LEARNER PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT STUDY

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RESEARCH REPORT 3

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - LPAS REPORT THREE

The LPAS Report 3 is an account of a sub-study undertaken in 1998 which focused on Grade Is in the Project's two primary schools. Part I of the report focuses on the issue of underage admission in Grade 1, and Part 2 analyses the transmission practices found in four of the Grade I classrooms. The aim of the sub-study was to conduct research into key issues in the Grade 1 year and relate these to the project's broader concern - that of learner progress and achievement.

Part 1

? Caregivers have compelling reasons for sending children to school before they are six. These reasons are largely economic, but also related to concerns about the inadequacy, expense and insecurity of pre-school provision, and pre-emptive issues.

? Schools are caught in the middle between policies which require them to exclude younger learners and pressures within the school and from the community which push them towards accepting these learners. Pressures on schools include demands from caregivers and empathy for the social and economic circumstances in which caregivers find themselves, as well as the struggle to maintain enrolments in the face of constantly shifting student populations.

? National and provincial policy are largely insensitive to the caregiver reasons for sending younger learners to school and to school reasons for accepting these learners. Both national and provincial departments provide little more than rhetorical support for pre-school provision.

? There is a lack of articulation between school admission policy and pre-school policy and practice.

? In the past, schools have responded to these pressures by covertly admitting younger learners in spite of policy. Stronger policing of these policies may inhibit these responses to some degree, but is unlikely to eradicate them.

? Where underage learners have been admitted covertly, they have been accommodated in ways which may not educationally desirable. Schools in this study - and we believe many other schools - placed many of the younger learners in an 'unofficial Grade 0' class.   Difficulties with this practice arise partly from its informal status.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the admission policy relating to school entry be reconsidered in the light of actual conditions in schools and communities. Ultimately, the fate of five year olds must be addressed. Either five year olds must be accommodated formally in the system, so that schools are guided towards and held accountable for providing an appropriate learning experience for them, or there should be closer articulation between the schooling system and pre-school provision so that five year olds are accommodated in affordable, secure pre-schools.

? Policy responses to Grade 1 failure have focused on underage admission. However, this study suggests that there are more fundamental difficulties arising from the nature of the pedagogy at this level. The pedagogy is such that learners in general are not given access to the principles which underpin knowledge appropriate to this level.

? It was found that learners observed in this study were actually engaged with learning for a relatively low proportion of time i.e. 39% of total school time.

? Within the time spent learning, an analysis of the transmission practices of four Grade 1 teachers led to the development of a theoretical frame within which the teachers were located.

? Pedagogy in the four classes observed for this study may be described as fragmented, where the criteria for the production of pedagogic texts are not made explicit. This is in contrast to a pedagogy which would give learners access to the principles which underpin knowledge appropriate to this level (described as generalizing), which would enable learners to produce pedagogic texts across a range of contexts.

? The kind of pedagogy that Grade 1 learners are exposed to in the classrooms has implications both for learners current and future progress and achievement.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study suggests the need to investigate current teacher transmission practices in classrooms in formulating policies around curriculum and teacher training and re-training. In other words the study implicitly suggests the need to examine where teachers are in formulating policy as regards where they should be and how they will get there. The pressing need to address problems concerning pedagogical issues in the earliest stages of schooling is also highlighted in this study.

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT THREE

This report presents the findings of the 1998 Grade 1 study undertaken within the Learner Progress and Achievement study (LPAS). Broadly LPAS is a longitudinal study which tracks learners in two primary and two secondary schools located in Khayelitsha over a full primary and secondary phase and seeks to identify factors which impact on learner progress and achievement. Along with the baseline study, each year focus studies are directed at the level in which the cohorts are in that year. So, for example, in 1998 when the cohort groups were in Grade I and Grade 8 two focus studies were undertaken, one looking at overage in Grade 8, and the other which sought to examine issues around underage enrolment in Grade 1. This report thus represents a part of the ongoing work of the LPAS. The tracking of the cohort group, including interviewing and testing, and the analysis of baseline data for all learners in the schools has been conducted alongside the work shown here.

Part 1 of the report addresses the question of underage enrolment directly by examining why many parents of learners at the study's primary schools send their children to school before the age of six; why the schools accept these underage learners; and how the schools have responded, organisationally, to the admission of underage learners. The study challenges several of the assumptions underlying the Department of Education's policy response to the issue of underage learners, and suggests that there is a lack of sensitivity to contextual conditions and the provision of viable alternatives in official admission age policy.

The second part of the study initially aimed to examine how the learning experience and performance of underage learners differed from those of correct age learners, in a particular context. However, it soon became evident that this was the wrong question, in that it assumed that learner success or failure was primarily a consequence of age related differences in the ability of learners to take advantage of adequate teaching. What was clear was that there were a range of other factors at play, such as the kind of pedagogy to which all Grade 1 learners were exposed, the ways in which decisions were made about learner progression and the pedagogic practices which differentiated learners according to age regardless of their academic performance. In the light of these factors, it seemed to us that the actual ability of learners - of any age - were of secondary importance in determining learner progress and achievement in Grade 1. Or, to put this differently, younger learners may well be at a disadvantage in terms of their ability to cope with Grade 1, but this difference in ability is difficult to identify in a context where other factors are impacting on the progress and achievement of all learners in significant ways. We then revised our focus for Part 2 to investigate what kind of pedagogic practices Grade I learners in the observed classes were exposed to.

The schools in context

The Grade one study, including Parts 1 and 2, was located in the two LPAS primary schools (referred to hereafter as PI and P2). Both schools are located in Khayelitsha on the Cape Flats, approximately 30 kilometres from Cape Town. Both schools were formerly administered by the Department of Education and Training. The official medium of instruction at the schools is English, although at the Grade I level the medium of instruction is Xhosa.

PI is located in a predominantly shack, or informal area. Having previously platooned at a near by school, PI has a brand new school building which was made available to them in April 1998. The surrounding area consists of shack dwellings. Many residents are recent migrants (mainly from the Eastern Cape) and there

is a high rate of unemployment. The school population is drawn mainly from the surrounding community. The school fees at P 1 are R30 per year.

P2 is located in a more established area where most of the housing is formal. The annual school fees at P2 are set at R120. P2 appears to have had greater difficulties sustaining learner numbers than PI, and the school has adopted the practice of bussing in learners from the more far flung township of Macasser. The decrease in learners drawn from the immediate vicinity of the P2 school may be explained by the fact that many families in the more established residential area around the school are sufficiently economically stable to send their children 'up the line' to schools in Mitchell's Plain. It is also possible that the higher school fees at this school mean that, in effect, this school has positioned itself to compete with the sector of the school 'market' located beyond rather than within Khayelitsha, i.e. that many families that can afford the higher fees send their children 'up the line', particularly when they are old enough to use public transport. Judging by parental occupations reflected in the parent interviews and surveys, the schools serve economically similar working class communities.

PART ONE

AN INVESTIGATION OF GRADE 1 UNDERAGE ADMISSION PRACTICES

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of enrolling underage learners has been common throughout South Africa. According to data from the Early Childhood Development Project, the percentages of underage learners in grade one are 41% in the Eastern Cape, 29% in the Free State, 25% in KwaZulu Natal, 23% in Mpumalanga, 16,5% in the Western Cape, 16% in Gauteng, 15,4% in the Northern Cape, 13,6% in the Northern Province and 12,2% in the North West. It is likely that these figures are lower than the actual numbers as it is known that both parents and schools report that underage learners are correct age, as will be discussed further below.

The issue of underage learners in grade one has raised increasing concern in policy debates, partly because it is frequently assumed that underage is associated with failure and repetition. Helen Perry, Director of Information Systems for the National Department of Education was recently reported as saying that 38% of grade ones repeated grade one in 1997 and that this was mostly because too many learners were underage (Pretorius and Khupiso 1998). The cost of grade one repetition is high; for example, Botha (1998) reported that grade one repetition cost the Western Cape Education Department R250 million per year.

The National Department of Education has responded to this concern by introducing a national admissions policy that requires learners to be six years of age at the time of admission to grade one. This will become policy in the Western Cape (and presumably also in other provinces) from January 2000. Opposition parties are contributing to the pressure to implement this policy effectively. In an education policy document for the Western Cape the Democratic Party declares that it will introduce significant penalties for principals who continue to admit underage learners in schools (Zille Maree 1999).

This research confirms that there is an association between underage and repetition. However, it does not follow from this that learners repeat or fail simply because they are younger than their classmates, nor that the twin problems of underage admission and high grade one failure rates can be solved simply by excluding younger learners from grade one. This research suggests that the exclusion of underage learners from grade one oversimplifies the problems causing failure at this level and ignores the contextual conditions which will constrain implementation of such a policy.

The Department of Education policy response to the issue of underage makes a number of assumptions that are questioned in this study, i.e. (a) that the failure of underage learners is attributable to the fact that they are not school ready and therefor unable to take advantage of the learning experiences to which they are exposed, i.e. that the problem lies primarily with their capacity to learn, (b) that the exclusion of underage learners will solve the problem of poor performance at grade one level and (c) that it is possible to curb the admission of underage learners by policy fiat. In other words, we are interested in whether this policy is likely to be an effective response to the problem of poor progression at grade one level, and in the likely outcome of the interplay of this policy and the conditions into which it is being inserted in terms of policy implementation and grade one performance.

This study aims to question these assumptions by examining the experiences of grade one learners in a particular context. The study has two components. The first addresses the following questions:

(a)Why do parents send their children to school before they are six?
(b) Why do schools accept learners into schools before they are six?
(c) How have particular schools responded, organisationally, to the admission of underage learners?

METHODOLOGY

This substudy consists of a multiple case study of four grade one classes in two schools. The methodologies for sections A and B are quite different. Section A relies primarily on perspectival data relating to actors' reasons for their actions, i.e. the reasons of parents and school personnel for admitting underage learners to schools and for organising the grade one year in particular ways. These accounts are supplemented by observation of organisational and pedagogic practices.

One difficulty with this data needs to be highlighted, however. All accounts by subjects are naturally subject to variation, depending on who is being addressed, the context of the interview or survey and the way in which the interviewee or surveyee perceives his or her interests in relation to the framing of the topic (See Ensor 1996 regarding this). In this case, interviewees and surveyees were being asked why they acted contrary to official policy at a time when departments were signalling that they intended to police these policies more vigorously than has previously been the case. It is quite understandable that school staff in particular tended to underplay their complicity in the admission of underage learners and to foreground an official version of events in the school.

In order to develop a fuller and less guarded account of school practices, researchers made use of alternative data collection strategies such as observation of actual classroom and admission practices, analysis of school records and informal discussions with personnel. It soon emerged from these alternative data gathering strategies that the official account highlighted some reasons for admitting underage learners and underplayed others. Researchers took time to make it clear to school staff that they were not interested in policing policies, but rather in understanding why schools responded to policies in particular ways. Ultimately school personnel were prepared to discuss the factors which pushed them towards admitting underage learners, even in formal interviews, while being understandably guarded about openly discussing the degree to which they envisaged continuing admitting underage learners in future.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study took the following forms:

(a) A survey of 183 underage learners' parents at two primary schools. The survey was translated into Xhosa. Questions related to parents' reasons for sending learners to grade one.

(b) Interviews were conducted with the caregivers of 40 underage learners - ten girls and ten boys from each of the two primary schools. The purpose of these interviews was to explore more fully parents' reasons for sending underage learners to grade one. The families of the youngest of the underage learners were selected for interviews; 34 of the forty interviews related to learners who were younger than five and a half at the beginning of their grade one year. Interviews were conducted in Xhosa or English according to the preference of the interviewees.

(c) Interviews with two teachers and one departmental head at each of the two primary schools. These interviews had three purposes - to establish why schools accepted underage learners, to determine to what extent and in what ways classes were organisationally differentiated in relation to underage learners, and to elicit teacher rationales for particular teaching practices.

(d) Data regarding enrolment and failure and repetition rates was taken from school records.

(e) As this section of the study took place simultaneously with Part 2, insights derived from classroom observation and on-going informal discussions with teachers supplemented data gathered specifically for Part 1.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed to identify

(a) parent accounts as to why they sent their children to school early
(b) school personnel accounts as to why young learners were admitted, and
© ways in which the school differentiated between younger and other learners in admission processes and the organisation of grade one

There is a degree of loose correlation between the frequency that particular reasons are cited in the child-minder surveys and the interviews, and also between responses from the two schools. This is reassuring, but we do not regard the precise percentages for each reason given as significant, given that respondents could cite more than one reason. Instead, we would regard the percentages as indicative of a loosely defined proportion of frequency and ranking of responses. It is not surprising that almost all factors were mentioned less frequently in the survey than in the interview as the interview allowed for probing which produced a more complex account involving a wider range of factors. Only the category of 'school readiness' came out more strongly from the survey than from the interview, suggesting that this is perhaps an 'easier' answer to the question as to why younger children were sent to school, in the more superficial survey context, than are some of the other categories. In the interview context, caregivers tended more often to add references to the importance of the category of opportunity and also more likely to criticise the provision of pre-schooling.

Twenty five percent of survey respondents did not choose to answer the question as to why they chose to send their children to school before the age of six. This is most likely an indication of a wariness to answer a question about an action which is in contravention of national policy. For this and other reasons, the interviews probably provide less guarded answers than does the survey. Having said that, it is significant that the overall picture derived from the survey and the interviews is not substantially different, other than in the ways mentioned above.

Definition of underage

For purposes of this study, underage refers to learners who were not yet six at the beginning of their grade one year. This is consistent with national policy and will be implemented as provincial policy as from 2000. In 1999 the Western Cape Education Department allowed schools to accept learners who were five and a half at the beginning of the school year. The majority of learners whose minders were interviewed for the study were in fact not yet five and a half at the beginning of the school year.

The schools and the learners

The proportion of underage learners in Grade 1 at the two primary schools involved in the study is high - 45% of all grade ones were underage in 1998 as against 34% that were correct age and 21% that were overage. The proportion of underage learners in grade one was higher at P2 (60%) than at P1 (39%). This

is consistent with the argument that the school that is struggling more to sustain enrolments draws in more underage learners.

The grade one repetition rate is high at the schools - in 1998 it was 33%. Repetition rates are higher for underage learners than for correct age and overage learners: in 1998, 72% of those who failed Grade I were underage.

By far the majority of underage learners at the two schools had attended some form of pre-school, creche, educare or out of home child-minding prior to grade one. Of 183 underage learners surveyed, 84% had been in organised pre-school care of one type or another. This proportion was higher at P2 (97%) than at PI (76%). 33% had been in pre-school care by the age of two and 93% had been in pre-school care by the age of four. Of the 16% that had not attended organised pre-school care the majority had been looked after by mothers or unemployed relatives. In these cases, caregivers cited the inability to pay creche fees or the presence of a childminder at home as the reason for not sending children to organised pre-school care. Table 3 below indicates the different ages when children started pre-school. It also includes those who did not answer the question and those who did not go to pre-school

Age at starting pre-school/crèche	Number	Percentage
0 to 2 years	46	25
3 to 4 years	84	46
5 years	10	5
Did not answer	14	8
Did not attend pre-school	29	16
Total	183	100

Table 1: Different ages when children started pre-school

The majority of learners from both schools were from working class homes, in which fathers were often absent. The table below provides an indication of the employment status of parents of grade one learners.

Occupations	Percentage
skilled non-manual	11%
skilled manual	7%
semi-skilled	61%
unemployed	21%

Table 2: Caregiver occupations and percentage at both P1 and P2, based on Grade 1 survey.

A surprising difference between the schools is that a considerably higher proportion of underage learners within the interview sample at PI live with both parents - i.e. 60% of the interview sample at P1 as compared to only 21% at P2. Just over a quarter of learners in the interview sample lived with mothers only and just on a third lived with grandparents or other relatives. Fathers are absent from the homes of 60% of underage learners in the interview sample as a whole, and 80% of learners at P2.

	Number and percentage at P1		Number and percentage at P2	
Mother	5	25%	6	30%
Both parents	12	60%	4	20%
Aunt	1	5%	6	30%
Grandparents	2	10%	4	20%

Table 3 : Number and percentage of family composition at P1 and P2 in the interview sample

ANALYSIS

a) Why do parents send learners to school early?
Seven reasons emerged from the surveys and interviews with parents for parents sending their children to school early. In many cases, parents mentioned more than one of these reasons. The reasons are mentioned in order of the frequency that they were cited in the survey. An eighth reason, which emerged from interviews with teachers, has been added in the discussion.

Reasons	Both P1 and P2	P1	P2
Economic	49%	48%	50%
Parental perceptions of their child	36%	32%	43%
Childminding and safety	25%	30%	19%
Pre-emptive	11%	11%	11%
Issues related to pre-school	9%	8%	5%
Opportunity	7%	3%	13%
Grade 1 perceived as Grade 0	6%	6%	6%
Unknown	25,6%	29,9%	18%

Table 4: Survey: Reasons for sending underage children to school

Reasons	Both P1 and P2	P1	P2
Economic	53%	45%	60%
Parental perception of their child	25%	30%	20%
Childminding and safety	30%	30%	30%
Pre-emptive	10%	10%	10%
Issues related to Pre-school	18%	15%	20%
Opportunity	38%	35%	40%
Grade 1 perceived as Grade 0	8%	10%	5%

Table 5: Interviews: Reasons for sending underage children to school

(i)   Economic reasons:

About half of all the caregivers surveyed and interviewed gave economic factors as their major reason for sending their children to school early. While school fees at the two schools in question were R30 and R120 per year, pre-school fees generally range from R30 to R60 per month. There are of course hidden costs in schooling such as the cost of uniforms and books, but there was a perception among caregivers

interviewed that it was not imperative to buy these for grade one learners, specially among those who viewed a first year in grade one as an informal grade nought year.

Economic reasons were more pressing for some categories of caregivers than for others, particularly single caregivers. Out of 21 caregivers who gave economic reasons as the main reason for sending children to school early, 17 (76%) caregivers were single. Very few two parent families gave economic reasons for sending children to school early and those who did were families in which at least one parent was unemployed. Level of income and number of dependent children were also clearly reasons for seeking the cheapest available form of child-minding.

Table 6 below profiles the caregivers (selected from the 40 interviewees) who gave economic reasons, the number of school going children in those families, employment status of caregivers and caregiver involvement and the costs (fees) of sending the number of children to school.

Number of school-going children	Caregiver occupation		Household education costs (Rand/year)	Caregiver
Living with grandparents				
4	Pensioner		120.00	Grandmother
4	self employed		9405.00	Grandmother
3	Unemployed		130.00	Grandmother
3	Char		1060.00	Grandmother
Living with mother only				
12	Spaza owner		5460.00	Mother
2	Domestic/W		90.00	Mother
1	Chef		30.00	Mother
4	Char		120.00	Mother
1	Domestic		120.00	Mother
4	Domestic		390.00	Mother
2	Teacher		1920.00	Mother
2	Char		240.00	Mother
1	Cook		120.00	Mother
Living with Relatives (Aunt alone and Aunt and Uncle)				
4	Assistant Nurse		7640.00	Aunt
2	Recycling		90.00	Aunt
4	Unemployed	Bricklayer		Uncle
1	Self employed		120.00	Aunt
Living with both parents				
2	Domestic	Plasterer	90.00	Both
1	Unemployed	Driver	30.00	Both
2	Domestic	Labourer	60.00	Both
3	Unemployed	Teacher	230.00	Both

Table 6: Economic reasons associated with a number of school-going children, who the child lives with, caregiver occupation, support and the school costs

(ii) Caregiver perceptions that their children were school ready

Just over a third of caregivers surveyed and a quarter of those interviewed based their decision to send children to school early partly on the perception that the child was school ready. Indicators of school readiness referred to by interviewees included the ability to write a name, write the vowels, count to ten, say the months of the year, remember stories or instructions or comprehend English words. Some caregivers indicated that their children were more advanced or sophisticated than they were at a similar age and that this rendered them ready for school:

> "Children of today learn how to write, paint and watch TV at the age of three. They know TV programmes and also have activities that require them to think even though they are young."

At the time when the interviews were conducted - towards the end of the child's year in Grade 1 - 40% of caregivers interviewed believed that their children had progressed sufficiently well during the year to pass grade one at the end of the year. Ten percent had no clear opinion as to whether their children were ready to progress to grade two.

On the other hand 50% of caregivers interviewed, towards the end of the child's year in Grade 1, perceived that their children were not as capable as the older children in their class. They took as indicators of a lack of school readiness the observation that the children tended to forget things, did not know their own addresses and could not write their names. These caregivers either perceived their children as being in an unofficial grade nought class, in which case it was appropriate that they were still acquiring school readiness, or they simply accepted the possibility that their children might repeat grade one. This would suggest that a majority of underage learners in this sample were sent to school by parents who did not see them as being capable of Grade 1 level work.

(iii) The need for a safe form of childminding

About 25% of those who were surveyed and nearly a third of caregivers who were interviewed indicated that schools were not only perceived as cheaper but also as safer than other forms of childminding. Parents expressed concern about children being alone at home or on the streets where they could meet with violence or accidents. Private childcare was also seen as being open to abuse. One surveyed caregiver wrote:

> It is because of the fact that parents struggle to find trustworthy people to look after their children. It is not good to leave children with people that you don't trust because children get raped by adults but if you send them to school you can be sure that they are safe.

By far the majority of minders were either working or looking for employment and were therefore unable to look after the children themselves, at home. Cock et al (1984:2) argue that full-time motherhood is impossible for many urban African women in South Africa, that these women are compelled to support themselves and their families or to supplement their husband s low earnings. With the decline in extended family as a main form of childcare, parents are forced to send their children to out of home care in the form of creches. However, because of the expensive nature of these creches and childminders, parents resort to sending children to schools which they believe are cheaper and safest forms of childminding. Cock at al (1984:29) found, as did this study, that many parents are suspicious of childminders and that they believe that the system is open to abuse.

(iv) Pre-emptive reasons

Eleven percent of those surveyed and 10% of those interviewed expressed a desire for the child to start school early in order to complete secondary school at a relatively early age and, in so doing, avoid being at school in the late teenage years when they are most likely to be affected by the dangers and temptations of township life such as drug abuse, violence and pregnancy. This was eloquently expressed by two parents:

> We do this so that children can learn quickly when they are still young before they get disturbed by evil things in their lives. When they start school at an older age, they do get disturbed.

> It is our lifestyle here in Khayelitsha. It is risky to have a child here. Children get involved in many things like crime and sex very young. We try to avoid that. We want them to have education so that they feel proud and don't turn into doing crime. With my first son I waited till he was six years old. He is impatient with school now, he wants to be a man and he is in standard nine. But my daughter started school when she was four and a half years old. She is finishing at sixteen. That has been successful. She is still interested in her work in standard ten.

(v) Lack of articulation between pre-school and school provision and dissatisfaction with the available pre-school options.

9 % of those surveyed and 18% of those interviewed as well as teachers referred to the practice among creches of 'graduating' pre-school learners at the age of five. Once learners had graduated, it was assumed that they would progress to grade one in the following year. This points to a lack of articulation between pre-school providers and the school system. Parents also expressed dissatisfaction with available preschool options as a reason for sending children to school early. Concerns related primarily to the quality of education provided and the perception that children were simply being kept safe and not taught or prepared for schooling.

(vi) Opportunity Reasons

Just over a third of parents who were interviewed mentioned that they took the opportunity to send their children to school early because they regarded this as accepted practice. They knew that the schools accepted underage learners and some of them had previously sent other underage children to school. Only 7% of caregivers volunteered this reason in the survey, however, possibly because this reason is less easy to articulate in writing than are more concrete reasons.

(vii) Grade one as informal grade nought

About 6% of caregivers surveyed and 8% of those interviewed indicated that they had responded to an established practice of sending a child to grade one with the understanding that the child will spend two years in the grade, with the first year serving as an informal grade nought experience. While this factor was not mentioned very frequently it appears to be assumed and implicit in other answers. For example, only 20% considered their children to be school ready, yet the other 80% sent their children to school on the understanding that they would spend two years in grade one if necessary. This would suggest that many parents did not mention this fact because they took it as given. The tendency to regard the first year in Grade 1 as Grade 0 is not so much a reason for sending children to school early but rather a fall back position for young learners who are not school ready and a legitimisation for sending younger learners to school. An initial year in Grade 1 was perceived as an informal grade nought which provided a way to socialise children into appropriate schooling behaviour and prepare them for further schooling. This is reflected in comments such as the following:

"Children who haven't matured have their own class.

The school has a bridging class which is the same as a pre-school.

It prepares children for grade one.

I think they are trying to prepare children for proper schooling, so that when they start Grade one they don't experience problems.

Parents want their children to learn how things are done so that even if they repeat Grade one they will be used to writing and listening.

Children should get used to school when they are still young because when they are older they experience problems of being lazy to go to school because they are not used to waking up early. When they start school very young, this encourages them to like school and learn easily."

(viii) Food

While none of the parents surveyed or interviewed raised the availability of school feeding as a motivation for sending children to school early, teachers believed this to be a factor. It is likely that this does play a role, even though parents would not easily volunteer this information, as many children in the classes observed were clearly undernourished.

Summary of caregivers reasons for early admission of learners

Three of the eight reasons given for sending learners to school early are related to the perception that other forms of pre-school provision are too expensive, not safe enough, provide inappropriate preparation for school or are not systemically articulated with the school system. By far the strongest reason relates to expense. Two more common reasons relate to the expectation that schools can and do provide a school readiness year which precedes the mainstream grade one. It is generally understood and widely accepted that those who are ready will proceed to grade two while those who are not school ready will spend an additional year in grade one. These expectations are based on material conditions and needs as well as established traditions and relationships between schools and communities.

Caregiver awareness of policy

Most caregivers who were interviewed (63%) were aware of national policy which requires learners to be six at admission. A further 13% were aware of provincial policy which, in 1998, allowed caregivers to send children to school when they were five and a half. Most of the balance (18%) thought that learners had to be seven at admission; this view was possibly based on a misunderstanding of the oft repeated statement of national policy: that learners had to turn seven during the first year of school. In general, then, most caregivers were aware of national policy and few were aware of provincial policy. Regardless of this, caregivers sent children to school when they were considerably younger than national policy required. This was facilitated by their awareness of the admission practices of local schools which allowed the admission of younger learners.

b) Why do schools accept underage learners?

Motala (1995:169) points to schools using the admission of underage learners as a strategy for keeping enrolment numbers high in order to get higher subsidies. In this way, schools collude with parents - who at

times falsify ages and addresses in order to gain access to schools. The purpose, argues Motala, is to subvert the system in order to survive it, i.e. to adapt the schooling system to suit a particular context, to meet needs and to cope with the pressures involved in the admission of learners. Apart from intentional subversion of the admissions policy, Motala also refers to unreliable record keeping as a factor contributing to admission processes which are inconsistent with national policy. The factors identified by Motala in her Soweto based study were also present in the schools in this study.

School admission strategies are documented here as they applied in 1998. They are adapted each year, in response to conditions within the school and community and to departmental policies. Three main reasons for admission of younger learners emerged from staff interviews:

(i) Misrepresentation of children's' ages by childminders

In initial discussions and more formal interviews, school staff placed considerable emphasis on tactics employed by parents to misrepresent the ages of younger children by, for example, providing borrowed or altered clinic cards and birth certificates upon application for admission. It was also reported that caregivers would not be accompanied by children at registration, so that the child's size was not evident.

As researchers became more familiar with staff and school practices it emerged in further discussions that there were strong pressures on the school which motivated staff to not only turn a blind eye to parent strategies but also to overtly accept underage learners, and to reflect this practice in the organisation of grade one classes (as will be discussed below).

(ii) Pressure of numbers

Schools were under pressure to sustain teacher pupil ratio's at a particular level. This pressure was exacerbated in the first weeks of the school year by the fact that it was not clear how many learners would register. This was illustrated in the first weeks of the first term in 1999 when both schools postponed the commencement of formal teaching on the grounds that they did not yet have their full quota of students.

There appear to be a number of reasons for delayed registration and unstable enrolments. Registration in a previous year is not a familiar practice in the Khayelitsha community. More pressingly, high failure rates throughout the school system have contributed to a high mobility between schools: when learners fail at one school they move to another school. Consequently, learners are loathe to register prior to receiving their results for the previous year. While this applies to learners already in the system, these practices are also generalised to grade one learners. In addition, a considerable proportion of learners move into Khayelitsha from further afield, and these learners often do not arrive in time for the first day of school.

These circumstances reflect a broader instability in learner enrolments in township schools in the context of low confidence in the schooling system, the emergence of school choice practices such as media publication of school results and the desegregation of formerly white and coloured suburban schools. Those learners whose families have sufficient economic and cultural resources to be mobile move 'up the line' to historically white and coloured schools while many of those who remain in the formerly DET schools shift out of schools where they have failed, or where failure rates are high, to schools that are perceived as offering a better chance of success. In the context of this study, the difficulty of sustaining numbers because children were being sent 'up the line' appears to have been more problematic at P2, which

is located in a more established area, than at PI which is located in a shack area. Many learners are sent to local schools in the initial years and then moved when they are old enough to commute.

In this context, the grade one year is seen as a level at which learner numbers can be boosted to offset falling enrolments at the higher levels. Consequently, there is a strong temptation to enrol high numbers of grade ones, including underage learners.

(ii)   School responsibility to, and empathy for, the community

Another factor which contributes to decisions to admit underage learners is the personal network and a culture of empathy, embedded within a history of established practices, which constitutes the relationship between a school and a local community. Teachers and caregivers are often known to each other and, where this is no the case, teachers are often sympathetic to the needs and circumstances of caregivers. Teachers are not insensitive, for example, to a caregiver's concern for the safety of a child who might be left alone at home if not admitted to school. A number of caregivers interviewed reported that schools initially advised them against sending their children to school while very young, but that the children were eventually admitted in response to persistent pleas. Teachers, on the other hand, spoke of their awareness of children who had been "graduated" by crèches, and who had nowhere else to go. One head of department insisted that it was part of the commitment of the post apartheid government to provide access to schools for learners who had emerged from (or been "graduated" by) the pre-school system.

c) How do schools respond, organisationally, to the admission of underage learners?

School admission policies and practices are formed over time in response to a range of influences from within the school, the community and the broader education system. Three sets of organisational strategies for accommodating young learners emerged from the study:

(i)   Admission Processes

At both schools, the majority of grade one learners were registered at the beginning of the year, rather than in the previous year. Both schools had attempted to introduce a system of registering learners in the previous year, but this proved to be largely impracticable, for reasons discussed under 'pressure of numbers', above. Administrative strategies for pre-admission at the two schools are also not very well developed yet. Schools tend to rely on word of mouth to spread information about registration procedures, dates and events.

(ii) Grouping into classes

In 1998 both schools used class grouping as a strategy for accommodating younger learners. In each case, the majority of younger learners were grouped together to form a predominantly 'young' class. In organising these younger classes, both schools drew on practices developed within an earlier policy phase - i.e. the practice of establishing bridging classes.
The former DET Bridging Period Programme was introduced into DIET schools in 1987 and suspended in 1990. According to Padayachie (1994) this programme was developed in an attempt to reduce failure rates in grade one and as a substitute for separate pre-primary classes which were regarded as unaffordable.

Within this programme, learners who were not deemed to be entirely school ready were admitted into a bridging class instead of the mainstream grade one class. In April, June and September, learners were tested and sorted so that some would remain with the bridging class and progress to grade one the following year while others would be released to join the mainstream grade one class and progress to grade two in the following year. This way all learners would be perceived to be making progress instead of repeating. Taylor (1989:33) argues that this programme did reduce failure rates in grade one from 21% to 3%.

In 1998 elements of these practices were still informally sustained by the schools in this study even though they are no bnger consistent with current national and provincial policy. The reason for maintaining these practices is that they allow the school some flexibility regarding the admission and progression of underage learners. However, these practices are adapted each year in response to prevailing circumstances and changing departmental policy pressures.

In effect, these practices add up to the establishment of an informal grade nought class to accommodate weaker - usually but not always younger - learners. It is assumed that the majority of learners in these classes will not progress to grade two in the following year, but will rather 'repeat' grade one or, put differently, progress to the 'big' grade one class.

The practice of offering an 'unofficial grade nought', was associated, in at least one case, with the perception that learners in this class did not require intensive teaching as this was merely a 'holding bay' until learners progressed to grade one. On these grounds, it was assumed that it did not matter if learner numbers were very high in this class. In 1998, the predominantly underage class at the P2 school held 70 learners while there were only 49 in the other ('correct age) grade one class observed.

(iii) Grouping within classes

The third strategy for accommodating younger learners is the well established practice of grouping learners according to ability. Younger learners are frequently - though not always - placed in 'weaker' groups. The efficacy of this strategy depends on the nature of the pedagogic support offered to these groups.

Conclusions

1. Caregivers have compelling reasons for sending children to school before they are six. These reasons are largely economic, but also related to concerns about the inadequacy, expense and insecurity of pre-school provision. This study has also identified a desire among caregivers to enable children to complete their schooling early in order to avoid being caught up in social practices such as crime, violence, sex and drug abuse.

2. Schools are caught in the middle between policies which require them to exclude younger learners and pressures within the school and from the community which push them towards accepting these learners. Pressures on schools include demands from caregivers and empathy for the social and economic circumstances in which caregivers find themselves. These pressures also arise from current educational circumstances in which schools are struggling to maintain enrolments in the face of constantly shifting student populations, It is often easier for schools to push up enrolment numbers at the grade one level than at other levels.

3. National and provincial policy are largely insensitive to the caregiver reasons for sending younger learners to school and to school reasons for accepting these learners. National policy is directed at ensuring that only learners who have turned six are admitted to primary school. Western Cape provincial policy is currently more flexible but it is planned that provincial policy will be brought in line with national policy in 2000. Both national and provincial departments provide little more than rhetorical support for pre-school provision.

4. There is a lack of articulation between school admission policy and pre-school policy and practice. This lack of articulation, combined with pre-school provision which is inadequate, expensive and unsafe exacerbates the pressure on schools to admit younger learners.

5. In the past, schools have responded to these pressures by covertly admitting younger learners in spite of policy. Stronger policing of these policies may inhibit these responses to some degree, but is unlikely to eradicate them. More importantly, schools and caregivers are unlikely to perceive these policies as serving their best interests, and therefor legitimate, so long as their reasons for wanting to admit younger learners are not addressed. As one school principal succinctly put it, if schools are expected to admit only learners who are already six, there "will just be more cheating". Another teacher added, "children will roam the streets and parents will be angry". In so far as the new admission policy is implemented, it is likely to contribute to the distress of poorer families, specially single parent families.

6. Where underage learners have been admitted covertly, they have been accommodated in ways which are not educationally desirable. Schools in this study - and we believe many other schools - placed many of the younger learners in an 'unofficial grade nought' class. Difficulties with this practice arise partly from its informal status. There is no departmental support for its administration or curriculum nor are there any accountability structures. It is this status that has created the conditions in which the informal 'grade nought' or bridging class could easily deteriorate into little more than a large scale childminding operation with little systematic educational content. The extent to which this actually takes place depends on the energy, motivation and pedagogic competence of the individual teacher. Of the two informal bridging classes observed for this study, one had indeed deteriorated into little more than a large holding class while the teacher of the other class had maintained some attempt to structure an appropriate pre-school educational programme.

7. Covert resistance to admissions policy results in skewed data relating to grade one enrolments. The 'informal grade one' arrangement causes difficulties for the collection of data within the provincial information system. In both schools observed in this study, the majority of learners in the informal grade nought, or bridging class, were recorded and reported as having passed at the end of the year. However, they were then placed in the mainstream grade one class in the following year. From a departmental perspective this means that large numbers of learners will have been recorded as having 'passed' grade one and will not have reappeared in grade two in the subsequent year. In the provincial data system, they would then be recorded as grade one drop outs, in the one year, and as new grade one admissions in the following year. This case provides a possible partial explanation for the very high grade one drop out rates which are intermittently reported by education departments.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the admission policy relating to school entry be reconsidered in the light of actual conditions in schools and communities. Ultimately, the fate of five year olds must be addressed. Either five year olds must be accommodated formally in the system, so that schools are guided towards and held accountable for providing an appropriate learning experience for them, or there should be closer articulation between the schooling system and pre-school provision so that five year olds are accommodated in affordable, secure pre-schools.

We believe that the educational, social and financial and political cost of attempting to exclude five year olds from the schools while ignoring the fact that they are not accommodated elsewhere is likely to be greater than the cost of actually accommodating them in formal grade nought classes within the system.

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PART TWO

AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION IN FOUR GRADE I CLASSROOMS

Ursula Kate Hoadley

LOCATING THE STUDY

As stated in the introduction to this report, the aim of this sub-study was to examine the schooling experience of the large number of underage learners enrolled in Grade 1 in the LPAS primary schools. It was discovered through an analysis of the baseline data that most underage learners in the schools failed Grade 1 and that they had been generally grouped in an unofficial Grade 0 class, which appeared to have a holding or 'child-minding' function. The study thus originally aimed to compare the learning experiences of underage learners to those of correct age learners in order to establish the differences in the pedagogy in the different age-defined classes and how this potentially impacted on their progress and achievement. It soon became clear, however, that both underage and correct age learners in these classes were being subjected to a similar learning experience and the data revealed a broader picture of a pedagogy that had similar features across the four classrooms. At this point it was necessary to reorient the study. The question developed along the lines of, if learners are 'falling at the first hurdle' to borrow Nick Taylor's phrase, to what extent is this an outcome of the pedagogy and in what ways.

What follows is an analysis of the transmission practices of the four teachers that were observed towards the end of 1998. Located within a theoretical frame developed primarily from the work of Paul Dowling (1998) and Basil Bernstein (1990), the analysis seeks to explore the extent to which the transmission practices give the learners in the classrooms access to the means to reproduce the discourse they are to acquire. Implicit in this theoretical approach is a privileged notion of pedagogy, asserting that for the production, as opposed to the restatement, of texts, acquirers need access to the principles generating what is transmitted in the classroom.

Before proceeding with a further elaboration of the theoretical frame and the analysis of the data, I will place the classrooms in context by providing a broad description of the two schools and a brief description of the classrooms, also making reference to some features of the learners and some of the established school practices in terms of the spatial and temporal organisation.

In terms of basic resources, all four classrooms in the two schools have sufficient desks and chairs for all learners, a teacher's table, bookshelves, a chalkboard and a wash basin. The physical structure of the classrooms is adequate.

The teachers reported that there was a high rate of absenteeism in Grade 1. The table below indicates the number and proportion of learners present on the days of the research observation.

Class and Observation Day	Total Number of Learners	Total Number of Learners Present	Percentage of Class Absent
Class 1 Day One	73	55	25%
Class 1 Day Two	73	58	21%
Class 3 Day One	43	29	33%
Class 3 Day Two	43	24	44%
Class 4 Day One	52	44	15%
Class 4 Day Two	52	37	29%
Class 2 Day One	39	26	33%
Class 2 Day Two	39	30	23%

Table 1: Absentee rate in the four classes across the eight days of observation

The spatial and temporal organisation within the schools is loosely defined. The school day generally begins half and hour to an hour after the school bell rings in the morning. Extracurricular events, such as sports days, staff training and meetings and school celebrations take precedence over class time.

There is a free flow of learners between the school and the surrounding. At P 1 a child who had wet himself was sent home to change in the middle of the morning. On another occasion several learners were sent home to collect forms that they had left at home. The children were unattended when they left the school. During break time many learners left the school grounds and either went home or wandered around outside the school.

Only one of the classes had the correct ratio of learners to teacher (39:1). The other three classes ratios are above the norm, with ratios of 43:1, 52:1 and 73:1.

There are a number of factors relating to the home background of the learners which manifest in the classroom. Many of the learners showed signs of physical neglect in the shape of sores on their bodies and heads, cloudy eyes and clear undernourishment. About 50% of the learners did not wear school uniform. Learners brought very few of their own resources to the school, and many did not have pencils or bookbags. Both schools participate in a school feeding programme and all the learners received bread (and on some days soup or milkshake) daily.

Having broadly sketched the context in which the classrooms are located, a discussion of the research methodology and theoretical frame follows

METHODOLOGY

The analysis is based on transcripts from the observation of four Grade 1 teachers at the two LPAS primary schools. Each teacher was observed by three observers for two whole school days, between 3 and 18 November 1998. For the purposes of this analysis, the classes will be referred to as Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 and Class 4.

The table below shows the age distribution of learners across the four classes. The vast majority of learners in Class 1 and Class 3 are underage. However, there is a high proportion of underage learners in the other classes, particularly in Class 2, where 62% of the learners are underage.

	Total number of learners in class	Percentage underage	Percentage correct age	Percentage overage
Class 1	73	52%	48%	0%
Class 3	43	44%	49%	7%
Class 4	52	33%	60%	27%
Class 2	39	26%	64%	10%

Table 2 (a) The age distribution of learners in the four classes (1999 criteria)

The extent of underage is much less according to these criteria, but there is a similar distribution across the classes, except in the case of Class four which has a greater proportion of underage learners in this class than Class 2.

The teachers and classes for observation were selected on the basis of the age of the majority of learners in the classes. The analysis, however, focuses on commonalities across the four classrooms due to the shift in focus from a comparison of transmission practices in underage and correct age classes to that of transmission practices in Grade I generally. In most cases the teacher practices within the classrooms are generalized across the eight days of observations. There were, however, differences between the teachers and reference is made to these differences.

The eight days of observation were broken down into activities as the units for analysis. These activities comprised both pedagogic activities (time structured for learning purposes) and non-pedagogic activities (time allocated for eating, going to the toilet, break, etceteras).

The observation schedule for the collection of the data was designed to gain a comprehensive description of the patterning of the school day, with special focus on recording teacher and learner talk and behaviour. The observations were recorded at least five minute intervals. The schedule also allows for general comments and observations (See Appendix A).,

The data was recorded in the form of notes, and a synthesis of the three sets of notes from the observers produced a data set that provided a detailed and comprehensive account of what happened in the classroom. Very few, minor discrepancies were found in the notes taken by the different observers, and these were resolved through discussion shortly after the observations.

One of the methodological issues that arose out of the study related to the fact that each teacher was observed for two whole school days. There is no longitudinal dimension to the study, that is to say teachers were not observed over a longer period of time. The two days are extracted from the complex reality of classroom life and held up for analysis as fairly discrete items. Teachers' work is on-going and arguably has to be studied over a longer period of time

	Total number of learners	Percentage underage	Percentage correct age	Percentage overage
Class 1	73	90%	10%	0%
Class 3	43	81%	12%	7%
Class 4	52	38%	35%	27%
Class 2	39	62%	28%	10%

*Table 2: The age distribution of learners in the four classes**

to do it justice. However, it is possible to discern in the analysis of these eight days classroom practices that have been established over a period of time.

THEORETICAL FRAME

In developing a theoretical frame for the analysis of transmission in the classrooms, I draw in the main on Dowling's (1998) construction of ideal types of pedagogic relations, and Bernstein's (1990) work on pedagogic discourse.

Pedagogic relation: apprenticing and relay

Dowling (1998)distinguishes between two ideal forms of pedagogic relation: apprenticing and relay. Essentially the difference between the two forms lies in the extent to which the esoteric domain of the discourse is made available by the transmitters. Dowling (1998) defines the esoteric domain as "the regulating domain of an activity in relation to its practices" (page 135), where both forms of expression and content are specialized.

Dowling (1998) defines the mode of pedagogic relation he terms 'apprenticeship' in terms of an adept/novice relationship. Pedagogic action involves the relationship between these two subjective positions. One of these positions is the adept in respect of the to-be-acquired practice, and the other is a novice. The novice, or object of the practice, is to become subjected to the discipline of the practice in order to become its subject. In that the novice is the object of the pedagogic action, the evaluative criteria crucially reside with, and are controlled by, the adept and not the novice. The rules of evaluation are made explicit, and the criteria for the [ultimate] production as opposed to the restatement of texts are transmitted. Acquirers are given access to the principles generating the pedagogic practice (the esoteric domain).

In the relay relation the evaluative principles are not made available to the acquirer. Relaying pedagogic action produces a 'dependant' acquirer who has access to neither the recognition nor realisation rules. In this relation the esoteric domain of the adept is not made available to the acquirer.

If we look at the apprenticing relation in terms of Bernstein's analysis of pedagogic discourse, in the instructional discourse in the apprenticing mode, knowledge is specialized and there is a progression, a sense of past and future. In the pedagogy, strategies aim to open up rather than close down the discourse. In terms of the modes of regulation time and space is specialized and there is the provision of a framework for the pedagogy to proceed. In this mode both the instructional and regulative discourses are regulated by the esoteric domain, and these regulating principles are made explicit to the acquirers.

In the relay relation the principles regulating the constitution of the instructional and regulative discourses are not made explicit. In terms of the instructional discourse knowledge is localized and fragmented. There is a weak classification of time and space.

Distributing strategies

When considering how transmission is realised in the classroom, I draw on Dowling's (1998) categories of distributing strategies, developed in order to describe how "[i]n its production, a

text may vary in terms of the extent to which it claims authority over or gives access to the domains of practice and ... the principles of its discourse". In the figure below I have simplified Dowling's categories to four strategies for analysing the distribution of the pedagogic message:

principling	generalising	specialising
particularising	fragmenting	localising

Figure 1: Distributing strategies

Source: Adapted from Dowling (1998:147)

Generalizing refers to the articulation of the regulating principles of the esoteric domain, a connection between the repertoire * and what Dowling refers to as the 'gaze' of the esoteric domain, which regulates the realization of a particular repertoire. A generalizing strategy "disembeds, abstracts or" pulls" the discourse away from context in order to extend its degree of context independence" (Ensor, 1999:74).

S*pecializing* strategies also present the repertoire as relatively context independent, however this is with respect to a narrow range of topics as opposed to generalizing strategies which present the repertoires as context independent across a range of topics (ibid.).

Fragmenting strategies realise the "esoteric domain as segmental rather than articulated" (Dowling, 1998:149). The principles that generate the repertoire are not made explicit. In terms of domains, "the public domain* is constituted as an incoherent connection of settings, or alternatively, as constituted by public domain rather than esoteric domain principles" (ibid.)

Localizing strategies are associated with the relay relation, where the "products of the practices of the activity" are distributed without the principles whereby these products are generated being made available. The elaboration of the repertoire is also restricted to a single site. The difference between fragmenting and localizing strategies is that localizing strategies present the repertoire as a limited range of topics, whereas fragmenting strategies present the repertoire as a more extended range of topics but without reference to principles connecting the segments

The general quality distinguishing principling from particularizing strategies according to Dowling (1998) is

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*The "public domain" is defined by Dowling (1998) as the domain of non-specialized practices, or the domain of practice which exhibits "comparatively weak classification in terms of form and content" (page 37).

the former [principled discourse] exhibits connective complexity, whereas the latter [particularized discourse] tends to impoverish this complexity, minimizing rather than maximizing connections and exchanging instructions for definitions (page 149).

Principling strategies can be associated with the apprenticing mode, and particularising strategies with the relay mode. The difference between the two modes lies in the extent to which an array of tasks provides the novice with access to the principles for the production of texts.

The data will be examined in terms of the distributing strategies outlined above. The analysis will also locate the teachers in terms of the ideal types of pedagogic relation (apprenticing and relay) drawn from Dowling (1998).

Text and grammar orientations

Finally, and by way of summary, I will consider the transmission practices in terms of grammar and text orientations. Following Lotman, Eco distinguishes between text-oriented and grammar-oriented societies in the following way.

> There are cultures governed by a system of rules and there are cultures governed by a repertoire of texts imposing models of behaviour. In the former category texts are generated by combinations of discrete units and are judged correct or incorrect according to their conformity to the combinatorial rules; in the latter category society directly generates texts, these constituting macro-units from which rules could eventually be inferred, but that first and foremost propose models to be followed and imitated.

Looking outwards then and applying these orientations to the pedagogy I suggest that the apprenticing mode involves the induction of the novice (or acquirer) by the adept (transmitter) into a grammar orientation. The relaying mode on the other hand follows a text orientation, where acquirers are not given access to the principles governing the production of texts. These points will be returned in the course of the discussion of the data and in the conclusion.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Each of the four classes was observed for two full school days - a total of 8 days or 44 hours and 25 minutes. In a preliminary analysis, the data was broken down into activities as the unit for analysis. These included 41 pedagogic activities on the one hand, and non-pedagogic activities on the other - which comprised such things as break, praying, eating and going to the toilet.

I will present the data under certain categories that were used in an initial sorting of the data and which provide a comprehensive descriptive account of what happened in the classroom. The categories that emerged in organising the data for analysis were a) how time was used, b) how knowledge was presented (or modes of transmission), c) what tasks learners were required to perform, d) how the tasks were mediated and assessed e) the completion of tasks f) what content knowledge was introduced, g) how the knowledge and tasks were structured, and h) forms of classroom control.

Time use

The total time observed in all four classrooms was 44 hours and 25 minutes. Of this time just over 25 hours (58%) were allocated to pedagogic activities 14 hours (32%) was allocated to non-pedagogic activities, which included breaks, praying, eating, going to the toilet and periods of unstipulated activity. The remaining 10% (over 4 hours) of time was lost to late starting, which ranged from 15 to 45 minutes late, though was usually around half an hour.

	Hours	Percentage of total time
Time allocated to pedagogic activities	26 hours 6 mins	58%
Time allocated to non-pedagogic activities	14 hrs	32%
Time lost through late starting	4 hrs 19 mins	10%
Total time observed	44 hrs 25 mins	100%

Table 3: Time allocation aggregated across the eight days of observation

Within the time allocated for activities, an estimate of how much time was actually spent on both pedagogic and non-pedagogic activities was made. During the pedagogic activities it was estimated that learners spent approximately 67% off the pedagogic time (or 39% of the total time) on task. Time loss was largely due to activities extending beyond the required amount of time, and teachers attending to interruptions and thus not monitoring the work that was or was not being done.

Within the time allocated for non-pedagogic activities, the time allocated exceeded the length of time it took for learners to complete the activities. For example learners were allocated between 15 and 35 minutes to eat their lunch which in each case they finished doing in half or less than half the time allocated. 56% of the time allocated to non-pedagogic activities was actually spent engaged in the activities for which the time was allocated.

Learners spent 58% of the total time actually engaged in tasks, pedagogic and non-pedagogic. The remainder of the time was lost to periods of unspecified activity. During these times learners either sat silently, or spoke to each other. At other times they engaged in out-of-seat behaviour or played with one another. At times several learners were observed to sleep, leave the classroom or play quietly on their own.

	% time on task *within* pedagogic & non pedagogic act.	% time on task of total time
Pedagogic activities	67%	39%
Non-pedagogic activities	56%*	18%*

*Time allocated for break is calculated as being time spent on task

Table 4: Percentage of time spent on task for pedagogic and non pedagogic activities.

Data here is aggregated, and there are differences between the four teachers as regards the amount of time lost. Time loss in three of the four different classes was much the same, however the reasons differed. In Class 1 learners spent 42% of the time engaged in unspecified activity. This was largely due to the teacher leaving the class and attending to interruptions.

Mode of transmission

Mode here refers to the means whereby knowledge is made available in the classroom, or the means employed by the teacher for generating knowledge in the classroom. The table below indicates the spread of the modes employed by the four teachers in the 41 pedagogic activities.

	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4
1	Q & A discussion	10	Q & A discussion Instruction & follow up	23	Q & A discussion	34	Q & A discussion Demonstration Reading Story-telling
2	Q & A discussion Instruction & follow up Story-telling	11	Q & A discussion Instruction	24	Instruction & follow up Demonstration	35	Instruction & follow up Demonstration
3	Instruction & follow up	12	Instruction	25	Instruction & follow up	36	Instruction & follow up Q & A discussion Demonstration
4	Instruction & follow up	13	Q & A discussion	26	Instruction & follow up	37	Instruction
5	Instruction	14	Instruction & follow up	27	Instruction & follow up	38	Q & A discussion Instruction & follow up
6	Instruction	15	Instruction	28	Instruction	39	Instruction
7	Story-telling Q & A discussion	16	Instruction	29	Instruction & follow up	40	Instruction & follow up
8	Instruction	17	Instruction	30	Instruction & follow up	41	Instruction & follow up Demonstration
9	Q & A discussion Instruction	18	Q & A discussion Story-telling Reading	31	Instruction & follow up		
		19	Instruction	32	Instruction & follow up		
		20	Q & A discussion	33	Instruction & follow up		
		21	Instruction				
		22	Instruction & follow up				

Table 6: The modes used by the four teachers in the 41 pedagogic activities

In the table 'Instruction' refers to when the learners were told what to do with little or no further clarification as to the approach to the task, for example learners were told

> What I want us to do now is draw a cow. After you have drawn your cow write a sentence about your cow. (Class 3 Teacher)

> and

> Sit and take out your pencils. I will give you pencil and paper. On the paper you will draw Jesus' family. Start with father, then mother and lastly Jesus, and write their names. (Class 1 Teacher)

'Instructions & follow-up' in the table refers to when the teacher offers further explanation or mediation of the activity. For example in a letter recognition activity the Class 3 teacher said to the learners: "You are going to play a game. I am going to call out a letter, and you will

For example, the Class 1 teacher spent almost an hour looking for a pot belonging to a parent that had been lost at a school function a few days earlier. In Class 2 40% of the time was wasted, and resulted largely from the fact that the teacher was absent from the class for a significant amount of time, and, whilst in the classroom, spent much of the time doing an assignment for a Business Management course she was completing at university thus leaving the class to work unattended or sit and wait. In Class 3 learners spent 41% of their time engaged in unspecified activity. This was largely as a result of activities that went on for longer than the tasks required, and attendance by the teacher to various interruptions. The interrupted nature of the school day accounts for the loss of a large proportion of learning time. The Class I teacher was interrupted 8 times, the Class 2 teacher 1 I times and the Class 3 teacher 9 times.

The Class 4 teacher on the other hand was interrupted only once during the course of the two days she was observed. It was also estimated that learners in her class spent 88% of their time on task, although her second day only extended to 11 am after which there was school cleaning for an hour. Further the Class 4 teacher spent the least time out of class during class time (2%).

	Time allocated for pedagogic and non-pedagogic activities	Percentage of time spent present in class by teacher	Percentage of time spent absent from class by teacher
Class 1	550 minutes (9hrs 10mins)	70%	30%
Class 2	580 minutes (9hrs 40mins)	72%	28%
Class 3	585 minutes (9hrs 45mins)	81%	19%
Class 4	385 minutes (6hrs 25mins)	98%	2%

Table 5: Proportion of class time over two days where the teacher was present/absent

Discussion

In terms of the regulative discourse, an examination of the specialization of time and space indicates the extent to which there is the provision of a framework for the pedagogy to proceed. The teachers move in and out of the classroom during class time, and the boundaries between the classroom for transmission purposes and the rest of the school for attending to other matters are blurred. Further, in terms of the specialization of time, it is only the non-pedagogic activities that are clearly marked in terms of when they take place and for what duration. Pedagogic activities are often either allocated too much time so that learners are not engaged in tasks for the entire period, or the time allocated is cut short and tasks are rendered incomplete. Classes do not begin on time, and a relatively small proportion of time is firstly allocated to, and secondly utilised for, learning. There is a surface, bureaucratic specialization of time and space, in that the school day has a beginning and an ending time, and that there is a classroom space marked out for the pedagogy to take place. Beyond this time and space for learning is weakly bounded and there is a loosely structured framework set up for the pedagogy to proceed.

point at it with your finger on your mat to show what sound it is" (Instruction). She then proceeds to call out 15 consonant sounds (follow-up). 'Story-telling' is when the teacher uses a story in order to present knowledge to the learners, and 'Q & A discussion' refers to a discussion in a question and answer format between the teacher and the learners, for example,

> Teacher: Listen there was a baby called Jesus, and he stayed at the horses' stable. Can anybody write 'stable on the board?
> [A learner goes to the board and writes 'isitali' (stable)) Teacher: What is a horse, Aphiwe?
> Aphiwe: It is an animal.
> Teacher: What is the difference between an animal and a person? Learner: An animal has four legs and we have two
> Learner: An animal has fur. Hands are different.

The most common mode employed by all four teachers was that of giving instructions, and the variation was the degree to which these instructions were followed up. The Class 2 and Class 1 teachers predominantly gave instructions with no further explanations and little or no mediation. For example the Class 2 teacher instructed the learners to "Draw two big shapes. First one, draw a triangle in the middle of your book. Now draw a square below the triangle. Make sure all sides are equal. Colour your shapes". In the case of the Class 4 and Class 3 teachers instructions were again the predominant mode, however, these were generally followed up. In 33 of the 41 activities, giving instructions constituted the predominant mode employed by the teacher.

'Demonstration' here refers to the teacher making the procedures and criteria for the task explicit through 'showing' an example. In the Class 3 class the teacher used demonstration once and in Class 4 the teacher demonstrated four activities. In Class I and Class 2 demonstration was not used by the teachers, and both teachers relied predominantly on learners carrying out instructions with little or no follow up in the form of mediation or further clarification of the task. On one occasion the Class 2 teacher explained to the learners that she had not written 'izibalo' (maths) on the board because she wanted them to learn to write the word on their own (which the majority of the learners were not able to do).

A pattern that several of the activities followed was that of a question and answer discussion, or a story told using a question and answer format followed by instructions for a task. For example, in Class 2 the teacher led a discussion with learners about various food products and dairy products and learners were then instructed to draw a cow and write a descriptive sentence relating to the cow they had drawn. The teachers generally posed closed questions requiring factual recall responses, for example

Teacher: We also have two types of food - fruit and vegetables.   Give me different types of fruit.

Learners: Pear, peach tomato

Learner: Onion

Teacher: We can eat these uncooked.   Can we eat onion uncooked?

All Learners: No miss

Teacher: Why?

Learners: It makes your breath to smell bad.

Teacher: Now let's go to vegetables.

Learners: Cabbage, onion, potatoes.

Teacher: Listen, we have spoken about peach, peat, pineapple, cabbage.   Now give me shapes that you know

Learners: Circle, triangle, square

Learner: Rugby

Teacher: Rugby is the people who play, but that is not their shape.

Learner: The ball has got a shape

Teacher: What kind of fruit can give us a triangular shape?

and

Teacher: A boy does not wear clothes like this (referring to a raincoat a learner is wearing]. How are you boy?

[No response from learner]

Teacher: Where does it rain? (to the whole class)

Learners: Outside

Teacher: What does mom do at home?

Learner: She washes the dishes Teacher: What else does she do?

Learner: She cooks and cleans

Teacher: Why do we need to clean?

Learner: When it is dirty

Teacher: How do you help your parents, Mabhuti?

Learner: I pick up papers

Teacher: Yoncla?

Learner: I wash dishes and sweep the floor.

Discussion

The learners generally knew the answers to the questions. The teachers' questioning strategies demanded low-level cognitive operations which largely evoked responses dependant on the recall of knowledge ('Who was the first person created by God?"), or on learners' everyday knowledge drawn from their own experience ("What does mom do at home?"). Learners were not required to produce their own texts. On the few occasions when learners did insert their own texts these were ignored by the teacher. For example, in telling the story of the Three Little Pigs part of the exchange between the learners and the teacher went as follows:

Teacher: The second pig built its own house using wood.

Learner: Our house is built out of tin

Learner: My house is built out of zinc

Teacher: Wolf came again and ate this second pig. The third pig ...

When learners did not know the answers to questions the course of questioning was arrested:

> Teacher: Today we will read from the Bible. By the way who created us?
> Several learners: God
> Teacher: Everything on earth was created by God. God worked for 6 days and what did he do on the seventh day?
> [No response from learners]
> Teacher: How many days do you come to school?
> Whole class: 5 days
> Teacher: After working very hard for 6 days, what do you think God did on the seventh day?
> Several learners: He rested.
> Teacher: Who was the first person created by God?
> Learner: Adam
> Teacher: And who else?
> Learner: Jesus
> Teacher: No we said that Jesus is God's son
> Learner: Eve
> Teacher: You don't remember things. We are going to the story of the Great Flood.

The predominating mode was that of issuing instructions for tasks which learners executed on the basis of memory (deduced from the fact that there was little evidence of elaboration and forms of extended explanation).

In relation to teacher education, Ensor (1999) shows how "the principles that generate the privileged repertoire are contained within language as well as within skilled performances. This suggests that the generative principles, the esoteric domain, can only be made available through a combination of explicit discursive elaboration and ostensive instruction, that is, through demonstration or showing"(page 70). In an examination of the modes we find an absence of discursive elaboration and ostensive instruction. The transmission strategy is characterized as fragmenting, where there is an absence of reference to the principles connecting a series of discrete and generally unelaborated instructions.

Tasks

Here we examine the types of performances evoked by the teachers in the four classrooms. These tasks are categorised into story-telling, reciting and singing, mathematics, drawing, reading and writing. The following table shows the selection of tasks in the 41 activities.

Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4	
1	Q & A discussion	10	Q & A discussion Drawing	23	Q & A discussion	34	Q & A discussion Story-telling Drawing
2	Q & A discussion Role play Story-telling	11	Maths (shapes)*	24	Maths (counting)	35	Maths (counting)
3	Maths (counting)	12	Reading	25	Instruction & follow up	36	Maths (number lines)
4	Writing	13	Drawing Writing	26	Story-telling	37	Reciting verses
5	Writing	14	Reading	27	Singing	38	Reading Writing
6	Drawing	15	Reciting verses	28	Story-telling	39	Reciting
7	Story-telling Q & A discussion Drawing	16	Story-telling	29	Instruction & follow up	40	Writing
8	Story-telling	17	Singing	30	Reading	41	Reading
9	Writing	18	Q & A discussion Story-telling	31	Writing		
		19	Maths (counting)	32	Drawing		
		20	Q & A discussion	33	Singing		
		21	Reading				
		22	Story-telling				

Table 7: The tasks in the 41 pedagogic activities

The emphasis in the classes was on an oral form of pedagogy, and the majority of the time in these classes is spent on teacher-led discussion in a question and answer format, story-telling by both the teachers and learners, and reciting and singing of well-known songs and verses by the learners.

Story-telling

In several instances learners were asked to stand and tell stories. The stories told were generally of a fairy tale type. They often bore no relation to the preceding or following activity. The teachers did not appoint learners to tell stories, but asked for volunteers. Most of the learners did not listen to the story-teller, but sat and scribbled or chatted amongst themselves. The teachers themselves did not listen to the learners recounting of the stories, nor was there any interjection on their part during the recounting or at the end of the story.

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*In some cases in terms of categorizing the data, it was difficult to distinguish between tasks. For example, in the Class 2 class learners were instructed to "draw a triangle, a square and a rectangle" without further elaboration. In this case it is difficult to distinguish whether this is a maths task or a drawing task

Reciting, singing

Reciting of well-known verses and singing songs known to all the learners took up a significant portion of the learning time in activities. The verses were well known to all the learners and most of the learners participated enthusiastically. The content of the verses bore no relation to the preceding or following activities, and were generally unmediated by the teacher.

Drawing

A drawing task often followed a discussion or a story. For example after the telling of the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' learners were instructed to draw a pig. Likewise after the telling of the Biblical story of the 'Loaves and Fishes', the learners were instructed to draw a fish. The drawing was generally unmediated. In two cases models were provided for the learners to draw (a picture of a cow and a picture of a fish). In the other cases learners drew from memory.

Mathematics

Three of the maths tasks seen in the classrooms consisted of counting exercises (in Class 1 up to 4 and 8, in Class 4 up to 10 and then 100, in Class 2 up to 10 then 50, and in Class 3 up to 10). Two tasks required learners to draw shapes. The remaining two maths tasks are outlined in more detail below.
In Class 2 the only numeracy activity seen in this classroom was a counting exercise (up to 10 and then up to 50), followed by a "quiz" which separated the class into a boys and a girls team. The following questions were asked in the quiz:

"Write 100 on the board"   (Learner able)
"Write 90 on the board"   (Learner able)
"Write 80 on the board"   (Learner able)
"There are 3 apples and you get 2 more. How many do you have?"   (Learner able)
"We are sitting in groups. How many desks in each group?"   (Learner able)
"How many legs does a table have?" (Learner not able)
"This classroom has windows. How many windows are there?"   (Learner not able)
"There are 2 children and I give them 4 oranges. How many (Learner not able) oranges does each child get?"
"How many desks do we have in this classroom?"   (Learner not able)
"I want a girl who will write 5 for us on the board"   (Learner able)
"I want a boy who will write 10 for us"   (Learner able)

In Class 4 a lesson was given by the teacher on number lines. The activity began with learners counting up to 10. The teacher then asked individual learners to count on their own. This was the only class where counting aloud was mediated by the teacher. The teacher then explained the use of a number line by using a role play of a grandfather who walks from his home, rests, and then carries on to the place where he gets his pension. Learners were asked to count how many paces he took before he rested, how many subsequent paces to the pension place, and how many paces in total. A number of simple algorithms were then demonstrated on the board on a number line: 4 + 5; 2+1;4+2;2+2;5+1.

The learners were then instructed to draw their own number lines. There was little focus and attention on the part of the learners and no management of whole class participation on the part of the teacher. For example, for a 10 minute observation period, during the number line activity, 7 out of the 44 learners present were watching the work on the board whilst the teacher explained. The rest of the learners played with each other, drew, two learners had their heads down on the desk and others sat staring off The teacher did not indicate an awareness of the lack of participation. Apart from the counting exercise the teacher did not monitor learner understanding during the course of the activity.

Reading

In all four classes the emphasis was on reading single words, or on the recognition of consonants and consonant sounds. No extended pieces of text were introduced and at no point did learners read sentences. There was very little evidence of pre-reading activities beyond several sound recognition and letter recognition activities. All reading exercises were poorly mediated and none of the four teachers spent time reading with or listening to individual learners. Learners were generally left to do the reading activities on their own and consequently most learners did not participate in or execute the tasks.

Over the two days that each teacher was observed very little time was spent on reading activities. In Class 1, 16 minutes were spent on reading activities, in Class 3, 10 minutes, in Class 2, 25 minutes and in Class 4, 36 minutes (in the case of which the majority of this time was spent on a cut and paste exercise around sound recognition). The table below gives an indication of the nature of the reading activities during the eight day observation period, the time spent on them, the approximate number of learners who participated in the task, and the nature of the mediation and assessment employed by the teacher during the activity.

Class	Nature of activity	Time spent on activity	Participation in task	Mediation	Assessment
Class 1	Letter recognition (letter 'h')	3 minutes	Few participate	None	None
Class 1	Letter recognition (letter 'h')	2 minutes	Few participate	None	None
Class 1	Reading single words	11 minutes	All participate	None	None
Class 3	Letter recognition (consonants)	10 minutes	All participate	None	None
Class 4	Reading single words	16 minutes	+/- 25% participate	Very little	None
Class 4	Letter recognition (consonants)	20 minutes	+/- 75% participate	Demonstrates to several Ls	None
Class 2	Reading single words	7 minutes	+/- 50% participate	None	None
Class 2	Reading single words	8 minutes	+/- 70% participate	Assists several learners	None
Class 2	Reading single words	10 minutes	+/- 65 % participate	None	None

Table 8: Nature and duration of reading tasks; participation of learners and mediation and assessment by teachers.

Not once in the course of the eight days of observation were learners exposed to or required to use books. Reading consisted of working through lists of single words or sound recognition exercises. No class readers were seen or used. In the course of the observations in all four classrooms a total of five books were seen in the classroom: two Bibles, a Standard 3 Geography textbook, a book on art ideas for teachers and one large book covering the numbers one to ten with pictures and text in English. Two teachers read from the Bibles, the other books were not seen to be used.

Writing

The following table shows all of the writing tasks evoked by the teachers in the four classrooms.

Class	Description of task	Number of words to be written
Class 1	Write name (alongside a drawing)	1
	Write word 'ihagu' [pig] (in sand)	1
	Form word 'ihagu' out of plastercine	1
	Write name (alongside a drawing)	1
	Write words Mary, Jesus, Joseph (alongside drawings)	3
	Write single words incorporating 'ih' sound	+/- 5
Class 2	Write word shape (alongside drawing)	1
	Write name, date and word 'izibalo' [maths]	3
	Write name and a sentence about a cow (alongside drawing)	sentence
	Write 5-10 single words (dictation)	5-10
Class 3	Write name (alongside a drawing)	1
	Write name and date and draw patterns	2
Class 4	Write name (alongside a drawing)	1
	Write name and date	2
	Write 6 single words incorporating 'dy' sound (copied from board)	6
	Write 12-15 single words (dictation)	12-15

Table 9: Nature of writing tasks; extent of writing tasks in terms of number of words written

Most of the instances in which learners were required to write words accompanied other tasks, such as drawing or maths where tasks were required to be labelled with a name and a date. Two dictation exercises focused on writing in particular, and one pattern drawing exercise represented a pre-writing activity.

In several of the writing and drawing tasks learners were required to write their names and over the course of the two days observed, learners in each of the classes wrote their names at least twice. Of the total 161 learners observed in the four classes, 42 (26%) were seen not to be able to write their names accurately. Little correction or individual work towards the mastery of name writing was evidenced, except in Class 3, where a few names written incorrectly by learners were corrected. Most learners did not have a good grasp of the actual technique of writing and formed letters in unconventional ways.

No formal writing activities which focused on the development of writing skills were seen in the classrooms, apart from the pre-writing exercise in Class 3 which consisted of pattern drawing. Learners were provided with a model to copy from in one of the activities in Class 2. Apart from this no demonstration of writing skills or models of writing were provided.

As with the reading activities the focus of writing activities was on single words. In only one activity were learners required to write a sentence, however this process was unmediated, and no demonstration was given by the teacher. The learners were instructed: "After you have drawn your cow write a sentence about your cow". Of the 26 learners present, three were able to write a sentence accurately. Eight learners made no attempt and seventeen learners listed a few products derived from a cow.

Discussion

Learners were required to execute tasks on the basis of memory. For example learners were told to "Draw a triangle, a square and a rectangle", without further elaboration. In presenting the tasks no references were made to the principles for the selection of a task, nor for the sequencing of the tasks.

The transmission practice here is characterized by a strong degree of fragmentation. Tasks were discrete, and often bore little relation to the preceding or following task. We will see examples of this later in the discussion. The pedagogic performances required of the learners remained at the level of practising. The emphasis in the classrooms was on an oral form of pedagogy, and a large proportion of the time was spent reciting well-known verses and songs, and story-telling of a fairy-tale type. Very little time was spent on reading and writing activities. No extended pieces of texts were introduced and learners read only single words. In the writing activities, single words were also produced.

In the transmission modes and tasks shown in the data the evaluative principles that are transmitted are inadequate for what may be demanded from students outside of the local context. In other words they are context-dependent and non-generalizable. In the pedagogy there is little evidence of strategies that open up the discourse, but rather in the predominating instructing mode, and the nature of the question and answer discussions which require low level cognitive operations dependent on recall, and the absence of learner generated talk in their passive positioning, the discourse is closed down.

Mediation and assessment

For my purposes mediation is defined as the teacher being aware of and observing what the learners are doing and intervening where appropriate in order to provide markers towards the realisation of the criteria of the task. There was very little evidence of mediation of tasks, though more in Class 3 and Class 4. In Class 1 and Class 2 both teachers generally gave the learners instructions and carried on with their own work (in the case of the Class 2 teacher), or spent a large portion of the time out of the class (the Class 1 teacher).

	Mediation of > 50% of learners	Mediation of <30% of learners	No mediation
Number of activities	11	8	22

Table 10: Incidence of teacher mediation of the 41 pedagogic activities.

The above table indicates the incidence of mediation in the course of the activities. At no time was a teacher seen to spend a protracted length of time with an individual learner.

Very little assessment was seen in the activities. Assessment here includes the teacher observing or watching learners and intervening in order to evaluate the realisation of criteria. Very often the teacher did not see the learners' work as they did it nor was the work collected for assessment. The following table gives an indication of how much assessment was apparent in the activities observed.

	No assessment	Ticks only	Ticks and corrects	Listens to/watches learners and mediates further learning
Number of pedagogic activities	28	6	2	5
% of pedagogic activities	68%	15%	5%	12%

Table 11: Nature of the assessment in the 41 pedagogic activities

Of the total 41 pedagogic activities observed, in 13 there was some form of assessment. On six of these occasions the teacher merely ticked the work, thus in only 7 of the 41 activities were criteria for the task made explicit through assessment. On five occasions teachers were seen to listen to what the learners were saying or watch what they were doing and intervene in order to direct the learning.

Most of the assessment seen took place in Class 4 and Class 3. In both Class 2 and Class 1 there was either no assessment or some ticking of work. Neither of these teachers were seen to correct any work (both written and oral) at any time. In several cases the teachers also ticked work that was in fact incorrect. For example in an activity where learners were required to draw a rectangle, the teacher marked the work of several learners who had drawn squares as correct*. In Class 3 the teacher marked patterns correct that did not correspond to the models given to the learners to copy. Although many of the learners in all the classes struggled to write their names accurately, in only two instances were teachers (the Class 3 and Class 4 teachers) seen to correct mistakes. Assessment also did not reach all learners.

In Class 2 learners completed two exercises on both sides of a piece of newsprint. On the one side they had drawn fruit which was supposed to correspond to a shape (for example an orange representing the shape of a circle) and were required to write the shape that their

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*Although a square fits the definition of a rectangle, learners were required to draw a number of shapes (including a triangle, circle, square and rectangle). They were thus required to be able to distinguish between a square and a rectangle, and therefore, a drawing of a square as a rectangle in this instance is strictly speaking incorrect.

drawing resembled. On the other side learners had drawn a cow and were required to write a descriptive sentence of their drawing. The teacher, who spent the time during both exercises working on a personal assignment, told learners to hand their work to one of the observers. The teacher did not at any stage see what the learners had done, and did not ask the observer for the work to be handed back to her so that she could assess it. In the drawing and writing exercise, three of the twenty-six learners completed the activity accurately. For the shape exercise sixteen of the twenty-six learners executed the task correctly.

On two occasions whole class assessment procedures were seen, where the teacher showed the class after the activity how it should have been done. This was evidenced once in the Class 4 classroom, and once in the Class 2 classroom (see example on page 27 relating to the visual literacy activity),

Discussion

The transmission did not appear to be informed by an understanding of where the learners were, where they should go next and how they were going to get there. In other words there was an absence of progression, a sense of past and future. Most activities remained at the level of practising, whether it was a learner practising writing their name incorrectly, or a leamer practising a skill they had already mastered.

The purpose of assessing is largely lost in that no statement with regard to the result or intended outcome of the learning is provided. The criteria for the tasks are not made explicit. In the lack of assessment and mediation the teachers do not make recognition rules (i.e. "what meanings may legitimately be put together (Bernstein, 1990:29), or the extent to which acquirers gasp what the tasks are intended to achieve), nor realization rules (which establishes what counts as a legitimate text (Bernstein, 1990:35)) available to the acquirers. The transmission strategy is characterized as localizing in that the principles whereby the pedagogic texts are generated are not made available.

Completion of tasks

The following examples show how several of the activities ended. They are a selection from the data to illustrate how in many of the activities closure is deferred by the teacher.

In Class 1 learners briefly began a role play exercise based on the story of the three little pigs. After a few learners role played the beginning of the story, for approximately three minutes, the following exchange took place

> Teacher: Do you want to continue?
> Whole class [shouts]: Yes, Miss!
> Teacher: No, we will continue tomorrow

The activity is not continued the following day. Another example comes from Class 2 in the telling of the story of the Great Flood.

Teacher: [Reads from the bible. She explains the word increase] When you cook rice then it grows bigger.

Teacher: Listen, we hear that people increased on earth. What happens when there are so many people?

[No response from learners]

Teacher: It seems like we have forgotten. Who watched Felicia's show last night? [No response from learners]

Teacher: When numbers increased, crime also increased. In the Bible it is said that people did bad things on earth.

Teacher: It was also said that there was a man who loved and respected God. who was he?

Learner: I think it was Jesus

Teacher: No. Jesus was not yet born then. I will tell you. He was called Noah. God told him to go to the forest, cut trees and build a ship with those trees. What was this ship going to be used for?

[No response from learners]

Teacher: Noah was going to go to the people and tell them that God was going to send a great flood.

We will hear tomorrow about what happened to the ship.

The story was not continued the following day. In another activity in Class 1 learners were required to draw a large circle with four smaller circles inside it on a slate. Of the 55 learners present 23 did not complete the exercise. The teacher ticked 7 of the learners' slates and then stated "Those I haven't marked I will mark when we come back from outside. Put your slates down and close your eyes". The slates were not marked, and by the following day the work had smudged or rubbed off the slates.

The purpose of "going outside" was to write the word 'ihagu' in the sand. Of the 55 learners, two learners wrote the word in full, two attempted to write the word but did not complete it, and one learner wrote his name. The rest of the class played amongst themselves. The teacher then moved on to the next task, asking learners to make the sound of a piglet's cry when being eaten by a wolf.

Discussion

There is no evidence of the insertion by the teacher of a developmental trajectory in terms of a shift or change that the learning ought to produce in the learners. In a pedagogic relation both the learners and the teacher must hold an implicit (at the very least) understanding that criteria are to be transmitted and acquired. The teachers instruct learners to move from one task to the next often without assessment or mediation, or closure. The criteria marking the beginning of an activity and the end are not made explicit. In other words the development from incompetence to competency (or the potential therefore) is not marked out and it would seem that development is indexed by the extent to which learners can retain increasing volumes of unprincipled, fragmented bits of knowledge.

The structuring of knowledge and tasks

The knowledge transmitted in the classrooms was domestic, close and everyday, and activities generally centred around topics such as food, animals, Bible stories and well-known songs and verses. The table below indicates the central topic around which each of the 41 activities was structured.

	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4
1	Prayer	11	Shapes	23	Days of week - weather	34	Bible story - loaves and fish
2	Pig	12	Reading single words	24	Counting	35	Counting
3	Pig	13	Food - cow	25	pattern, shapes, colour	36	Grandfather fetches pension
4	Pig	14	Reading single words	26	Visual literacy	37	Well known verses
5	Pig	15	Well known songs	27	Well known songs	38	Sound recognition
6	Pig	16	Fairy tales	28	Pig	39	Prayer Months - days
7	Bible story - Birth of Christ	17	Hymns	29	Shapes, colours	40 4	Dictation
8	Pig	18	Bible story - Creation - Noah	30	Consonant recognition	41	Consonant recognition
9	Letter recognition	19	Counting	31	pattern drawing		
10	Food - Fruit - Vegetables	20	cow - diviner - herbs	32	Food		
		21	Reading single words	33	Well known songs		
		22	Visual literacy				

Table 12: Content / concepts around which the 41 pedagogic activities focused

Two examples of the nature of the knowledge that was introduced in the classroom are provided below. The first is the Class 1 teacher's telling of the story of the 'Three Little pigs' and the second is a visual literacy activity in Class 2.

Teacher: Let me tell you a story of a pig. It was staying with lots of children, and she told them to build their own homes. They had to build their own homes with straw. After the first pig had built its house something came to its house and shouted "Piglet, piglet open the door". The pig was scared. Why was it scared?
Learner: Because it thought that it was a ghost.
Teacher: It was scared because a wolf came to eat the pig.
The second pig built its own house using wood. Wolf came again and ate this second pig. The third pig built its house with bricks. The house had a chimney. Do you know what a chimney is? Whole class: Yes.
Learner. Smoke comes out of it.
Teacher: The house had windows and the wolf came to the window and shouted: " Pig, Pig, open the door" but it couldn't get in because the door was made up of iron. Why didn't the wolf enter at the door?
Learner: The door was hard
Teacher: What did it decide to do? Aphiwe?
Aphiwe: It decided to climb to the roof.
Teacher. Why?
Aphiwe: Because the door was hard.
Teacher:
What was the pig doing inside?
Learner: It boiled water so that when the wolf goes down the chimney it can boil
Teacher: Why did the pig decide to boil water?
Learner: I think it was clever

Teacher: I also think that the pig was clever because other pigs were....?
Whole class: They were scared.
Teacher: I want us to role-play the story. Do you want to play?
Whole class: Yes Miss

The 'huffing and puffing' of the wolf in the standard version of the story is omitted.
In Class 2 the teacher hands out the series of pictures below for the learners to interpret and orally recount the narrative.
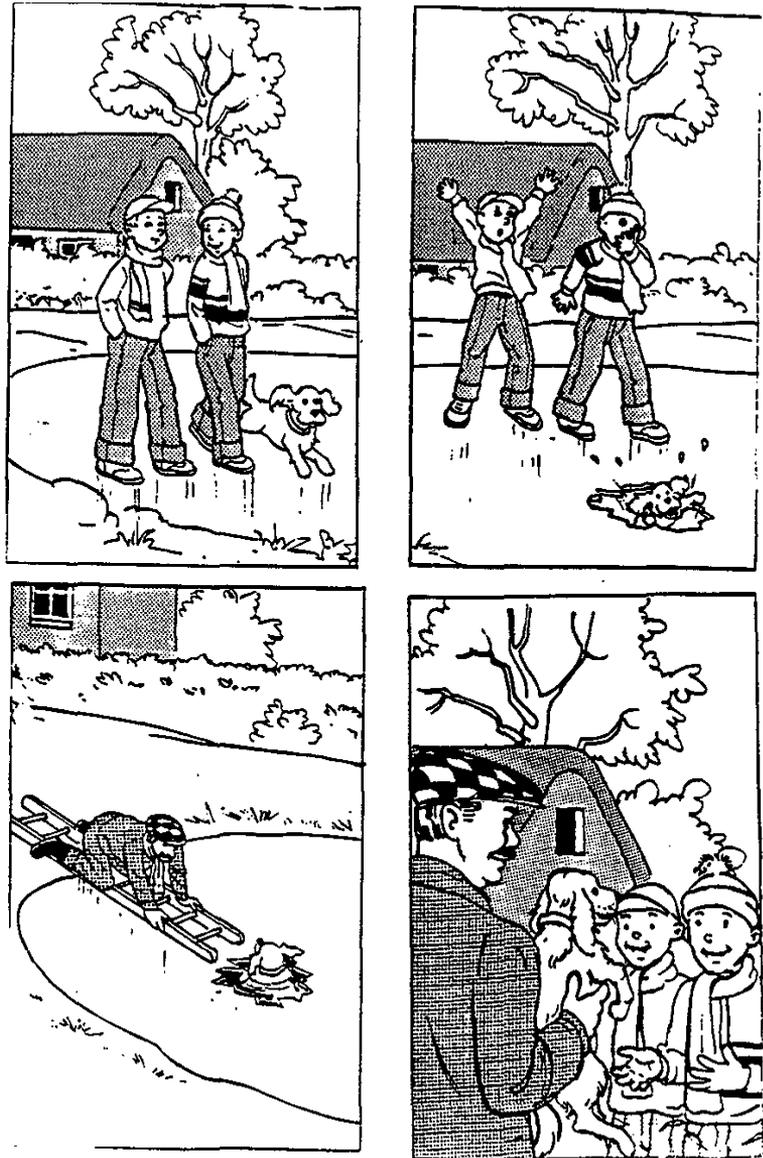

Figure 2: Worksheet distributed to learners

Several learners tell a version of the story, followed by the teacher presenting the 'correct' version:

I am going to tell you my own version of the story. These two boys are Liza and Zola. They wake up early in the morning and dress up warmly because it is raining. They take their dog with them to hunt. On their way the dog was playing and didn't see the hole. The hole had water in it. The dog got into the hole and the two boys started crying. At that moment a man came and decided to go and get a ladder from his house, because if the boys were to go in they would not be able to get out because the hole was deep. The man put the ladder in the hole and the dog came out. He gave it to the boys. They became very happy.

The teacher omits reference to the frozen pond in the pictures. In the telling of the stories none of the learners recognise the ice. It is unlikely that the learners in this context would ever have been exposed to a frozen pond, and the knowledge that is transmitted by the teacher does not go beyond the learners everyday experience.

The way in which knowledge is structured in the classrooms appears to be frequently based on relations of closeness, both within activities, and between activities. Consider the following examples:

In the activity which ends in the teachers instructing the learners to draw a cow and write a sentence about the cow they have drawn, the task is arrived at through what appears to be a free association of ideas. A discussion begins around the naming of different food, then moves on to breakfast foods, and from cereal to milk. The teacher then proposes "Let us brainstorm a cow":

> Teacher: I want us to talk about milk. What do we do with milk?
> Learner: We pour it on cereal. And on tea.
> Teacher: Who drank milk this morning?
> [No response from learners]   ,
> Teacher: Where do we get milk?
> Learner: In oats.
> Learner: Cornflakes.
> Learner: In tea.
> Learner: From a cow.
> Teacher: Let us brainstorm a cow

In another example, in Class 1 a series of activities are structured around the subject of 'pigs':

- The teacher tells the story of the 'The Three Little Pigs'.
- The learners are instructed to write the word 'ihagu' (pig) in the sand on the playground.
- The learners are instructed to shape the word 'ihagu' (pig) out of plasticine.   The teacher states: "You'll be pigs now and you are going to make mud [softened plasticine] on top of the paper. You are going to use your mud for writing an 'h' for ihagu".
- The learners participate in a counting exercise focusing on the number of legs a pig has.
- Learners retell the story of the three little pigs in groups and individually to the class.
- Learners commence a role-play of the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'

The structuring of the tasks appears to be based around relations of closeness in terms of the content - pigs.

Another example of a series of activities in Class 2 indicates the way in which tasks are structured and knowledge is presented (the list shows how four and a half hours in one of the days was spent):

- Learners are instructed to read lists of single and double consonant words: including words like udidi (kind); icici (earring); usisi (sister); deda (move); ixesha (time); uyaphaka (dishing up).
- Learners go to the toilet
- Learners eat

- Learners go out to break.
- The teacher leads a discussion about foodstuffs, moves onto breakfast foods and finally dairy products. Learners are instructed to draw a cow and write a sentence describing the cow they have drawn.
- Learners sit and talk, no specified task
- Learners go to the toilet
- Learners eat
- Learners go out to break.
- Learners play, no specified task, the teacher is absent from the class
- Learners are instructed to read cards with single words on them, including ileli (ladder); idolo (knee); icawe (church); unodoli (door).
- The learners recite three verses, including:

Wena Nomathemba   (Hey Nomathemba)
Ubethwe ngubane?   (Who hit you?)
Yile ndoda   (It is this man)
Khayibize izapha   (Call him to come here)
Owu hayi ndiyonqena (Oh no I'm lazy)
Khel'ihashe   (Ride a horse)
Owu hayi ndiyoqena (Oh no I'm lazy)
Asuk'ehl'amathambo uzubhek'ezantsi   (I feel more and more lazy)
Asuk'ehl'amathambo uzubhek'ezantsi   (I feel more and more lazy)

Two little dicky birds sitting on the wall
One named Peter, one named Paul Ply away Peter, fly away Paul Come back Peter, come back Paul.

- Learners sing a number of gospel songs.
- The teacher instructs the learners to stand up and tell stories. The stories told are all of a fairy-tale genre.
- Learners sit and talk, no specified task
- Learners are dismissed for the day.

Discussion

In the content knowledge that is introduced in the classroom a localizing strategy is evident. That which is transmitted is context-dependent and non-generalisable. Learners primarily have access to personal, localized knowledge (everyday knowledge), and are not given access to formalized and specialized knowledge (school knowledge). The repertoire is constituted by public domain principles.

Through the content used the identity projected is that of a learner bound and confined to their local environment, and the teachers were not seen to appeal to the learners' imagination to move beyond their local and immediate surroundings. Even within this conceptual space, the teacher does not accredit learners with a specialized knowledge. In a discussion around dairy products, although there are cows milling around all over the township and around the school, the Class 2 teacher says to the learners: "Some of you do not know what a cow looks like", to which all the learners reply "We do, Miss".

In the structuring of knowledge in the classroom there is an absence of coherence to the series of pedagogic acts (tasks), and a fragmentation in the pedagogy. Because of this, it is not possible for learners to derive evaluative principles from the teachers transmission that go beyond the immediate context. The discourse is localized as opposed to specialized.

Classroom control

When the teacher is present in the classroom, order is generally kept through direct speech acts based on threat, as evidenced in the following teacher utterances:

Class 1 Teacher:
"If I see you talking you will be caned"
"I will hit you if you make a noise"
"I told you to keep quiet. I will hit you if you make a noise"

Class 2 Teacher:
"I will hit you if you don't listen"
"If you talk while colouring in I will hit you"
"Have you forgotten 'Bakhalele' [cane]?"

Class 4 Teacher:
"Yonela, I will hit you"
"You were laughing but now you don't know the answer. I will hit you"
"I will hit you Anele"
"I will hit you Simelela"

Class 3 Teacher:
"Nomthandazo, I will hit you for making a noise".
"Malusi, I will hit you for talking"
"Luvuyo I will hit you. You make a lot of noise and at the end you write incorrect things".
"Malusi come to me so that I can pinch you. You are naughty".

and in a comment made to an observers by one of the teachers a few days after the observation:

The pupils were very naughty when you [the observers] were in the classroom. They took advantage of the fact that you were there. They knew that I wouldn't hit them in front of you. When you left I told them this, and it was a different day when you were gone because I hit them when they misbehaved. They only behave when teachers hit them (Class 2 teacher).

When the teacher is absent from the classroom, learner behaviour represents a complete break from the order established by the teacher. Learners displayed a lot of physical and verbal aggression towards one another. Even when the teacher is present, however, behaviour amongst learners is often aggressive, for example one of the teachers used a quiz in a counting activity, where boys and girls competed with each other. Children who answered questions incorrectly were verbally or physically attacked by their team mates. One girl pinched another girl for answering incorrectly, and on another occasion, three boys pinned another boy against the wall and threatened him when he gave an incorrect answer. At the end of the day in another of the classes three children had been in tears as a result of the physical aggression of other learners.

The Class 4 teacher also hit two learners lightly with a stick, in both cases the reason was unclear. In Class 1 the relations between the teacher and learners and between the learners themselves was largely antagonistic. The Class 1 teacher began the first day by speaking gently

to the learners and was enthusiastic and gregarious in her presentation. Her tone during the course of the day became progressively more barking, and she frequently threatened to beat the children. The learners in turn become more unruly and showed signs of physical aggression towards one another. By the end of the day three children had been in tears as a result of the physical aggression of other learners.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that the transmission observed in the classrooms is constituted by particularizing strategies, where fragmenting and localizing strategies inhibit access to the principles generating the repertoire.

In terms of Dowling's ideal types the pedagogic action is based on a relay relation, where the evaluative rules are not made available to the acquirers, and access to the esoteric domain of the adept is denied. The complexity and inter-connectedness of pedagogic texts is reduced through fragmenting and localising strategies.

By way of summary, and to examine these conclusions from a different angle, it is perhaps useful to consider the transmission in terms of text and grammar orientations. Applying these orientations to the pedagogy it is shown through the analysis that the teachers follow a text-orientation. The teachers do not appear to have access to a grammar, a principle informing their teaching, and because the selection of tasks and knowledge cannot be justified in these terms, transmission is based on teacher assertion. Hence the predominating instructing mode. Learners are largely instructed to do things without being given access to recognition rules, and thus cannot grasp what the activities are intended to achieve. As well as the activities in the classroom being brought together on the basis of assertion, the control in the classroom is based on censure and threat.

The learners in the classrooms are essentially passive. They have little access to the principles for the production of legitimate pedagogic texts, which are gained via the evaluative rules. What is required of them is the restatement of texts, primarily through the reciting or recall of what they already know. With a grammar orientation, the rules for the production of a text are transmitted, and learners are required to use these rules in order to produce texts. The teachers observed require the restatement of text, offering no explicit or implicit reference to the field of knowledge to justify the selection or sequencing of texts. When learners do insert their own texts these are generally disregarded by the teachers.

To return to the question, and in terms of the broader project of research into learner progress and achievement, I have explained how the discourse is localized and the evaluative rules appear to pertain only to the task at hand rather than giving learners access to rules governing a range of pedagogic acts. The pedagogy is fragmented and the learners are not given access to the criteria for the production of texts.

In order to explain the transmission practices observed it is necessary to try to understand what it is that informs what the teachers do in their classrooms. In conversation with the teachers an emphasis on 'play' and a notion of 'incidental learning' were emphasized:

> Everything they [the learners] do must be based on play although you as a teacher you want them to learn (Class 2 teacher).

> You must make every lesson interesting to the child. By so doing you are implying curriculum to the child but in a play way method that the child is not able to recognise (Class 1 teacher).

> In this new curriculum, when you start your lesson, you include lifeskills, you include numeracy and when you have finished, they can go to their groups. That is where they apply these skills ... they will learn everything incidentally without knowing that they are learning (Class 4 teacher).

The notion of learning based on play is located within a strand of the Education Department's discourse concerning early learning. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it would be illuminating to unpack what this means, as clearly the teachers recruit a particular interpretation of this discourse in their teaching. It would also be interesting to explore whether, and to what extent, the transmission evidenced in the classroom is a particular interpretation of OBE.

Lastly it would perhaps be useful to look at the modes of regulation in the school as a whole, and how its organisational matrix informs what was seen. This report represents a staring point for asking these questions in order to construct coherence out of what was found in the classrooms.

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