in the middle of a lesson – something which all the teachers seemed to do:

When I got here, I had to study Afrikaans and I was struggling for the first year. And when I got to Grade 9 I really struggled with Afrikaans and English. As you know there is first language English and second language English, I was in the first language English (Thando. txt-14-67 [169-170]).

Vally - an Indian learner - supported this fact: “I repeated Grade 8 because the teachers were still teaching mostly in Afrikaans and I did not understand most of the work (Vally. txt-3-17 [18:19]). As if to concur with Vally, Boipelo added: “Sometimes he just teaches in Afrikaans forgetting that ours is not an Afrikaans class” (Boipelo. txt-16:46 [50:50]).

In the process, the Afrikaans-speaking learners were at an advantage because they did not have to struggle with the language. However, when they did not do better than learners who belonged to other language groups, it was as if they were not up to the standard of the school. The principal was equal to the challenge and requested the education department to provide the school with more resources - both human and material - but without success (Principal. 1st interview. txt 12:24 [22:23]). The principal conceded that the introduction of other indigenous South African languages in the curriculum was a long term project which depended on the availability of resources. The learners were given a choice to study Northern Sotho, but most of the parents refused to let their children learn this language. This is in line with a study conducted by Howie (2005: 23)⁵³ in Cape Town, in KwaZulu-Natal and in the Eastern Cape where teachers agreed that the learners' parents did not want them to study their home languages.

Notwithstanding the above challenges, what is important is that Van Den Berg High School made every effort to desegregate by changing its language policy - albeit under severe pressure from other structural developments that were hard to ignore. As in the issue involving the name of the school - which follows below, in the language issue members of the parent community had a stronger voice and influence. Ironically, however, it was only those parents who were resistant to change who were the most vocal. For example, the former Kwazulu-Natal MEC, Ben Ngubane, had made a press statement acknowledging the importance of Afrikaans as a language "in the economic development of the country." (Beeld, 12 July 1997) This article provided the ammunition needed by one parent - who wrote a letter to the school, highlighting Ngubane's words - who demanded that Afrikaans be left alone because it was critical to the economic development of the country (SJ2: 123). Be that as it may, the decision to change the school's language policy - with the overriding objective of accommodating learners from other racial groups who might not be at ease with Afrikaans - was a clear demonstration of the adult stage of the school's

53. Part of a larger study by the University of Cape Town - in partnership with the University of Kwazulu-Natal and Rhodes University. The University of Pretoria's Centre for Evaluation and Assessment was contracted to carry out an evaluation and assessment of the project. This included classroom observations and interviews with Maths teachers who had to do code switching during their teaching, but assess only in English. I was a researcher on the project.

metamorphosis towards integration. During the same period, many Afrikaans schools still “clung jealously - and rigidly - to their language policies in order to exclude others” (The Star, 21 March 1999).

5.3.2 Attempts to change the school’s name

Although it may, at first, sound absurd to include the failure to change the name of the school - in line with the political developments since 1994 - as part of the adult stage of the metamorphosis of the school’s desegregation process, there is no doubt that the very thought and willingness to do so in the first place indicates a certain political maturity of the school and its parent community to warrant this treatment. I have pointed out elsewhere in this study that the school was named after one of the key ideologues of Afrikaner nationalism, who was one of the architects and refiners of the apartheid policy.

Like all processes that seek to deal with the legacies of apartheid, such as Affirmative Action (AA) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), the process of changing historical names, such as Verwoerdburg to Centurion; Pretoria to Tshwane; etc., are – understandably - emotional issues. Attempts to change the school’s name were accompanied by emotional outbursts from those who still regarded Van den Berg as their hero. For example, in the school journal there is a letter from one member of the parent community - with a pasted article from an Afrikaans newspaper about a journalist who had asked President Nelson Mandela to comment on the changing of the name of a building in Cape Town which was also named after Van den Berg. On that occasion, Mandela’s comment reflected his commitment to the ideals of the *Freedom Charter*⁵⁴ when he stated, unequivocally, that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it and the history of the country is not only about black people” (Beeld, 10 June 1997). He, therefore, suggested that the name should rather stay as it was - which explains why the building still carries that name today.

Thus, clearly given ammunition by Mandela’s views on name change, the parent had highlighted - in green - Mandela’s statement in the article and had sent it to the school to serve as guidance for those who were still wedded to the idea of changing the name

54. A document in which the people who belonged to different political parties which believed in democracy were actively involved in formulating their own vision of a free South Africa.

of Van Den Berg High School to something else (SJ2: 183). The parent concluded: “We must also leave the name of our school as it is.”

As part of the process of changing the name of the school from Van Den Berg to another one that had not yet been decided on, a referendum was held in 1999 to address the issue. In this way, the views of the learners, the teachers and the parents on the subject were canvassed. In the final analysis, it was found that about 53% of parents supported the idea of a name change and 57% of learners also voted in favour of a name change. Perhaps, even more important, is the fact that of the 13-member School Governing Body (SGB), only one voted against the idea of a name change.

To reiterate the point I raised earlier, it is not surprising that the school did not change its name - despite all these efforts. What is, in fact, surprising is that a genuine attempt was made to recognise the political correctness of doing so. It is on this basis that I regard the process as part of an adult stage of desegregation and, more so that - after these efforts - the name of the school came to represent something so much more different from what it had earlier stood for. As one learner so aptly put it, “I don’t care what the name of our school is. Whether it is Van Den Berg or Mandela, it has no relevance to what is happening in the classroom and what the overall results of the school will be at the end of the year” (Anne-Marie.txt - 9:88 [112:113]).

For Thando, the name is not important. What is important is what the people do at school. For instance, she stated:

I think with the same name we can actually get very far. I think the name is not such a big thing among all people in the school; it is just those few students and their parents as well who think the name should change (Thando.txt - 14:25 [42:42]).

Almost all the learners - both black and white - seemed to share Thando’s view on the subject because many of them saw no connection between the name of the school and the actual teaching and learning process. Karen’s response was even blunter - to say the least:

I do not know who the hell Van den Berg was, and how he can affect my life now. It sounds a little bit stupid, but I do not know who Van den Berg was. I

know he was a big racist or a communist or whatever, I don't know (Karen.txt - 12:42 [95:100]).

It is often said that time is the greatest healer and that is why basic changes require time. Underlying the importance of time is the fact that all the learners at Van Den Berg High School today - black and white - have only a scant idea of the political significance of Van den Berg. This is critical for integration because - in this case - while the future is the domain of goals and dreams and of hopes and fears, the past should be understood as the domain of memories and of wrongs that can never be corrected - only forgotten. Hence, for those learners whose memories do not take them beyond their birth dates, what Van den Berg did - or failed to do - remain inconsequential. Be that as it may though, the school retained Van Den Berg as its name, despite of the outcome of the referendum.

In an effort to achieve the objective of a name change, a meeting of School Governing Body decided to run a competition whereby the person who could come up with a name that may, eventually, be selected and be acceptable to most people would receive R500 (SJ2: 36). However, this process was nipped in the bud when a certain Mr Vermaak⁵⁵ - who was, supposedly, not happy with the idea - suggested that due to the costs involved, and until at least one person donated R200 000 towards this process, the item of a name change should be dropped from future Governing Body meetings⁵⁶ (SGB Minutes, March 2000:). Having reached consensus on the issue, the School Governing Body closed the matter for which they had earlier voted by 12 to one.

Ironically, however, of the 16 learners sampled for this study, 13 were against the use of Van den Berg as the name of the school. However, this was not because of their own misgivings about the name but, mainly, because they now knew that the name was closely associated with the ideology of apartheid and, therefore, it prevented sponsors from other race groups. As Vernon put it in the following quote - in response to a question on what he would like to have changed in the school:

⁵⁵ pseudonym

⁵⁶. ...stel voor dat totdat daar 'n persoon is wat bereid is om 'n skenking van R200 000 te maak omdat daar koste sal wees om die naam te verander, die saak in die sakely verwydersword. Almal teenwoordig stem saam.

I would probably change the name of the school honestly. Because of what and who Van den Berg was, and what he represented. It brings a lot of negativity among the students - especially the black students - because of what he represented. He was a pure racist. I mean honestly that adds a little bit of pressure and doesn't create a very good impression and image of the school (Vernon.txt - 2:79 [156:166]).

Koos alluded to the same factor:

The problem is really going to a company and asking them to sponsor the school with something. First of all - even though people are not supposed to base their decisions on the school's name, you get a black person as the head of that company; he looks at Van Den Berg High School, looks at another school, Phakeng High School, for example. He would obviously want to sponsor Phakeng High School than Van Den Berg. So I think it is going to benefit the school much more if we changed the school's name, because now the school is very poor. Van Den Berg is that guy who wanted others to be excluded, he was actually looked at as one of the worst South Africans, why, I don't know, he was not good (Koos .txt - 6:14 [22:32]).

Sihle was especially worried about the association of their school with the name Van den Berg when he said: "Van den Berg was a very bad name; our school is wrongly still associated with him" (Sihle.txt - 13:91 [118:119]).

A closer examination of the school records; an in-depth analysis of the School Governing Body minutes; and personal observations reveal that the name of the school is not in any way a reflection of the attitude of the school community towards other race groups. On the contrary, the school community seems to have been the most successful in managing the challenges accompanying transformation. By keeping their children in this school - and in spite of the arrival of large groups of black learners - the white parents had clearly demonstrated how far - in a space of a decade - they had managed to move away from the separatist beliefs and practices of apartheid. This observation should, however, in no way be misconstrued to suggest that there were hardly pockets of still racist parents, such as Mrs Blou and Mr Vermaak, whose primary motive for keeping their children at Van Den Berg High School was to keep the school theirs and to do everything in their power to prevent transformation.

5.3.3 The desegregation of the School Governing Body

The quality and the character of the principal - an important factor in the leadership of the school - are fundamental to the twin processes of desegregation and integration in any school. This is largely because of the decisive role played by the School Governing Body in the routine governance of the school and the SMT's management of the school - in terms of the *South African Schools Act* (SASA). There can be little doubt about the influence that these two bodies have on matters which are pertinent to desegregation in any particular school. For all practical purposes, a School Governing Body that is 100% Afrikaans-speaking would not readily endorse the decision to equate Afrikaans with any other language, including English. Similarly, if the School Governing Body does not embrace transformation of any kind at the school, it would block such transformation and the school would not desegregate.

Against this background, it goes without saying that one of the first steps to take in the process is to desegregate this important organ of school governance to reflect the demographics of the school and that of the parent community. Thus, as a demonstration of the school's maturity in this regard and with effect from 2001, the School Governing Body of Van Den Berg High School was, itself, desegregated when black parents were elected as members for the first time since the establishment of the school in 1937. This development partly explains why the principal's approach to the challenges of integration was successful. He did not have to deal with a rigid and inflexible School Governing Body that was resistant to change. The present School Governing Body is desegregated.

The school contributes to diversity by giving the learners projects and by constantly discussing issues of inclusion and of diversity - with race issues - across the curriculum. It is evident that learners in this school and, possibly, in some schools like this one cope with diversity better than their parents do - mainly due to this exposure.

Unlike learners from other schools, learners at Van Den Berg would like to be educated and develop South Africa because they are optimistic about the future.

Examples of the projects to promote diversity include:

- The Cultural Awareness project that is given to the Grade 8 learners at the beginning of the year. The learners are divided into groups of four. Ideally, in each group the four race groups are represented. Usually, the Indian learners are in a minority and most groups do not have an Indian learner. The project is a month long or it takes four weekends. During each of the weekends the learners rotate and sleep over at one of the four families' home. What they are, then, expected to do is to write down all the 'strange' practices that take place in the visited family's home which do not happen in their respective cultures. They compile a report at the end of the exercise. After the report is submitted, the classes interrogate the contents and the learners agree that it is an eye-opener for them and their teachers. This platform assists them to deal with stereotypes and myths about other racial groups.
- Another project that informs the learners about issues of diversity is given in Grade 10. The learners compile a portfolio in which they argue that they are 'African'. The essays are discussed in class and after the discussions there are reflection sessions during which the learners show how much they have learnt about views different from theirs.
- The prefect camp activities teach learners to work as a team despite their differences.

All these efforts are in line with the Stanford University Educators' second dimension of diversity. This dimension is diversity-related teaching where learners are taught - and are given space to indulge in - diversity issues at school. It can, also, be in line with diversity initiatives where the school deliberately alerts learners to their diverse environment.

Most of the learners have attended school together since the first grade. Some of them have become very close friends who will continue to coexist - even in work situations in the future. It will be easier for them to interact with one another than it has been for the older generations. This will be possible if parents stop telling their children unfounded stories about other races that are different from their own.

5.4 LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF THEIR CHANGED ENVIRONMENT

Most learners are aware that they live differently from the way in which their parents did. Most of them appreciate the fact that the government has changed and that it is striving to bring the people in the country together - in spite of their diversity. Except for two boys, all learners - despite problematic personal experiences - centre their energy on studies and their hopes for the future. Most of them want a bright future. They are aware that education can be the key to success. Four learners aim to enter the medical profession; three would like to be in business; one wants to be a forensic scientist; one wants to be a computer engineer; another wants to be a programmer and graphic designer; while four want to join crime prevention units. Learners, generally, interact at school. Most of the friendships - especially amongst the white and black learners - end at school. However, amongst some of the learners - both black and white - the friendships cross the school border into the home, usually with the support of the parents.

During the process of desegregation, there were schools that were resisting change and research has documented sad stories of inter-racial confrontations. Such fights could hardly be resolved without expensive court actions ensuing. However, for learners at Van Den Berg High School, the situation is quite different because they know that they have to be a rainbow nation.⁵⁷ Suzan alluded to that when she said:

Yes, our school is a reflection of the rainbow nation, because there is not that much discrimination or anything. We are used to get along quite well here. We are not really fighting about issues of racism, or sexism - stereotyping people on the basis of race or sex. Yes, there are fights, but more for simple stuff you know (Suzan.txt - 11:67 [221:222]).

57. A spoken metaphor for South African unity - aspiring for one country, with many peoples.

One could have expected Abuja to allude to problems that she encountered in the school, but to the contrary - and just like Suzan, she is very happy to be a part of the 'Berg family'. She said:

At this school, we are like a big family; we know each other's strong points and weak points. We can see if someone is down and we lift each other up, spiritually (Abuja.txt - 8:114 [151:151])

When I asked her if there was anything that made her sad, she laughed out loud; kept quiet for a while; and then alluded to some learners who laughed at her English accent as well as to her black neighbours - at home - who called her family *magrigamba*⁵⁸ (Abuja.txt - 8:78 [119:121]).

She seemed very sad, indeed, which made me probe further and ask what the concept meant. She explained that it was just a "bad word they give to very dark skinned people - especially from the African countries." She emphasized that it did not happen at school but rather at home and that the white neighbours did not use the derogatory word - only the black neighbours. What happens at home usually has an impact on what happens at school. The black neighbours who referred to her family as *magrigamba* where using this term to hurt them. As she said later on: "They just want to hurt us."

Abuja spoke about a xenophobic tendency amongst South Africans who think that black people from other countries in Africa have come to South Africa to 'steal' their jobs and that they are the ones contributing to the high level of crime in the country. This xenophobic tendency can be very ugly at times when people are being assaulted - and even killed. In his study, Klaas (2004:147) refers to *kwerekweres* - a term with almost the same meaning as *magrigamba* which is dominant in Kwazulu-Natal. The term, *magrigamba*, is used mainly in Gauteng. What is surprising, though, is that there are also white people who come to South Africa to seek assylum or to look for jobs but who are not given any derogatory names.

58. A degrading term - usually given to black people with a darker skin colour from other African countries by South Africans.

It is commonplace that learners usually succumb to peer-group pressure, and that one often does what his/her peers are doing - even if this means discriminating against the 'other' because a friend, who had been taught at home to discriminate against members of other racial groups, does so. However, for the majority of learners at this school the situation is viewed differently from that of their parents. Quite often they reacted to their family restrictions and anxieties with a mixture of negotiation and rebelliousness.

The learners are aware of what is happening around them. They know that South Africans were segregated according to race in schools and in settlements. They show awareness - across the colour-line - that they are all human beings and, therefore, should be treated as such. Samantha - the coloured girl - witnessed this by saying:

We are like sort of happy now. We are not exactly different, and we learnt that we are not actually different as they used to make us believe (Samantha.txt - 5:17 [30:30]).

When asked who the "they" in her statement referred to, she said: "It is the apartheid people."

As Thando put it, the learners at Van Den Berg High School see themselves as people - not as black or white. She alluded to their choice of learner-leaders when she proudly said:

I know that most of the black students and the white students in my class voted for me. Because they saw that I am really serious about what I am doing. We do not mind your colour - sometimes we even forget about it (Thando.txt - 14:108 [256:258]).

Kobus supported the girls - in this instance - and he even gave a reason why the fighting stopped: "We do not fight because now we know each other" (Kobus.txt - 10:25 [37:37]). According to Kobus, they used to fight because they did not know each other, but now that they know each other, they trust each other and, therefore, the fighting stopped.

It looks as if the problem that the school has is with people from outside the school. The people inside the school get along very well. They have formulated their own ways to cope with their situation and most of them seem to be happy with that. The people who are not at the school - and who are not affected by the school's everyday events - are the ones who "worry too much about whether things are right or wrong"⁵⁹. On this issue, the principal gives an example of the choice of learner-leaders - which is done, democratically, among the children themselves. In the English classes, especially - because those are the most integrated classes, the learners choose their peers - not necessarily looking at their colour. Those learner-leaders end up being black and white. People question this and ask: "Why don't you have so many blacks or so many white learners on your LRC." The principal continues by saying that it becomes a problem when they have followed democratic means of choosing the LRC and it results in being predominantly white or predominantly black. "Why should the school management manipulate it because the learners chose those particular learners to represent them?"

5.4.1 Academic integration

Data from the interviews shows that the participants valued the equal opportunities that they - as learners - had, and which were maintained by the schools' social norms of tolerance and equality. This is reflected in the school's mission and vision statement where it is clearly stated that the school strives to provide equal education opportunities for all the learners who enrol at Van Den Berg High School. From the evidence presented in this study, it is clear that there are specific features of the school that distinguish it from the other schools in terms of motivating all learners to strive to achieve the highest possible academic levels. What I could deduce from the views expressed by the participants in this study was that they are constantly 'fed' with the notion that they are '80 % or A' class students by their teachers.

This procedure has given rise to a unique culture in the school which seems to suggest that all "Bergies" - all learners at the school refer to one another as "Bergies" which is

59. The third Interview with the principal in January 2006

derived from the name of the school, Van den **Berg**, and whereby they regard themselves as part of the 'Berg family' - are special. It further suggests that 'they have got talent' which only needs to be sharpened by means of academic programmes. Consequently, the will to achieve and to make their school proud of them seemed to be the motivating goal of each of the sixteen learners who participated in this study. What is particularly notable is that this attitude cut across the racial divide and each individual learner saw himself/herself as a valued member of the group. For the purpose of this study, this factor - more than any other - attests to the progress of 'integration' in this particular school. The following quotes from Vernon and Thando support this claim:

In this school you just wanna do it. You wanna work for the school and for yourself. You get given opportunities and it is up to you to achieve like in sport and in academia. I am not personally a sports person. I concentrate more on academia, it is quite nice but opportunities get given to you, like in academia and in sport. You get motivated to achieving; to get an A; or to get a consistent 80% (Vernon - a learner who joined the school from an English high school nearby) (Vernon.txt - 2:68 [136:139]).

They told me and I saw that this school is a school of achievers - not only academically but sports wise. I used to get 50% in Grade 8, but now I am in the eighties or eighty-five and all that. It has improved and now I am in the top ten again (Thando - a learner who joined Van Den Berg High School from a township primary school and has strived to get 80% in Afrikaans which she could not even speak when she joined the school!) (Thando.txt - 14:71[174:174]) .

Learners see themselves in relation to others. If they are not in the top ten, then they consider themselves to be inadequate. This is important to the learners in this school, but the school tries to develop the learners as a whole - in sports and in cultural activities. There are also cooking classes which are compulsory in the lower grades to reinforce the school's aim to develop the whole human being. The learners do not feel under pressure to perform, but they know they have to.

The concentration on grades and on whether one gets an 'A' or not - while important - does not occupy the learners' whole school life. Because the school thinks it would rob the learners' of their everyday experiences that could not be recaptured in life, it

allows them to have fun too. Parents are also supportive of the learners. Richard clearly refers to this in the following statement: “Unlike those who would put you down, my parents always encourage me”(Vernon.txt - 2:61 [120:121]). For most of the African learners, achievement - at present - was for self-affirmation (Wexler: 1992: 132). Thando - a learner from Makushoaneng who came to the school as a result of the Science Development Project - confirmed this in the following quote: “We are also clever and we also have brains” (Thando.txt - 14:147 [329:331]). According to Thando, for the learners who come from the township schools to be recognised at this school, they needed to prove themselves academically.

5.4.2 Integration through sports

In moulding its learners to excel in competencies other than just academic ones, Van Den Berg High School - like all schools - encourages learner-participation in various sporting and cultural activities. In the area of sport, it is remarkable how - irrespective of their racial or ethnic affiliation - the spirit and the will of the learners to perform at their best has been inculcated. As Klaas explained: “It appears that models of racial integration could be developed using the strength of friendship and sport” (Klaas, 2004: 263). Watching a soccer match between Van Den Berg High School and another school during the course of my research, one could not fail to appreciate the role of sport as a unifying factor among a people long separated by an ideology. Indeed, the inspiration of the *team spirit* cannot be overemphasised - something the learners express in song:

We have got the spirit. Yes, we do.
The Bergie spirit. How about you?
We have got the spirit
The winning spirit. Yes, we do.
We have got the spirit. How about you?

We have got the players (sometimes, here reference is made to the star in the team)
The winning players, yes we do.
We have got Katlego
The winning player, how about you?

To this song the opposing team would reply in whichever way they wanted to, but the Bergie team (explain which team it is) spirit would just overwhelm them - to an extent

that, in the final analysis, they would lose the game because of the 12th player in the form of supporters than because of the field of play. In the process, it does not matter whether a person is black, white, Indian or coloured. If he/she excels he/she becomes the hero of the entire school community. As soccer in South Africa is largely a black sport, most of the learners who turn out to be the best in soccer are black, but everyone cheers them with the same emotion as they would at a rugby or cricket match. Vernon clearly attested to this when he said:

Apart from all the achievements, I would have to say what brings us together is mostly our spirit in sport. I think our school has the most incredible spirit. I mean you do not have to come and call us to cheer, like in sporting activities. We will just cheer throughout. We are very motivated - especially in sport. We always support our school (Vernon.txt - 2:70 [140:143]).

While on the issue of sport, the following codes are offered at the school. Before desegregation, soccer was not one of the sport codes, but it was introduced when the school desegregated. My attention was caught by the budgeted amounts for different sports in the 2001 sport budget.

•	Athletics:	R6000
•	Hockey:	R5000
•	Netball:	R2700
•	First Aid:	R3000
•	Rugby:	R3000
•	Tennis:	R2700
•	Cricket:	R7000
•	Soccer:	R1000
•	Target shooting:	R1500 (SJ2: 156).

The soccer budget for 2002 was increased from R1000 to R3000 and the one for cricket from R7000 to R7500. If one takes a quick look at the budget, one can quickly jump to conclusions about the lesser amount budgeted for soccer. Soccer is played mostly by black and coloured learners in the school - with very few white children participating. If one looks at the increase in percentages from the 2001 to the 2002 budget, there is a 200% increase of the soccer budget. If one thinks of the idea of introducing the sport which was not one of the school sport codes before the process

of desegregation - and bearing in mind the past history of the school - the idea of introducing soccer at the school after the admission of black children cannot be underestimated in school integration. I am comparing soccer and cricket in this budget simply because the one received the most while the other one was given the least. During this research, the cricket stars in the school were coloured learners and athletics was the most integrated of the sports.

In the course of my interviews, I was particularly humbled by the response to a question I deliberately framed with the aim to check the learners' level of racial integration. For example, when they were asked who was the best soccer player in their school, Vernon did not hesitate to give me the boy's name, but when I enquired about the race of that learner, he paused for a moment to think about it because he could not visualise him in racial terms, but only as their soccer hero. Later he confessed that he could not make it up because he is not sure if the "guy" was white or coloured. This was very revealing to me because in a little more than a decade ago, it was easy to see a person first as white, coloured, Indian or black before one could see him/her as just another human being as, honestly, I would have done.

5.4.3 Social relations

On inquiring about the possibility of intercultural friendships among learners, it became evident that it was largely those learners who came from culturally diverse communities who answered in the affirmative. For the rest, it was in only a few cases that learners had actually forged such friendships – friendships which emanated, directly, from their interaction at school. Interestingly, most of such friendships - though few - went beyond the school grounds, while others ended at the school gate. This was largely due to parental influences where many parents had not yet embraced the kind of desegregation in their social life that their children were exposed to on a daily basis. These parents were still wedded to the cultural purity of the apartheid years which was only feasible through the separation of the races. It, therefore, implies that residential integration brings about social cohesion.

For some learners, there was no clear explanation why the friendship did not go beyond the school gate. Kobus said: "Yes, I have friends here at school but not at

home. But no, we do not visit each other at home. I don't know why (Kobus.txt - 10:94 [178:178]). Expressing the same thoughts, Vernon explained:

It is just the fact that we are friends here at school and we do not really get together outside the school. There is absolutely no reason but it just doesn't happen. I never really thought of it. I thought of him as a buddy here at school (Vernon.txt - 2:87 [187:187]).

For Snail - a coloured boy who is also a cricket player - the situation was different. Of course, as a popular player it was easy for him to make friends across the colour divide as he explained:

Yes, I do have friends from other races. There is always a problem somehow, not really because of their colour, but because of their character.... There are few people I don't get along with I suppose, but not because of their colour. I have friends from the black and white communities (Snail.txt - 4:42 [175:177]).

Carrim's 1998 study concluded that there are new forms of discrimination - in addition to the existing ones of colour and race. Snail talks of character. He does not get along with some of the learners because of their character, and not because of their colour. It is more about the personalities and whether they like the same things, I suppose - as Klaas found in his study (2004:151).

As part of the history of racial separation, some learners come from families that not only embraced the racial policies of the apartheid government, but also believed in the inherent superiority of the white race. Even in the new dispensation, there are still pockets of parents who insist on maintaining this racial separateness and want their children to see and treat black children as different and, therefore, constituting 'the other'. It is among this group of people - albeit in the minority in this school - that the attitude of 'us' and 'them' thrives. However, this attitude gets overpowered by the large number of learners who have changed the meaning of the 'us' and the 'we' to mean 'everybody in our school.' The family - as an institution - has a role to play in the life of its children. If the learners are taught something different at home to what is taught at school, they will be confused and they will make the choice of which route to follow.

There is a shift in reference from what the learners used to say when they referred to one another. The white learners referred to black, Indian and coloured learners as *'they'* or *'them'* and to themselves as *'us'* and *'we'* (Carrim, 1992). They used to say *"they came to our school so they must do what our school wants them to do"* (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). This reflects the assimilatory stance that the former Model C schools of that time took, but at Van Den Berg High School it does not seem to be the case. The *'they'* and *'us'* have changed their meaning and, presently, at Van Den Berg High School - when they refer to one another - the learners talk about *'us'* across the colour line and when they refer to learners from another school they talk about *'them'*. The learners are part of the big family of Van Den Berg High School and each one is a *'Bergie'* - as the following statements suggest:

That's the way we live now, we no longer have apartheid and stuff like that. And we are all living together; we don't have like a place where black people have to go and white people have to go to another place, we are not really fighting about issues of racism, or sexism (Koos.txt - 6:42 [113:114]; Suzan.txt - 11:14 [23:23]).

I think the good thing about the new South Africa is that we are having a lot less conflict than other countries of the world expected. The way we see ourselves is not the way the world sees us; we look like much better and more stable country now than we were in the past. We are trying to make everybody understand each other's cultures (Vernon.txt - 2:136 [262:263]).

In both the above statements, when probed further the meaning of the *'we'* clearly includes all the people of South Africa and is no longer specific to race or colour. The learners have made an important shift. They are aware of what happened in the past and they do not like it. They have, therefore, broken away from it. According to Sihle, *"The world sees us as role models for being able to resolve conflicts peacefully; therefore, we should live as such. Our school has a very bright future"* (Sihle.txt - 13:63 [76:76]).

The learners acknowledged that *"we are only trying to make everybody understand"* (Vernon.txt - 2:95 [202:203]) *"Everybody"* seems to mean parents who are against

integration; communities who are against integration; and even the countries of the world who seem to doubt the people of our country's ability to become reconciled with one another. The learners have crossed the colour and racial line - as Karen's statement clearly indicates: "We do not give a damn; we do not care about black, white or whatever" (Karen.txt - 12:25 [65:65]).

5.4.3.1 Extra-ordinary friendship

Some individual learners, teachers and parents may have had privately held intolerant beliefs, but the school environment did not let those intolerant beliefs prevail. Instead, the social norms of the school supported equalised opportunities in gender, ethnicity and class. In the lives of the 16 learners who were sampled for this research, the school social norms offered freedom from the racial codes they learnt from home and gender codes of their homes (Kathleen Gewinner in Walford, 2004: 213). This is demonstrated very well by Karen and Boipelo's friendship where they both reacted to their families' restrictions and anxieties with a mixture of negotiation and rebelliousness.

Most of the interracial friendships were not as intimate as the one between Karen and Boipelo. Unlike many friendships that ended at the school gate, Boipelo and Karen's friendship crossed over the school gate and into their homes - in spite of the disapproval of their parents. This section deals with Boipelo and Karen's friendship. Notwithstanding the foregoing, however, and perhaps towering above the rest, was the unusual friendship of Karen and Boipelo. Karen is an Afrikaans-speaking white girl of 17 in Grade 10 and Boipelo is a Setswana-speaking African girl of 17 in Grade 11. Indeed, their friendship tended to be so emotionally intimate that it began to worry even their parents, who had been socialised to understand social relations in racial terms for a long time. Karen and Boipelo had a lasting friendship. It was not just a casual relationship that ended at school; it crossed over to their homes - even with the disapproval of both their parents - as it is evident in the following quotation:

I mean one of my best friends is Boipelo and so my mother did not enjoy it hearing that one of my best friends is black or whatever. So, we are like best friends and we are enjoying each other's company and we weren't there when

our parents were in the apartheid era or what, so they can't force us to be like them. I do not have other friends. I only have one friend, the black one (she laughs). Yes, she is incredible! (Karen.txt - 12:36 [87:87]) I think I would visit her even if she stayed far from me. Distance doesn't come between us. We went to Margate in December with my mom last year and my friend stayed here; we phoned each other and stayed hours and hours on the phone almost everyday. I missed her (Karen.txt - 12:104 [266:267]) .

Karen had a parent who was resisting change at this school until circumstances forced the parent body to allow black learners to be admitted at the school. I do not think that she thought that one of those black learners would become her child's best friend. I had a chance to speak informally to both Boipelo's parents and Karen's mother at school functions - to get their sides of the story so that I could confirm what the two learners had told me. It was just too much for Karen's mother - and also it happened very quickly.

Boipelo's parents had their own concerns. Leticia, Boipelo's mother, could not understand why her child had chosen a white friend out of all the children at the school. When I asked her what the problem was with the choice of a white friend, she said:

You know we respect white people; we were never socialised to live with them; now, suddenly, a white child has to come and sleep over at my house for the whole weekend. It was just not on; I did not know that white children are just like our children and that you can reprimand them as well. I just felt like I will make a mistake and end up in jail.

She finished with a laugh. Papi, Boipelo's father, was also worried and as he put it: "...had mixed feelings about it" - more like a "we will see" attitude and they ended up by allowing Karen to visit.

Mangcu comments on the issue of young parents' phobias on the South African Reconciliation Barometer. He alluded to the dilemma that Boipelo and Karen's parents found themselves in - which is a problem that most young parents in South Africa grapple with. In the following quotation he acknowledged that

...as a young black parent who grew up during apartheid, I am often torn by two clashing instincts. On the one hand, I want my children to understand the history that has informed our collective political and social identities as black people. On the other hand, I want them to be able to define their world as

they see it, and that is as autonomous beings, unburdened by my issues (Mangu, 2003: 9).

Holman (2004) titled *After Such Knowledge*, a set of meditations on the Holocaust, begins to offer conceptual tools for understanding this racial distancing between white and black parents in the South African context. Holman as quoted by Jansen (2004: 4) tries to understand why and with what effects knowledge of the Holocaust is transferred intergenerational to families of victims of this great human tragedy. How does memory affect the so-called second-generation i.e., those who have no direct experience of the Holocaust but who nevertheless carry powerful and consequential knowledge of this event? Holman refers to this phenomenon as the paradox of indirect knowledge.

Jansen (2004) translating Holman with some caution into the post-apartheid context, poses some questions on the behaviour of students at the University of Pretoria, where he was Dean of the Faculty of Education: “Why is it that white students who have no experience of compulsory military service or the horrors of policing the apartheid state or the material and ideological conceit of white power--how is it that such students have such powerful views of black students? Similarly, why do black students, born long after the Soweto Uprising of 1976 and whose youth blossomed in the post-1990 period, have such firm views about white students? Where and how did these students, white and black, learn the discourses of struggle and the routines of domination?”

This indirect knowledge, demonstrates the inheritance that white and black survivors of apartheid consciously and unconsciously "give" to their children (Jansen, 2004:5). It is a terrible legacy which, rather than breed consciousness and responsibility, has drawn out the worst racial stereotypes, prejudices and aggression among students (Jansen, 2004:5). This argument enhances the comprehension of how the young parents, both black and white, grapple with the issue of accepting their children's friends from other cultures

What Boipelo and Karen were doing - against the wishes of their parents - is in line with the findings of a study conducted by the South African Reconciliation Barometer

which found that more young people appear to be more positive in their evaluations of present and future race relations for South Africa. In that study, 79% of the youth in South Africa agreed that the government should include topics in the curriculum that would help children understand the customs and ways of groups of people from other racial, religious or cultural backgrounds (Mangu, 2003: 11).

Karen's friendship with Boipelo stands out as testimony to the fact that differences between men are differences within a community. Underlying all differences of race or colour, a common humanity exists. Karen, emphasizing this idea, remarked:

We weren't there when our parents were in the apartheid era or what; so they can't force us to be like they are. In the beginning my mom was kind of against it. Yes, she told me it was wrong for us to be friends like that. It is not fair - she was fighting or arguing or whatever so I told her that she lived 48 years ago, it was her youth, and I told her I am sorry⁶⁰ I am enjoying it; and she is my best friend and I am not going to worry who says what (Karen.txt - 12:23-36 [63:64-87:87])
(*Karen seemed so cross and emotional when she uttered those words.*)

During my interview with Boipelo this idea of parental disapproval of their friendship came up again and she confirmed that:

Karen is my friend; we have been friends since primary school. She did not do well in her Grade 10, so her mom said she must repeat Grade 10. I love her a lot. She also loves me. We kind of had a tough time with my parents in the beginning of our friendship, they said, Boipelo, why do you have a white friend? I said, what is wrong, they could not come out very clear. I did not understand what their problem was⁶¹ (Boipelo.txt - 16:29-30 [28:29]).

Boipelo confirmed her awareness of her environment which was different from her parents childhood days:

This is the new South Africa. There was supposed to be no more racism. ...all cultures are mixing and there is no problem. Yes, I love my friend, I was not even aware she was white until my parents told me. I wanted to go to her sleep over party in grade 1 and my mom asked me if she was white or black. I told my mom that Karen is skin colour, and she laughed. She then

60. *Jammer*

61. *Bare, Boipelo, why o na le chomi ya lekgowa? Kere kgane what is wrong, they could not come out very clear Ke ne ke sa utlwisise hore problem ya bona ke eng?*

told me that Karen is actually a white person. I did not understand her. We have been friends since Grade 1. Our school is ninety nine percent like the rainbow nation (Boipelo.txt - 16:20 [16:16]).

From this evidence it can hardly be denied that - unlike their parents - the learners in this school have, truly, embraced the concept of a 'rainbow nation'. As one learner bluntly put it during the informal conversations, "The rainbow nation is getting together here! I don't worry about anything else here. It is just lekker⁶² (Heloise.txt - 12:85 [199:200]).

Boipelo and Karen are girls. This confirms what Jansen (2004: 6) observed with the female students at the University of Pretoria where he says "through weekly lunches with ten of my first year students, young women students make the transition much easier than their male counterparts", but to contradict Jansen's view about female learners and students, there were other friendships amongst the boys, who even learnt one another's languages in the process. Koos - the Ndebele boy - had three friends: one white and two coloured. They visited him at his home and, usually, they would swim together. Koos' dad spoke to them in IsiNdebele – an indigenous language of South Africa. Koos translated for them, later on, the boys tried out IsiNdebele words and were eager to speak Koos' language. -

This attitude towards the rainbow nation idea is in contrast to the idea of whiteness that was so characteristic of Fernwood High School where Dolby carried out her research - Fernwood "*actively rejected an engagement with the emerging discourse of the rainbow nation or the practices of a new democratic state*" (Dolby, 2001: 48).

5.5 CONCLUSION

It is often said that one of the most important results of the war against Hitler's Nazism was that it brought ideas about racial superiority into disrepute. When the National Party launched its ideological propaganda in the 1940s and institutionalised its racist policies in the 1950s and 1960s, it went completely against the grain of post-

62. Nice

World War II opinion (Terreblanche, 2002:303). Thus, in the course of implementing its apartheid policy, the National Party built a mammoth organisational structure in order to control not only the movement of Africans but also their living and working patterns - as well as their intellectual lives. Although much of the apartheid legislation was concerned with the control of black labour, the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* did not only ensure that black and white learners received their education under different institutions, but it ensured that for over four decades these two race groups developed myths about the 'other' that would take more than the elimination of apartheid in 1994 to correct.

Of course, the studies conducted before I undertook this one have clearly revealed that the integration of the learners of the different race groups in terms of the South African Constitution - as well as the South African Schools Act - is more pain than joy. Yet, the evidence presented in this chapter clearly suggests the opposite of what Carrim (1992); Carrim (1998); Vally and Dalamba (1999); Metcalfe (1999); Nkomo et al. (2004) have found. Admittedly, their studies were conducted under different circumstances and at particularly different stages of the metamorphosis of the country's desegregation process. On the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, I am inclined to argue that factors other than just the maturity of the country's democratic order (Carrim, 1998) were more decisive in making close proximity at Van Den Berg High School more of a joy than a pain. 'One of the most powerful factors in determining whether you become friends with other people is their sheer proximity to you' (Berscheid & Reis, 1998: 196)

Franzoi reports on different research projects by different researchers who explored the relationship between proximity and relationships of people. Numerous studies found that close proximity fosters liking. "Chances are, most of your friends live in close proximity to you, or at least did so in the past' (Franzoi, 2003:367). There is another study by Ebbe Ebbesen (1976) that contradicts this finding. Ebbesen found that just as much as close proximity may foster liking, it can as much develop enemies. How many of us love our neighbours? "They may have loud parties late at night, throw trash on your lawn, and just generally get on your nerves!" (Franzoi, 2003: 368)

In this school specifically, among other critical factors, I have referred to the personality of the school's principal who - as the manager - had first embraced racial integration before he expected his staff and the learners to integrate. While I concur with the view that proximity may foster liking, it takes more than just proximity for people to like one another. I have also argued in this chapter that though the document analysis – as presented in Chapter 4 - suggest that desegregation at this school was initially marred by racial conflict and concomitant confrontations across the colour divide which included members of the parent community, such as Mrs Blou; desegregation and diversity - as seen through the eyes of the learners, themselves - is alive at Van Den Berg High School and it is, therefore, possible in other schools.

In conclusion, therefore, I think it would not be out of place to suggest that, despite initial indications, close proximity of the different race groups would be a pain - as evidenced in the racially motivated stabbing incident referred to in Chapter 4 - the lived experiences of the learners make me accept the view that close proximity at Van Den Berg High School is in fact a joy, at least for most learners.

On the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, it is difficult to understand the rationale for separate education systems because the learners of the school - who were researched - are coping well after desegregation. Learners are resilient until parents intervene to spoil it. The case of Karen and Boipelo provide a living example of the fact that the basic qualities of the human mind are the same among all peoples. They have the same dominant instincts; the same primary emotions; and the same capacity of judgment and reason. The learners' friendships have proved to me that people of different races - no matter how long they have been separated - are able to understand one another.

They can judge each other's motives and discriminate character in other races. They have proved that the more intimate their contact with one another - even in schools or in the communities that still resist change, the more ready they will be to endorse the Psalmist's verdict: "He fashioned their hearts alike" (Psalm 33:15). The fact which is unquestionable is that it is possible for friendships to be formed between learners of different races - friendships as intimate, close and rich as members of the same race -

shows that there are no insurmountable barriers or fundamental differences between the minds of different races.

From this study, however, it has become evident that wherever integration is embraced at the highest level of school management, many of the pitfalls resulting from the legacy of the past can be eliminated. Although possibly under duress, the school management embraced change and reacted to it in a positive manner. In my view, in responding to the demands of integration it is not enough that black learners should be helped to fit into white schools or that their cultures and home languages should be reflected in the curriculum. The most important issue is that all learners require - and their parents expect them to receive - equal opportunities and equality of treatment without regard to race or ethnicity that Banks (2004) alludes to in his definition of school integration.

For the schools, the challenge is to rigorously and systematically examine practices and assumptions to eliminate the deeply embedded effects of racism as well as the effects of a long history of racial separation - alluded to earlier in this study. Yet, more positively, it means the reorientation of educational institutions, generally, so that they provide equality for all learners. I am convinced that it is on this basis that the ethnic diversity of society as a whole can be integral to the educational experiences of all children.

Some institutions try compensatory programmes, but those programmes are ineffective if they do not include attention to culture, identity and agency. A multi-level approach is also critical in reducing inequalities, but this reduction in inequality should not be at the expense of self-identity and cultural belonging. Mere exposure to learners of other cultures can lead to positive attitudes (Franzoi, 2003: ix). Van Den Berg High School consists mostly of teachers who are receptive to different perspectives and, therefore, found themselves having to operate a recursive system that was able to develop - and adapt to - the interest and needs of the learners.

With the notion of diversity, one is not looking for uniformity amongst the different people involved, but for the recognition of difference - working towards cohesion. I do not think the aim should be to make “Turks Germans” (Mncwabe, 2003: 24) because it has proved not to work (Kozol, 2005: 45; *The Detroit News Special Report*, 2002). More than four decades after Americans in the US fought and died to end segregation, many in the Detroit Metro are comfortably living apart - divisions along colour lines are dismissed by politicians and accepted by residents (The Detroit News, 13 January 2002).

The experiences of the learners at Van Den Berg High School show that there is a willingness to integrate for reasons other than state policy and a desegregated school may re-segregate - unless deliberate efforts are made to prevent such an eventuality. According to the principal of Van Den Berg High School,

Most of the learners are still bussed into the school, but I think due to the zoning that the Department of Education is introducing, the school may end up - maybe in five years - not having learners from outside the area (Principal. 2nd Interview. txt - 18:9 [24:25]).

This zoning prompts schools to admit only learners who are resident in the area of the school or whose parents are employed in the area of the school. It may bring an end to the learners who are bussed into the school from township schools.

The lack of legal barriers has led some Americans to think that segregation no longer exists (Jacoby, 2002: 44). In a survey of Bloomfield Township in America which was - during the time of the survey - 88% white and 4% black, a white resident had the following to say about the status of integration in his block:

I think it just happens that way. I don't think people would scream if Blacks moved in. If you can afford to live around here, I do not think it is a problem.

In an American township, a white American man still says: “I don't think **people** would scream if **Blacks** moved in.” Who are the “people” in his statement and who are the “Blacks”? Does this particular white person not regard the black people as people? His statement refers to being able to “afford to live here” - a class issue and not a race one.

Martin Luther King statement below should sum up the whole idea behind the process of integration and social cohesion:

We were fighting for the right to live where one chooses. Today we have self-segregation. Everyone should have the right to do that ...but I think the goal in America is for people to live in truly diverse communities. Only then can we begin to understand each other (Detroit News, 2006: May 25).

Even though King school of thought wishes for diverse communities, segregation is no longer seen as a problem in other parts of the world. A black resident of Detroit had the following to say:

I happen to live in a city that is heavily populated by blacks, but I am not racially segregated. No one in Detroit feels isolated. No one in Detroit feels segregated. (Detroit News, 2006: May 25)

I am tempted to inquire about the necessity of understanding one another. Possibly Anne Marie gives the answer to this question when she said: “I have learned that all people are the same - even if we are different, we are still the same” (Anne-Marie.txt - 9:75 [97:97]).

Anne Marie’s statement is in line with what the president of the Transvaal United Teachers Association (TUATA) and former principal of Giyane High School in Limpopo for many years and a respected academic in his area, Eric Nkondo, had to say. In the quest to grasp what experienced people would say about being human as opposed to race, I asked him for his opinion on segregation, desegregation and diversity. His answer was:

I have lived amongst different people and have studied them closely, and have come to the conclusion that there is no native mind distinct from the common human mind. The mind of a black man is the mind of all mankind; it is not separate or different from the mind of the white person or Asian, any more than the mind of the English is different from that of the Scottish or Irish people (Personal Conversations, 2005: April 2).

In the United States of America the movement to eradicate racial segregation in schools has been regarded as “one of the most monumental developments in school

law in the twentieth century” (Kemerer, Sansom & Kemerer, 2005: 406). However, the eradication of legally segregated schooling systems led to more fundamental questions. The first question that comes to mind is; “If the cessation of forced racial segregation does not result in racially integrated schools, should school principals and governing bodies be forced to use racial or ethnic heritage information to diversify their schools?” Secondly, “Are racially homogenous schools detrimental to their learners?” This study concludes that under normal circumstances, students cannot learn what they are not taught - no matter how highly motivated and how capable they are. “Children naturally play together, are resilient, until an adult is in the picture” (Hallinan, 1977:446)

To elaborate the discussion further, there is another view on the same issue. A study of black students - who grew up in elite families alongside the white students – and who have their best friends as white students; grew up in the same environment; watched the same movies; ate the same food; and wore the same clothes had the following to say:

Even if we grew up together, we will never be the same. When we watch similar movies, we do not relate to the characters in the movie the same way. If the movie is about criminals, being arrested and taken into custody, I relate very closely to that because my cousin somewhere is in jail and theirs not. We will never be the same (Manghezi, 1976:74).

This fact agrees with what Michelle at Van Den Berg realised when she said:

I cannot change the fact that I am white and financially able, but I can change my attitude towards learners different from me in many ways, black learners, poor learners, learners with disabilities, academically challenged, HIV positive learners because they all did not choose to be whoever they are, they found themselves not being able to be anybody else but themselves (Personal Conversation, 5 April 2005).

The newspaper, The Detroit News, reports on empirical research done in America’s Detroit city where residents live in segregated townships. Kozol’s research is on American schools segregating again along the colour line (Kozol: 2005)). This segregation is happening – even though all structural laws to separate people had been repealed a long time ago. This process is, therefore, occurring through choice and not by law. People choose where they want to stay. It just happens that some areas are populated by Blacks-only while others are Whites-only. This new segregation

frustrated the long-time civil rights leaders and raised new questions about the necessity and meaning of integration. Are we fighting racism or segregation? Is it integration that we need?