

Indoctrination to Indifference? Perceptions of South African Secondary School  
History Education, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1960–2012

by

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## DECLARATION

I declare that INDOCTRINATION TO INDIFFERENCE? PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY EDUCATION, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MPUMALANGA, 1960–2012 is my own work and that all the sources I have quoted have been included and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

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## ABSTRACT

It is generally agreed that during the apartheid era secondary school History education was perceived as either an indispensable aid toward furthering the National Party's social and political programme of separate development by some sections of the South African community or as an insidious form of indoctrination by other sections of the community. One of the contentions of this thesis is that this form of apology or indoctrination was less successful than is generally believed. The white English and Afrikaans-speaking sections of the community, although practising very different cultures shared many perceptions, including the perception that secondary school History education was less important than was the study of other subjects. The result was that at least since the 1960s, History was a subject in decline at most South African white secondary schools. History education enjoyed a mixed reception on the part of black secondary school educators during the apartheid era although the majority of black secondary school educators and learners, particularly after the 1976 Soweto Uprising, rejected the subject as a gross misrepresentation of historical record. The demise of History as a secondary school subject during the post-apartheid era is well documented. The case is made that this is due to factors such as poor teaching and the tendency by school administrations to marginalise the subject. My own 2008 and 2012 research indicates that while many South African adults display a negative attitude toward secondary school History education, secondary school learners have a far more positive outlook. The finding of this thesis is that the future for History education in South Africa is not as bleak as many imagine it appears to be.

## KEY TERMS

Mpumalanga; education; History education; secondary schools; educator perceptions of History education; learner perceptions of History education; apartheid education; Outcomes-based education (OBE); General Education and Training (GET); Further Education and Training (FET); National Curriculum Statement (NCS); Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AS	Assessment Standard
BBR	Bushbuck Ridge [Educational region of Mpumalanga]
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BED	Bantu Education Department
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CI	Curriculum Implementer
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CNE	Christian National Education
DCES	Deputy Chief Educational Specialist
DEIC	Dutch East India Company
DET	Department of Education and Training
DNE	Department of National Education
DO	Developmental Outcome
DoE	Department of Education
EHL	Ehlanzeni [Educational region of Mpumalanga]
EPU	Education Policy Unit
ERS	Educational Review Strategy
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
GNU	Government of National Unity
GS	Gert Sibande [Educational region of Mpumalanga]
H/S	Hoërskool [High School]
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HSS	Human and Social Sciences
IEB	Independent Examination Board
JC	Junior Certificate
JMB	Joint Matriculation Board
LO	Learning Outcome
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NED	Natal Education Department
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NETF	National Education and Training Forum
NKA	Nkangala [Educational region of Mpumalanga]

NSC	National Senior Certificate
OBE	Outcomes-based education
OFS	Orange Free State [former province of pre-1994 South Africa]
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SAOU	Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie [South African Teachers Union]
SASHT	South African Society for History Teaching
SASO	South African Students Organisation
SATA	South African Teachers Association
SAW	'Peace be upon him' [Muslim acclamation of respect for the name of the Prophet Muhammed]
SMT	School Management Team
SPCC	Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee
SS	Social Sciences
Std	Standard
TED	Transvaal Education Department
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TTA	Transvaal Teachers Association
TVL	Transvaal [former province of pre-1994 South Africa]
UNISA	University of South Africa
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
ZAR	Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek [South African Republic]

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Nomenclature

Nomenclature is an aspect of this study which deserves mention at the outset as the purpose of the study is to compare and contrast the perceptions toward History of various cultural and linguistic groups of people who have to be identified and named. The word 'perception' may be used in various ways. It may describe 'the ability or capacity to perceive' or outline a 'way of perceiving; awareness of consciousness' or describe 'the process by which an organism detects and interprets information from the external world by means of the sensory receptors' or in a legal sense may refer to 'the collection, receipt, or taking into possession of rents, crops, etc.'<sup>1</sup> Definitions of the term which however most apply to this study include the concepts that perception entails 'the act or effect of perceiving' and the 'insight or intuition gained by perceiving.'<sup>2</sup> In an abstract for an article due for submission in September 2014, Jack and Dotch use the term 'mental representations' to represent perceptions. The 'social brain' 'must perform the complex task of processing information sampled from the external environment coupled with top-down knowledge (i.e., mental representations) about social agents (e.g., individuals and groups) and social signals (e.g., facial expressions). Created from individual experiences interacting with the environment, mental representations provide predictive information, thereby guiding thought and action.'<sup>3</sup> The authors do however note something applicable to the kind of research I conducted for the purposes of this study, namely that 'remarkably few tools can accurately capture the true complexities of mental representations.'<sup>4</sup> Given this limitation, I have set out to uncover the insights and intuitions of both providers (educators) and receivers (learners) of secondary school History education. The complexities of psychological definition and discussion of the term

<sup>1</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/perceptions> quoting the Collins English Dictionary (Auckland, 2009), page not noted. Accessed 26 May 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.frontiers.org/Perception\\_Science/researchtopics](http://www.frontiers.org/Perception_Science/researchtopics) quoting abstract, R. E. Jack and R. Dotch, 'Reverse Correlating Mental Representations of the Social Brain'. Accessed 26 May 2014.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

aside, I believe that the responses to my conducted interviews and surveys fairly reflect the perceptions toward school History education of my target groups.

At this time in South Africa's history when the country is still recovering from the wounds and imbalances of the past, it is not sometimes considered fashionable or politically correct to use words like 'white' or 'black' to describe people. The comparative nature of this study, however, makes the use of these words unavoidable. The perceptions of Afrikaans speakers, for example, surveyed and investigated in this study, need to be clarified as those belonging to white Afrikaans-speakers, as in South Africa, Afrikaans is a language spoken by millions of coloured and black people as well as is commonly perceived, white Afrikaners. For the purposes of identifying people in this study, 'black' people will refer to speakers of many African languages, including isiZulu, isiSwati, isiNdebele and others. These people also affiliate to different cultures. Indian people are differentiated from white English-speaking people as when the findings of my research are detailed it is of interest to see whether there were any significant differences between the way in which white English-speakers and Indian English-speakers have and presently perceive secondary school history education. It is true that an element of generalisation inevitably occurs when people are classified into various groups – and generalising about others and designating them into specific groups was indeed one of the things which apartheid ideology thrived on – but the generalisations inherent in this study have been carefully considered, are necessary to its findings and have been made without malice.

Further terms which require clear definition include 'Mpumalanga' and terms associated with contemporary South African secondary school education such as 'ex-Model C schools', 'traditional township' and 'rural schools'. 'Mpumalanga' refers to a province of post-apartheid South Africa which came into being on 24 August 1995.<sup>5</sup> Previously, the province had formed part of the pre-1994 Transvaal province. Although it can be argued that Mpumalanga is a contemporary geopolitical construct which cannot be said to have existed before 1995, the sections of this thesis which deal with the period 1960–1994 interrogate the position of History education within the same geographical (if expanded) area. It must therefore be noted that although the research for this thesis was conducted in Mpumalanga for reasons of purpose and convenience it was enhanced by data gathered

<sup>5</sup> This information is from <http://www.statssa.gov.za>, accessed 11 November 2013.

from respondents who had been educated in other regions, particularly that of the former Transvaal province of South Africa. The terms 'ex-model C' school, 'township' and 'rural' schools have been used in this study because they are descriptive terms still in use within the South African secondary school educational fraternity and are thus the terms that were most familiar to respondents whom I interviewed or who completed questionnaires. While it is true that terminology such as the 'quintile' method of ranking schools (which measures schools in terms of the resources available to them) is currently employed by the Education Department, the term's use is not widespread enough to enable it to be fruitfully used in surveying educators and other role players who may not be familiar with it. For this reason I chose to make use of terminology which – even if associated with pre-1994 South Africa – made sense to the people I surveyed. As already noted with terms such as 'black' and 'white', the terminology I have employed to describe various kinds of schools is used without malice and for reasons of practicality.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to uncover and explore the perceptions which various role players, including educators, learners, school administrations and the wider community have held and presently hold toward secondary school History education, especially in the province of Mpumalanga. The perceptions which these role players have held toward History education will help to answer the question of whether or not the accepted apartheid-era aim of school History education, to indoctrinate learners into supporting or at least accepting the social, political and economic status quo, was effective or not. Questions such as why and whether History is struggling to hold its own at secondary school level will be examined. The perception that South Africans as a whole have lost interest in history in general and school History in particular and have become indifferent to the subject will be examined. The perceptions toward History of the various cultural and linguistic groups which make up the population of Mpumalanga – and which are largely representative of the wider demographics of South Africa – will be contrasted and compared to ascertain what differences, if any, existed and still exist between their perceptions.

### **1.3 Historical nature of the study**

This thesis is concerned with the perceptions with which History as a subject was viewed by educators and learners in South African secondary schools and especially secondary schools in Mpumalanga. It is therefore concerned with the field of education. The study is however presented in a historical format as the History education offered to learners in South African secondary schools is explored within the context of the National Party government's attempt to impose its own legitimating view of the past upon secondary school History education from 1960 through to the new democratic dispensation which formally began in 1994. The position of and perceptions held toward secondary school History education up to 2012, some 18 years into the existence of post-apartheid South Africa are examined.

### **1.4 Geographical area of the study**

This thesis investigates the general history of History education within South African secondary schools and the perceptions and experiences which it created. Detailed field research concerning educators and learners was conducted in 2008 among a selection of black secondary schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga which included the Emalahleni, Middelburg and Hendrina areas. My 2012 field research concerning secondary school learners was conducted among a wider selection of schools, also in the Nkangala region but included learners from Ermelo. The non-History teaching secondary school educators who were interviewed in 2012 and who filled out questionnaires were drawn from the entire province. Their perceptions of present-day History education reflect their experience as educators in Mpumalanga although the perceptions of the secondary school History education which they experienced as learners were accumulated in secondary schools located in diverse areas of South Africa. The History educators I interviewed in 2012 taught History or Social Science in various schools in the Nkangala region and the town of Ermelo.

### **1.5 Description of Mpumalanga**

Mpumalanga constitutes 6.5 per cent of South Africa's land area. The province is representative of South Africa in several ways. The economy is centered upon agriculture, mining and especially coal. Tourism is also a substantial contributor to the province's economy, the Kruger National Park being the major tourist attraction. The province boasts

a population of over four million people, 68 per cent of whom are urbanised. The population distribution by groups in Mpumalanga consists of around 89 per cent African/black people, 0.7 per cent coloured people, 0.5 per cent Indian/Asian people and **nine 9** per cent white people. The 1996 census revealed that among people aged 20 years of age or older over 28 per cent had no formal schooling at all, while over 14 per cent had some degree of primary school education. Only 4.8 per cent had a tertiary qualification, while 14 per cent had completed matric (Grade 12).<sup>6</sup> Siswati is spoken by 30 per cent of the province's population, while 26 per cent speak isiZulu, 11.6 per cent Xitsonga, 10.3 per cent isiNdebele and 10.2 per cent Northern Sotho. Mpumalanga and its people are broadly representative of the demographic composition of other South African provinces, with the possible exception of the Western Cape, where the demographic composition is somewhat different to that found elsewhere in the country.

## 1.6 Research question

- Why has the subject 'History' been relegated to a place of such minimal importance within contemporary secondary schools in Mpumalanga?

### 1.6.1 Research sub-questions

- How have the perceptions of educators, learners and school administrations toward History education in Mpumalanga changed between 1960 and 2012?
- How effective was the National Party government's aim of using secondary school History education as an indoctrination tool to promote its policies?
- Have South Africans become indifferent toward secondary school History education?

## 1.7 Research journey

The research I conducted between 2010 and 2012 which compared and contrasted the perceptions toward History education of secondary school educators and learners from diverse communities and types of secondary schools within the province of Mpumalanga. This was a continuation of the research I conducted into the perceptions of secondary school History education up to and during 2008 among educators and learners from black

<sup>6</sup> This information is from <http://www.statssa.gov.za>, accessed 11 November 2013. The most recent census, conducted in 2011 should reveal an improvement in the level of education of the general population.



secondary schools located in the Nkangala region of the province and which resulted in the production of a dissertation in 2009.<sup>7</sup> My dissertation, which investigated the perceptions of black secondary school educators and learners in Mpumalanga toward the History offered to them by various education authorities during the apartheid era and up until 2008 was inspired by the fact that for many years I had taught History in a Mpumalanga secondary school populated almost exclusively by black learners. The History educators with whom I came into regular contact with as well as the Mpumalanga Education Department History administrators I worked with were all representatives of cultural groups who had been disadvantaged under the apartheid system. Naturally, I investigated and wrote about the context of History education – that within black secondary schools – with which I was most familiar. The personal benefits of this research included being able to uncover the wisdom and experience of several stalwarts of the History teaching profession within the black secondary schools of Mpumalanga. I was also able to gain a fresh appreciation of the difficult educational, social and political conditions under which my teaching colleagues laboured during and beyond the apartheid era.

I was however aware that my 2008 research had only investigated one – if admittedly the major – kind of History teaching experience in a province (and country) populated by diverse cultural and linguistic groups. My 2009 dissertation left me with unanswered questions and a deep curiosity to discover more about how History was perceived and how the subject was doing within the white community of Mpumalanga and the schools which despite nearly two decades of educational change and restructuring, still so clearly represented them. I was particularly interested to discover how a largely conservative Afrikaans educational community in Mpumalanga was perceiving post-apartheid History education. I felt that uncovering the perceptions of Afrikaans-speaking educators and learners toward the History education presently offered within government secondary schools might be an indicator of how this community as a whole was coming to terms with their changed social and political status in post-apartheid South Africa. When I began research for the present study I was deeply interested in and concerned about what I perceived to be a general lack of interest in their own culture, history and language of the

<sup>7</sup> D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009).

many Afrikaans-speaking teaching colleagues I worked with on a daily basis. Indeed, I felt that I was more concerned about the apathy and disinterest shown by the adult Afrikaners I knew toward their history, culture and language than they themselves appeared to be – the most disturbing factor of all to me.

I felt privileged to have had access into the personal perceptions of the many respondents and interviewees I encountered. I found a high level of honesty and openness in both the interviews and the questionnaire responses. The co-operation from some individuals and organisations far exceeded my expectations. My research journey greatly enriched me as I developed a deeper and more sympathetic understanding of a changing Afrikaans culture. I gained insight into the mindsets of young people – the surveyed learners in this study – which gave me much hope for the future of South African society. Within the responses of the surveyed learners I discovered the emergence of a new and common culture as opposed to the divided society of the past.

### **1.8 Research methods**

It must be noted that I approached this research as an ‘insider’ – I have worked for many years as a History educator at Steelcrest High School, one of the schools within which I conducted research for purposes of this thesis. My years of teaching as well as various other involvements in education meant that I was personally acquainted with all the role players I interviewed as well as over half the educators who completed the educators’ questionnaire. The advantage of this was that I experienced an eager willingness to participate from everyone I approached. I found that all the participants in my research expressed honest perceptions when completing questionnaires or answering questions. Despite personally knowing many participants, I never felt that respondents expressed views which they believed that I might wish to read or hear.

The nature of the field research which I conducted for both my 2009 dissertation and the present thesis was qualitative, rather than quantitative, although I did manage to gather substantial factual material which illustrated how many learners were taking and how many schools were offering History as an optional subject after Standard 7 (or Grade 9) in South African secondary schools. Since the purpose of both studies was to try and establish and outline the various perceptions, both positive and negative, which secondary

school learners and educators have held and presently hold toward History education, the descriptive data yielded by qualitative research served to reveal the attitudes and feelings of my respondents. The theoretical perspective of the research I undertook was thus interpretative, rather than positivist in nature. Qualitative research concerns itself with ‘understanding the meaning of human experience from the subject’s own frame of reference’<sup>8</sup> and the point of it is to ‘describe and understand the lived experience of individuals’.<sup>9</sup> As with my previous research, this is what this thesis seeks to achieve in regard to the perceptions which have been and are held by its various target groups toward History education in the province of Mpumalanga.

The research process is generally believed to comprise of planning, data collection, editing and coding, analysis and the forming of conclusions.<sup>10</sup> Table 1.1 illustrates how these research process steps applied to my own research:

**Table 1.1**

<b>RESEARCH PLAN FOR THIS STUDY</b>	
<b>Research process step</b>	<b>Summary of actions undertaken in this study</b>
Planning	Involved deciding how to approach collection of data for the study; designing questionnaire forms and compiling interview questions; deciding which target groups to survey; obtaining permission to collect data from relevant role players and deciding who would assist, if at all, in the collection of data.
Data collection	Arranging appointments and visiting interviewees; ensuring that optimal conditions prevailed for the conducting of the interviews; visiting schools to conduct or organise completion of learner questionnaires and arranging to collect completed forms.
Editing and coding	Collected data to be organised and labelled logically. Completed questionnaires to be numbered according to school and grade. Questionnaires and interviews to be transcribed.
Analysis	Involved production of descriptive statistics (summarising data using tables). A 400 page document was produced detailing questionnaire results for both learners and educators, detailing responses (verbatim) on a question by question basis, to assist in making meaningful comparisons with and drawing useful conclusions from the data. Questionnaires were analysed question by question.

<sup>8</sup> M. J. Holosko, *Primer for Critiquing Social Research: A Student Guide* (Belmont, CA., 2006), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> University of Pretoria, Learning Guide, p. 25.

Conclusions	Embraced drawing meaningful conclusions (statistical inference) from the data collected.
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A survey is described as ‘a method of collecting information from people about their feelings, opinions, perceptions, motivations, plans, beliefs, and about their personal, educational and financial background’.<sup>11</sup> The surveys which I conducted among both educators and learners included collecting information about most of the attributes listed above.

The conducting of a pilot study was not considered for this study for two reasons. My 2009 dissertation which considered the perceptions of educators and learners within Mpumalanga’s traditionally black secondary schools involved similar research methods and the experience which I gained in conducting surveys for that work prepared me for the surveys which I conducted in 2012. In addition, my position as an insider (discussed above) and my many years of involvement with secondary school History education provided me with firm ideas about what participants in the 2012 surveys should be asked. Before conducting any survey however, I needed to decide upon the sample group.

A sample may be defined as ‘a group that is selected by the researcher from the population (as representative of the population as possible)’.<sup>12</sup> Purposive sampling may be defined as selecting participants on the basis of certain requirements or characteristics from which the researcher believes that he/she can learn the most.<sup>13</sup> This kind of sampling is ‘intentionally nonrandom in selection of data sources’.<sup>14</sup> In addition the sampling I undertook could be described as representative in that the educators and learners whom I selected comprised a typical cross section of those who either taught, or had experience of receiving secondary school History education.<sup>15</sup> Chapters six and seven reveal that a comprehensive spread of racial, linguistic and cultural groups was in fact obtained. I carefully chose both the educator and learner participants (samples) in my surveys on the

<sup>11</sup> University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education Learning Guide; Introduction to Quantitative Research, 2003, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education Learning Guide, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> University of Pretoria, Learning Guide, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> P. Leedy and J. Ormrod *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (Saddle River, 2010), p. 147.

<sup>15</sup> This principle is outlined in Leedy and Ormrod *Practical Research*, p. 147.

basis of the criteria outlined above. The sampling I conducted was related to the task of addressing the research questions outlined in 1.6 and 1.6.1 above.<sup>16</sup>

As a result of the sampling process, the primary research I conducted for the purposes of this thesis entailed the distribution and collection of 87 questionnaires to presently employed white, English and Afrikaans-speaking educators from Mpumalanga which sought to uncover their perceptions of the History education which they had received while at secondary school as well as their perceptions of the subject as it is taught in their present-day schools. Questionnaires were also issued to 1018 secondary school learners from five Mpumalanga secondary schools. These included 505 General Education and Training (GET) band (Grade 8 and 9 learners); 227 History-taking Further Education and Training (FET) band (Grade 10–12 learners) and 286 non-History-taking learners from the FET band. A focus group which comprised Grade 8 learners from one of the surveyed schools – Steelcrest High School – was held.

In addition to the educator and learner questionnaires, I issued seven personalised questionnaires to various educational role-players in the province which sought to uncover their perceptions toward History education as school principals, subject advisors, examiners or History educators.

When considering questionnaire design I consulted previous literature and considered the reliability and validity of questions that had been asked and which could potentially be employed in my own questionnaires. I made use of questions which had been provided by Mazabow<sup>17</sup> as a way of uncovering the levels of historical consciousness present in learners and questions which had been used in the surveys conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council's 1991 research into History education in South Africa.<sup>18</sup> I believed that Mazabow's questions would help reveal the extent to which my surveyed learners were aware of the role of history in their lives (even if not formal school History) and made use of the HSRC questions in order to be able to compare the perceptions of my 2012 surveyed learner group with those of 1991.

<sup>16</sup> This principle is outlined in Leedy and Ormrod, p. 147.

<sup>17</sup> G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools' (D.Ed thesis, University of South Africa, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> A. van der Merwe, A. Vermaak and L. Lombard, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA: HSRC Education Research Programme No. 19* (Pretoria, 1991).

When constructing questionnaires for both educators and learners I attempted to include a mixture of unstructured questions (free response/open ended questions) and structured questions (where a respondent selects a category that best suits his/her response). Factual questions which concerned obtaining factual information such as biographical detail were asked. Other kinds of questions included information questions, concerned with ascertaining the level of knowledge respondents had about certain matters; questions about opinion and attitudes and questions on behaviour.<sup>19</sup> All selected questions were chosen with the aim of assisting me to answer the research questions as detailed in 1.6 and 1.6.1 above.

Some 29 adults were interviewed either to uncover their school-going experience of and perceptions toward History education or their experience as presently employed History educators. The interviews I conducted could be termed phenomenological interviews as they sought to uncover a narrative version of an individual's lived experience – in this case his/her lived experience of secondary school History education.<sup>20</sup> These interviews were structured in that the asked questions were thoughtfully planned so as to obtain relevant and utile answers from interviewees. All interviewees were selected because they had had some experience of secondary school History education, either as a learner, educator or administrator of the subject. Few challenges were experienced in organising or conducting interviews as I found all interviewees keen to assist. The places where the interviews were conducted varied although I did ensure that places where interviewees felt relaxed and undisturbed were used. Although most of the information I gathered for this study was gleaned from the questionnaires I employed, the interviews I conducted assisted me to gain valuable information as well as the first-hand lived experiences of interviewees. I found the responses of interviewees to be trustworthy. I took great care to follow the advice provided by Henning, who cautions interviewers to guide but not ask leading questions during interviews or force speakers into what she terms a 'confessional mode'.<sup>21</sup> I tried to be aware of the fact that interviewers are indeed 'co-constructors of the meaning (the data) whether they intend to be or not' and so cautioned myself against even single

<sup>19</sup> University of Pretoria, Learning Guide, pp. 50–51.

<sup>20</sup> E. Henning with W. van Rensburg and B. Smit *Finding Your Way in Qualitative Research* (Pretoria, 2004), p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

non-linguistic utterances (for example using the word 'Hmmm') which could be understood by an interviewee as a call for the provision of more information.<sup>22</sup> Formal interviews were recorded and transcribed, although hundreds of informal conversations with Mpumalanga Education Department colleagues about History education have to remain unrecorded but nonetheless provided me with much insight and information which is informally reflected within this study.

Care was taken to conform my primary investigations to the ethical requirements expected by the University of South Africa. Leedy and Ormrod outline five principles of ethically conducted research:

- Participants should not be exposed to physical or psychological harm or subjected to embarrassment or loss of self-esteem.
- Participants should be informed about the nature of the study to be conducted and be given the choice of participating or not participating.
- Participants rights to privacy should be respected.
- Findings should be presented in as complete and honest a way as possible, without any attempt to mislead readers about the nature of the findings.
- The contributions of all who contributed to the research should be faithfully and honestly acknowledged.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, Henning, van Rensburg and Smit note the following ethical considerations which should be taken into account when interviewing people:

- Data which is forthcoming should not be induced by the exertion of undue interference from the researcher, who should act as a neutral facilitator.
- While interviews should be guided, speakers should not be forced into a 'confessional mode'.
- Content which is gathered should be taken at face value.<sup>24</sup>

My research did in fact conform to the criteria listed above. No embarrassing questions were asked of participants who were never faced with the possibility of losing self-esteem.

<sup>22</sup> This advice is provided by Henning, *et al.*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>23</sup> Leedy and Ormrod, pp. 101–104.

<sup>24</sup> Henning, *et al.*, p. 53.

Participation in all the surveys I conducted was strictly voluntary. Names of participants in the questionnaire surveys were not required and in one case where controversial information was reported in my study the name of the provider of the information was withheld. No data in my study has been presented in an effort to support any preconceived conclusions I may have held. I have attempted to meticulously acknowledge all who made contributions to this study, be this in terms of the primary or secondary research which was conducted.

Permission to conduct research about History education within Mpumalanga's secondary schools was obtained from the Deputy Chief Education Specialist for History education in the province. Principals and History educators within the secondary schools I surveyed were happy to allow both learners and educators to be surveyed or interviewed. In fact the principals of Hoërskool Middelburg and Steelcrest High School, the chief contributors to the research allowed me to make use of their schools' computers and photocopying facilities free of charge as an additional contribution to the research. All responders to questionnaires completed and signed a statement providing permission for their comments and observations to be utilised in any thesis which might emerge as a result of the research. No questions asked in the issued questionnaires explored religious, political or gender oriented issues. In addition, no responders were ever in any way pressurised to complete questionnaires.

It must be noted that I also made extensive use of the primary research which I had conducted among black secondary school educators and learners for the purposes of my 2009 dissertation. Secondary research conducted consists of the literature which I consulted. This literature is discussed in section 1.11 of this chapter, titled 'Literature survey'.

### **1.9 Secondary schools in Mpumalanga**

Mpumalanga boasts a wide variety of secondary schools. These range from the 33 Afrikaans-medium ex-model C secondary schools; a handful of English-medium ex-model C secondary schools; traditionally black township secondary schools, a range of private schools and a large number of rural schools. In the diverse educational landscape of post-apartheid South Africa it is difficult to neatly classify schools into types. Ex-model C schools



were so named because during the late apartheid era, such schools were provided with the option to become schools which were allowed to be run mainly by their elected parent governing bodies. The powers of these governing bodies included the ability to decide who would be able to enter the school as a learner. The drawback to this freedom from Education Department control was that such schools received small subsidies from the government and aside from the payment of educators' salaries had to raise needed working capital themselves. Today, these schools, at least in theory, no longer have the final say about admission. All English-medium ex-model C schools in Mpumalanga presently enroll very few English-speaking learners – such schools are overwhelmingly attended by black learners. Afrikaans-medium ex-model C secondary schools in Mpumalanga no longer exclusively service the educational needs of white, Afrikaans-speaking learners. The percentage of black learners at such schools ranges from one per cent to over ninety per cent, depending upon the location of the school and other factors such as the selection of languages which the school offers to its learners. Traditionally black township schools in Mpumalanga continue much as they did during apartheid times. These schools continue to provide education to the poor and most suffer deprived physical and technological conditions. A scattering of private schools are found throughout the province. These range from a few schools for the very privileged to a multitude of 'fly-by-night' private schools which offer few prospects of success to those desperate enough to attend them. The rural schools of Mpumalanga admit the children of the poorest-of-the-poor. Academic success at these often wretched schools is difficult to obtain.

Mpumalanga's secondary schools are typical of the kinds of schools found throughout South Africa. Perhaps their most striking feature lies in their diversity as they represent every racial, cultural, linguistic and economic group in the province. They are indeed a mixture of third-world poverty and first-world affluence.

### **1.10 Description of surveyed Mpumalanga secondary schools**

The black secondary schools which I surveyed in my 2009 dissertation were as follows:<sup>25</sup>

Steelcrest High School (Middelburg) is a typical example of an ex-model C English language secondary school. It is situated within the traditionally white suburbs of Middelburg and

<sup>25</sup> Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', pp. 10–12.

now caters for black learners who are drawn from mainly upper and middle income families. Parents' occupations range from domestic workers to educators, government employees and Members of Parliament. Average annual enrolment is about 670 learners. Ninety-five per cent of these learners are black and almost all History-taking learners are black. Matriculation pass rates over the years vary between 95 and 100 per cent. The Matriculation History pass rate has always been 100 per cent, except for 2008, the first year of the new National Senior Certificate examination, when a 76.5 per cent pass rate was recorded. The school decided to phase out History as a Further Education and Training (FET) subject and so did not offer History as a Grade 10 option in 2009, but resumed offering the subject from 2010. The school fees in 2012 were R 8 430 per annum.

Middelburg Combined School (Middelburg) is situated in the township of Nazareth, just outside Middelburg. It has 1700 learners, almost all of whom are black. A few Coloured learners attend. The learners come from middle to lower income homes. Unemployment in the area is very high. The matriculation pass rate over the last five years has varied between 87 and 96 per cent. The History matriculation pass rate has varied between 91 per cent and 100 per cent during the same period.<sup>26</sup> The school began phasing out History as a FET subject from 2007, but the involvement of a new History educator heralded a subsequent revival of the subject.

Tshwenyane Combined School (Middelburg) is situated in the township of Mhluzi, just outside Middelburg. Its population is entirely black. There were 882 learners in 2008. Most cannot afford the R300 per annum school fees. The school has found it necessary to run a feeding scheme for learners, many of whom receive their only substantial meal of the day at school. Facilities at the school are poor, both in terms of availability of educational equipment and the conditions of the grounds and buildings. No details of past Matriculation pass rates were provided by the school, but the pass rate has never risen above 50 per cent.

Tsiki-Naledi Secondary School (Hendrina) is situated in the small rural town of Hendrina. It occupies the facilities of the old Hendrina Laerskool/Primary School and is separated from the predominantly white Afrikaans Combined School by a wire fence. The fence is not the

<sup>26</sup> 2008 Educator's questionnaire, Response 8.

only indicator of the separation between the two schools. The Afrikaans Combined School is wealthy and generously equipped with all the equipment and facilities it could possibly need, while Tsiki-Naledi is visibly poor and run down. No audio-visual equipment is available. Most of the 429 learners who were registered at the school in 2008 could not afford to pay minimal school fees of R300 per annum. Many learners have recently left the school to attend rural schools in the countryside where school fees are as low as R20 per annum, but where facilities are even worse than at Tsiki-Naledi. The History educator complained that most parents spend the limited resources they have on ritual practices. Matriculation pass rates have varied between 34 per cent and 58 per cent over the last five years, while the History matriculation pass rate has varied between 20 and 41 per cent during the same period.<sup>27</sup> From 2010, History was discontinued at the school.

In 2012 I again surveyed learners (Social Sciences, History and non-History-taking) from Steelcrest High School and Middelburg Combined School. In addition I surveyed learners from Hoërskool Middelburg, Hoërskool Ermelo, Eastdene Combined School and the Middelburg Muslim School.

Hoërskool Middelburg, an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium secondary school, was established in 1918. Traditionally it catered for white, Afrikaans-speaking learners from the town of Middelburg and accommodated out-of-town learners in hostels. The school began accepting white, English-speaking and black learners from 2002 and presently offers an English-medium class in every grade. Black learners comprised 15 per cent of the 1 000 strong school learner population in 2012. Social Science is taught in Grade 8 and 9, although Geography is emphasised at the expense of History as History is not offered as an optional Further Education and Training (FET) subject after Grade 9. School fees in 2012 were R9 600 per annum.<sup>28</sup> The school emphasises sport and great pride is taken in the achievements of its sports teams. The school has consistently performed well academically and claims (along with other schools) to be the best performing academic school in Mpumalanga.

Hoërskool Ermelo, also an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium secondary school situated in the town of Ermelo. The school was founded in 1914. As is the case with other ex-model C

<sup>27</sup> 2008 Educator's questionnaire, Response 5.

<sup>28</sup> Conversation, Hoërskool Middelburg School Marketing Department, 16 October 2012.

Afrikaans-medium schools in Mpumalanga the school presently accommodates English-speaking white and black learners. The transition from a single to multi-cultural school was a difficult one for Hoërskool Ermelo. The school presently accommodates 750 learners. School fees for 2012 were R12 500 per annum. The educational and extra-mural facilities at the school are excellent. The school boasts a 500 seat state-of-the-art auditorium which assists with instruction in subjects like music, drama and ballet. The school offers History as an optional FET subject and there are often two Grade 10 to 12 History classes. The Grade 12 pass rate for History has always been 100 per cent and an average Grade 12 mark of over 80 per cent is the norm, thanks to a dedicated History teaching staff.

Eastdene Combined School (Middelburg) is a government combined school which caters for learners from Grade 1 to 12. Almost all of the 1 400 learners are black and the majority of these live in poor households. School fees are R850 per annum. Classes are large and while the school has access to modern audio-visual and other educational equipment, facilities are not plush. History is offered as an optional FET subject, although classes are not large. The Grade 12 pass rate in 2012 was 64 per cent.

Middelburg Muslim School is a private school under the authority of the Mpumalanga Education Department. The ethos of the school is Muslim and the approximately 300 learners attend school in traditional Muslim attire. Muslim history and other religious instruction is provided at the school, although the few non-Muslim attenders are not obliged to attend. Classes are small and the level of personal discipline among learners at the school is high. School fees are R10 500 per annum. About 70 per cent of the learners are of Indian extraction, while approximately 30 per cent are black. History is not offered at the school after Social Science which is studied in Grade 8 and 9.

In addition to the detailed learner surveys I conducted at the above schools, I interviewed staff members, ex-staff members and ex-learners from the following Mpumalanga secondary schools in 2012:

Valencia Combined School (Mbombela)

Greendale Combined School (Emalahleni)

Hoërskool Piet Retief (Piet Retief)

Hoërskool Evander (Evander)

Hoërskool Ben Viljoen (Groblersdal)

Hoërskool Volksrust (Volksrust)

Hoërskool Sybrand Van Niekerk (Sabie)

Hoërskool Reynopark (Emalahleni)

Hoërskool Kanonkop (Middelburg)

Middelburg Technical High School (Middelburg)

### 1.11 Literature survey

A wide variety of literary sources were consulted for the purpose of compiling this thesis. These included books about general educational issues which provided valuable background information such as Pam Christie's<sup>29</sup> *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa* and A. L. Behr's<sup>30</sup> *Education in South Africa: Origins, Issues and Trends: 1952–1988*. These are general works which outline the legislation which underpinned South African education and unpack the issues surrounding it. They are especially useful in assisting the reader to appreciate the aims, methods and results of apartheid-era education. Peter Kallaway has edited several very informative volumes which provide a varied and extensive overview of apartheid education and the education provided in South Africa after the democratic elections of 1994. Black secondary school education is focused upon. The self-contained and detailed chapters in these works are written by prominent academics, making them an invaluable resource to any researcher of South African apartheid education.<sup>31</sup>

Books about black secondary school education which were useful included the works of Muriel Horrell. Horrell's work is really a tabulation of statistical data about Bantu Education and largely refrains from passing judgement upon this pernicious system of education. Horrell's books are a good source of information about the conditions

<sup>29</sup> P. Christie, *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> A. L. Behr, *Education in South Africa: Origins, Issues and Trends: 1952–1988* (Cape Town/Pretoria, 1988).

<sup>31</sup> P. Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg, 1984); *Education after Apartheid: South African Education in Transition* (Cape Town, 1997) and *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened* (New York, 2002).

pertaining to black secondary schools up until the late 1960s.<sup>32</sup> Ken Hartshorne's many publications about Bantu Education and the Department of Education and Training (DET) which followed it from 1977, provide the reader with the valuable insights of a practically-minded educational administrator who was not afraid to voice his disapproving perceptions of the destructive results of an unfair and politically manipulated education system.<sup>33</sup> Melanie Walker's chapter in *History From South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices* provides an excellent summary of the history and main issues around apartheid-era South African school History education.<sup>34</sup>

Hermann Giliomee's work *The Afrikaners* proved a useful source of background information as I sought to understand the at times painful history of the Afrikaner people so that I could better appreciate their perceptions of the value of History education during and beyond the apartheid era.<sup>35</sup> The Human Sciences Research Council's 1991 publication *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA: HSRC Education Research Programme No. 19*, which tabulated research findings on the state of History education within selected South African secondary schools proved to be a useful source of information. I do have some reservations about how this research was conducted but nevertheless the statistics related in this work are informative. I based some of the questions which I asked in my 2008 and 2012 questionnaires on the models provided in this publication.<sup>36</sup> Information about History education during the apartheid era in Mpumalanga may be found in the chapter by P. Holden and S. Mathabatha in Peter Delius's *Mpumalanga History and Heritage*, a work which provides a detailed account of the history and heritage of Mpumalanga.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> M. Horrell, *A Decade of Bantu Education* (Johannesburg, 1964) and *Bantu Education to 1968* (Johannesburg, 1968).

<sup>33</sup> K. B. Hartshorne, *Education in the Homelands: in a Cul-de-sac or at the Crossroads* (Johannesburg, 1989) and *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910–1990* (Cape Town, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> M. Walker, 'History and History Teaching in Apartheid South Africa', in J. Brown, P. Manning, K. Shapiro, J. Wiener, B. Bozzoli and P. Delius., eds, *History From South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices* (Philadelphia, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> H. B. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> A. van der Merwe, A. Vermaak and L. Lombard, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA: HSRC Education Research Programme No. 19*.

<sup>37</sup> P. Holden and S. Mathabatha, 'The Politics of Resistance: 1948–1990', in P. Delius, ed., *Mpumalanga History and Heritage* (Scottsville, 2007).

School History textbooks are a valuable source of information about the perceptions of those who commission and write them toward the syllabus content they relate. These perceptions are not simply apparent in the words which are used or the ideas conveyed in these books but also in more subtle ways such as topics which are omitted or dealt with in a perfunctory fashion. The cover designs of the school History textbooks also serve to make strong statements about the ideology, bias and perceptions of the book's producers. School History textbooks also strongly influence the perceptions of the learners who use them toward the subject content and even their appreciation of History itself.<sup>38</sup> N. S. Keykana<sup>39</sup> and I. E. Zwane<sup>40</sup> offer commentary upon the way black South African secondary school History learners have perceived their textbooks, while Alta Engelbrecht's<sup>41</sup> work investigates white Afrikaner perceptions of school History textbooks during and beyond the apartheid era. The book by E. Dean, P. Hartmann and M. Katzen, *History in Black and White*, remains essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the legitimization value of school History textbooks and the dangers inherent within the bias they contain.<sup>42</sup> Several dissertations and theses focus upon the History textbooks used in apartheid-era South African secondary schools.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The cover designs of South African school History textbooks are discussed in detail in J. Rehman, 'From Bantu Education to Social Sciences: A Minor Field Study of History Teaching in South Africa 1966–2006' (Research Report, Department of Didactic Science and Early Childhood Education, Stockholm University, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> N. S. Keykana, 'The History Textbook in a Multicultural South Africa'. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July, 1990, in M. H. Trümpelmann, ed., *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*. (Johannesburg, 1990).

<sup>40</sup> I. E. Zwane, 'An examination of the Position and Role of History in Black Secondary Schools with Particular Reference to the Period since the Introduction of Bantu Education' (Research Report in partial fulfillment of M. Ed., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991).

<sup>41</sup> A. Engelbrecht, 'Textbooks in South Africa from Apartheid to post-apartheid: Ideological Change Revealed by Racial Stereotyping', in ed. E. Roberts-Schweitzer in consultation with V. Greaney and K. Duer *Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for using Textbooks and Curricula*, (Washington, D.C., 2006), pp. 71–80 and 'The Impact of Role Reversal in Representational Practices in History after Apartheid', *South African Journal of Education*, 24, 4 (2008), pp 519–541.

<sup>42</sup> E. Dean, P. Hartmann and M. Katzen, *History in Black and White: An Analysis of South African School History Textbooks* (Paris, 1983).

<sup>43</sup> These include the following dissertations and theses: F. E. Auerbach, 'An Enquiry into History Textbooks and Syllabuses in Transvaal High Schools' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1963); Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools'; R. E. Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present: A Study of South African School History Syllabuses and Textbooks 1839–1990' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990); P. Da Cruz, 'From Narrative to Severed Heads: The Form and Location of White Supremacist History in Textbooks of the Apartheid and Post-apartheid eras: A Case Study' (M. Phil. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2005); G. Evans, 'Textbooks and the Reproduction of Knowledge' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990); E. Motshabi, 'The Use of the Textbook in the Teaching of History in Bantu High Schools' (D.Ed.thesis, University of Fort Hare, 1973); R.

Dissertations and theses written about various aspects of secondary school History education during and after the apartheid era provided valuable information for this study. Some of these works were helpful in providing a contextual background for this study. The comprehensive and detailed dissertation of Rosemary Mulholland provides an account of the history of History education in South Africa from 1652 up until 1981.<sup>44</sup> Most of the dissertations or theses written subsequently not surprisingly make extensive reference to Mulholland's work, which has become something of a standard reference in the field of school History education. I discovered Mulholland's work to be richly informative, although this study does challenge some of the assumptions she made, particularly about the relative perceptions of apartheid-era white English and Afrikaans-speakers toward secondary school History education. At the time of writing her dissertation (1981) Mulholland could not avoid exhibiting the bias against Afrikanerdom which was common to white English-speaking liberals of the apartheid era. As such she may have overlooked some of the nuances inherent in Afrikaner perceptions of History. Although the perceptions of Afrikaners toward apartheid-era secondary school History education ought not to be generalised about, there is no doubt that the officially sanctioned version of History propagated in secondary schools damaged its recipients of every cultural group intellectually and emotionally. These destructive effects of the official version of apartheid-era Afrikanercentric History education upon apartheid-era learners have been well documented by June Bam (1993).<sup>45</sup>

The thesis by Richard Chernis (1990) examines school History textbooks and syllabuses from 1839 until 1990 and provides a detailed account of the development of nationalism in general and among the Afrikaans people in particular. This information proved very helpful to me as I sought to understand the mindset of Afrikanerdom in general and the perceptions which white Afrikaans people have held about their own history and History education offered at secondary schools in particular. Chernis shares Mulholland's views

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B. Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol I and II' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981); A. I. Raubenheimer, 'Die Geskiedenis-handboek op Skool met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika' [The School History Textbook with Special Reference to South Africa] (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1944).

<sup>44</sup> Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa Vol. I and II'.

<sup>45</sup> J. Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum for the Secondary School Level in South Africa: Considerations Related to the Possible Inclusion of Themes Drawn from Unity Movement History' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1993).



about the differing perceptions of white English and Afrikaans South Africans during the apartheid era and quotes Mulholland in support of this view.<sup>46</sup> Another scholar who has adopted Mulholland's ideas is Gerald Mazabow, whose 2003 thesis examines the possibility of infusing secondary school History education with the concepts inherent in the philosophy of historical consciousness. Mazabow's thesis introduced me to the work of Jürgen Rüsen who conceived of the ground-breaking theory of historical consciousness, without which it is difficult to understand or account for the perceptions which people adopt toward History education. Rüsen posited that every person, whether they are aware of it or not, have a deep need to place their lives within the context of a personal and cultural history. Rüsen's philosophy of historical consciousness implies that a person who denies his own past or who cannot understand himself in a wider historical context cannot be what psychologists term 'self-actualised' or a truly happy and psychologically healthy individual. Mazabow sought to apply Rüsen's work to secondary school History education and demonstrated the need for History educators to be critically aware of this important psychic component within learners. Mazabow's work proved helpful to me as I attempted to understand the perceptions of learners toward secondary school History education. It must however be noted that Mazabow's findings were based entirely upon an intense literature survey and were not tested with field research among the learners he sought to understand.<sup>47</sup>

Several dissertations and theses proved to be helpful in understanding the perceptions of black educators and learners toward apartheid-era secondary school History education. These include Michael Cameron's 1989 dissertation about the different reactions of educators to the introduction of Bantu Education in the Cape Town area. Although based in Cape Town and on the period between 1945 and 1960, this research described patterns of reaction which black educators throughout South Africa adopted toward Bantu Education and the variants which succeeded it throughout the apartheid era.<sup>48</sup> W. R. L. Gebhard's thesis about black perceptions of South Africa's history explains how black

<sup>46</sup> R. E. Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present'.

<sup>47</sup> G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools'.

<sup>48</sup> M. J. Cameron, 'The Introduction of Bantu Education and the Question of Resistance: Cooperation, Non-Collaboration or Defiance? The Struggle for African Schooling with Special Reference to Cape Town, 1945-1960' (M.Ed dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989).

historians have at various times sought to interpret South African history and thus forms a useful conceptual backdrop to this study.<sup>49</sup> M. R. Legodi's study concerns educational changes which were made in South Africa after 1994 and describes post-apartheid educational legislation and its effect upon educational institutions.<sup>50</sup> Johannes Seroto's thesis about the impact of legislation between 1948 and 2004 on black education in rural areas is a goldmine of information on the same theme.<sup>51</sup> The works of Ndlovu,<sup>52</sup> Nuxumalo,<sup>53</sup> and Zwane<sup>54</sup> all relate to the perceptions which apartheid-era black secondary school History educators and learners have held toward the subject.

The dissertation of Ebenezer Malie<sup>55</sup> and the thesis of Eva Motshabi<sup>56</sup> serve as windows into the mindset of conservative black History educators during the 1960s and 1970s. Present day readers might find it difficult to understand the conservative assertions and subservient attitude adopted toward the government and educational authorities of the day until it is remembered that black apartheid-era History educators were subjected to great pressure by economic constraints, educational authorities and conservative personal convictions to conform to the system of the time.<sup>57</sup> These conservative perceptions were shared by many black History educators until the turbulent educational and political aftermath of the Soweto Uprising (1976) forced many conservative educators to change their political stances.<sup>58</sup> A full understanding of black educator and learner perceptions of

<sup>49</sup> W. R. L. Gebhard, 'Black Perceptions of South African History' (Ph.D Thesis, University of Pretoria, 1988).

<sup>50</sup> M. R. Legodi, 'The Transformation of Education in South Africa since 1994: a Historical-Educational Overview' (D.Ed thesis, University of South Africa, 2001).

<sup>51</sup> J. Seroto, 'The Impact of South African Legislation (1948–2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: a Historical Perspective' (D.Ed thesis, University of South Africa, 2004).

<sup>52</sup> S. M. Ndlovu, 'Perceptions of History and Experiences of Learning among African Students in the Early 1990s, in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Pietermaritzburg' (M. A. dissertation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1993).

<sup>53</sup> O. E. H. M. Nuxumalo, 'The Sociological Significance of the Teaching of History as a Variable in the Socialisation of African Secondary School Pupils (in Kwa-Zulu)' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1980).

<sup>54</sup> I. E. Zwane, 'An Examination of the Position and Role of History'.

<sup>55</sup> E. Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary High Schools of the Southern Transvaal Region' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1967).

<sup>56</sup> E. Motshabi, 'The Use of the Textbook in the Teaching of History in Bantu High Schools' (D.Ed. thesis, Fort Hare University, 1973).

<sup>57</sup> These reactions to the introduction of Bantu Education and toward the black secondary school education provided thereafter are outlined by Cameron, 'The introduction of Bantu Education' and C. Soudien, 'Teachers' Responses to the Introduction of Apartheid', in Kallaway, ed., *The History of Education under Apartheid*.

<sup>58</sup> A good account of the change of black educators' political stances after the Soweto Uprising (1976) is found in the article by P. Lekgoathi, 'Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of

apartheid-era secondary school History education can only be acquired by recognising that perceptions toward the subject ranged from conservative through to revolutionary.

The dissertation of Sarah Dryden contains very valuable information about the perceptions toward secondary school History education of Cape Town educators and learners in the late 1990s.<sup>59</sup> Dryden investigated the perceptions of educators and learners in a variety of secondary schools, ranging from disadvantaged schools which catered for black and coloured learners, inner city schools and advantaged suburban schools populated mainly by middle class to affluent white learners. The perceptions of both educators and learners of the various cultural groups she surveyed were markedly different. This study, written in a unique conversational style, was helpful to my own study as I was able to compare the perceptions of History education of Dryden's 1999 subjects with my own 2012 respondents. As with my study, the title of Dryden's study, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition' indicates that she observed that the perceptions of her subjects toward History education revealed the nature of their wider perceptions toward life in South Africa.

J. J. Nel's 1949 dissertation examined History teaching in white, Afrikaans-medium secondary schools in the pre-1994 South African province of the Orange Free State. The dissertation proved valuable to my study despite having been written before 1960 because it highlighted many perceptions of secondary school History education which were evident among white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans throughout the apartheid era.<sup>60</sup> The rather negative perceptions of white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans toward history in general and school History in particular were persuasively outlined by W. A. De Klerk (1967) who felt that, unlike the popular perception of an Afrikaner love for the history of their own people, Afrikaners had lost interest in their history, a tendency encouraged by a decided lack of interest shown in historical matters and monuments by the government and by ineffective teaching of the subject at schools.<sup>61</sup> A. G. Coetzee (1963 and 1964) felt

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Zebediela, 1986–1994', *South African Historical Journal*, 58 (2007), pp. 226–252.

<sup>59</sup> S. Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition: Case Studies of History Teachers and Students in Cape Town Schools' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1999).

<sup>60</sup> J. J. Nel, 'Gesiedenis in die Middelbare Skool onder die O. V. S. Departement van Onderwys (1933–1947)' (Dissertation in part fulfillment of M. A., University of the Orange Free State/University of South Africa, 1949). ['History in the junior high school under the Orange Free State Department of Education (1933–1947)'].

<sup>61</sup> W. A. De Klerk, 'Ons Volkgeskiedenis as Lewende Erfenis', *Historia*, 12, 4 (1967), pp. 242–249. ['Our Peoples' History as a Living Heritage'].

concerned that History was a subject that was being sidelined in schools, which he blamed on poor assessment systems and prejudice toward the subject on the part of school administrations which adopted streaming policies which favoured scientific and commercial subjects thus relegating History to the status of a subject for intellectually challenged learners.<sup>62</sup> Like Coetzee, J. J. Van Tonder (1965) blamed a content-loaded examination system and the increasing popularity of scientific, mathematical and commercial subjects for the decline in the popularity of History at white Afrikaans-medium secondary schools. Van Tonder provides very interesting statistics which compare the popularity of History at white South African secondary schools between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s which clearly reveal a sharp drop in the popularity of the subject at Afrikaans-medium secondary schools, a tendency which he related to the very foundations of Afrikaner culture – religion, language and history – being under attack.<sup>63</sup> Leo Barnard's 1995 article also debates the declining popularity of secondary school History especially in white, Afrikaans-medium schools.<sup>64</sup> Barnard attributed the decline in the numbers of secondary school learners taking History to an outdated syllabus, that History was not perceived to offer many career opportunities and to poor, uninspired teaching. All of the above sources provide insight into the perceptions which educators, learners and the wider Afrikaans community held toward secondary school History education during the apartheid era.

Other journal articles which proved helpful in compiling this thesis include J. Dean and R. Siebörger's 'After Apartheid: the Outlook for History'<sup>65</sup> and Dryden-Peterson and Siebörger's 'Teachers as Memory Makers: Testimony in the Making of a New History in South Africa'.<sup>66</sup> This article is a follow up to Dryden-Peterson's 1999 dissertation which investigated the perceptions toward History education of Cape Town educators and

<sup>62</sup> A. G. Coetzee, 'Kruispaaie in Ons Geskiedenisonderrig', *Historia*, 8, 4 (1963), pp. 233–237 [Crossroads in our History Education'] and 'Die Vraag na 'n Moontlike Nuwe Benadering van Geskiedenis as 'n Skoolvlak' *Historia*, 9, 1 (1964), pp. 2–7 [The Question of a New Approach to History as a School Subject'].

<sup>63</sup> J. J. Van Tonder, 'Gesiedenis: Knelpunte en Gevaartekens', *Historia*, 10, 4 (1965), pp. 257–264. [History: Problems and Danger Signs'].

<sup>64</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het Geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms?: Enkele Perspektiewe, *The Free State Teacher*, 85, 4 (1995), pp. 13–17. ['Does History at School Level have a Future? Some Perspectives'].

<sup>65</sup> J. Dean and R. Siebörger, 'After Apartheid: the Outlook for History', *Teaching History*, 79, (1995), pp. 32–33.

<sup>66</sup> S. Dryden-Peterson and R. Sieborger, 'Teachers as Memory Makers: Testimony in the Making of a New History in South Africa', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26 (2006), pp. 394–403.

learners. Siebörger's article 'History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience' is helpful for the insight it provides into the creation of post-apartheid education policy-making in South Africa. Peter Kallaway provides a concise summary of the state of History education in South Africa up to 1995 in 'History Education in a Democratic South Africa'.<sup>67</sup> Cynthia Kros has written several articles which provide helpful insight and a good background to some of the issues around History education in South Africa.<sup>68</sup>

Certain government publications are necessary to provide a background to assist acquiring an understanding and appreciation of the legislation which has supported South African school education. These documents include policy documents which influence every aspect of South African life such as the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.<sup>69</sup> The South African School's Act of 1996 regulates significant areas of school life in South Africa.<sup>70</sup> Many national and provincial education department publications support some segments of this thesis.<sup>71</sup> The original policy speeches of Dr Verwoerd who in the 1950s and 1960s, in various government positions, so influenced the course of South African history in general and South African educational policy in particular, assist one in attaining a broad picture of the perceptions which underpinned Bantu Education and the general mindset of conservative Afrikanerdom at the time.<sup>72</sup> Official government or Education Department documents are significant in that they both represent the perceptions of those in power who compose them and may also assist in forming the perceptions of those who are enjoined to abide by their provisions.

<sup>67</sup> R. Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience', *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, Vol I No I (2000), pages unnumbered.

<sup>68</sup> Some of Cynthia Kros's prolific collection of work about school History in South Africa includes: 'Ethnic Narcissism and Big Brother: Culture, Identity and the State in the New Curriculum', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 38, 3 (2004), pp. 587–602; 'History for Democracy', *Lengwitch*, 4, 1 (1987), pp. 5–23; 'Pardoning the Past?', *South African Historical Journal*, 38 (1998), pp. 205–213; 'Telling Lies and then Hoping to Forget all about History', *South African Historical Journal*, 42 (2000), pp. 69–88; and 'The Making of a Class: A Preliminary Critique of the Presentation of History in South African Schools', *Perspectives in Education*, 10, 1 (1998), pp. 87–99.

<sup>69</sup> *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996* (Pretoria, 1996).

<sup>70</sup> *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* (Pretoria, 1996).

<sup>71</sup> A comprehensive list of these publications may be found in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

<sup>72</sup> Union of South Africa, *House of Assembly Debates: Volume 83*, Column 3576, September 1953 (Pretoria) and Union of South Africa, *Senate Debates: Volume II*, Columns 2618–2619, 1954 (Pretoria).

### 1.12 Overview of chapter content

A brief overview of the content of the remaining chapters of this thesis follows:

Chapter two begins with a survey of the many perceived positive values which secondary school History education might impart to learners. The perceptions and ideology of the National Party government and educational authorities toward education in general and History education in particular are examined. The perceptions which white, English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, as well as their black counterparts held toward secondary school History education during the apartheid era are examined and assessed.

Chapter three examines post-apartheid perceptions toward secondary school History education. The perceptions of the education department toward the subject and particularly the values which it seeks to impart are examined.

Chapter four investigates the important role which History syllabuses and textbooks have played in creating and maintaining the historical perceptions which learners have held both during and beyond the apartheid era.

Chapter five investigates both learner and educator perceptions toward secondary school History education during the apartheid era. The perceptions of both white, English and Afrikaans learners and educators as well as their black counterparts are examined.

Chapter six examines educators' perceptions of post-apartheid History education in Mpumalanga. Both negative and positive perceptions are investigated. Issues such as educator abilities and the ethical conduct of educators are examined as they impact upon the teaching of and the perceptions held toward History as much as they impact upon any other subject.

Chapter seven investigates and examines the perceptions of post-apartheid-era secondary school learners toward the General Education and Training (GET: Grades 8 and 9) and Further Education and Training (FET: Grades 10–12) History education which they receive. The findings of Dryden as well as my own 2009 findings concerning the perceptions of

black secondary school learners in Mpumalanga will be contrasted with the perceptions of the secondary school learners whom I surveyed in 2012.

Chapter eight describes and presents the present state of History education among the various kinds of secondary schools in Mpumalanga. The History education offered (or not) within a large number of schools, ranging from conservative Afrikaans private schools, disadvantaged township schools, ex-model C schools and Muslim schools in Mpumalanga will be examined and compared.

Chapter nine presents the findings of the thesis, namely that the History taught at South African secondary schools from 1960 to 1994 did not succeed in its task of indoctrinating South African secondary school learners into adopting a more favourable disposition toward the policies of the National Party government. Although education departments and school administrations still largely perceive History education negatively, if the positive perceptions I uncovered within young South African people of diverse cultural affiliations in Mpumalanga are representative of South Africa as a whole, then the future of History education at every educational level does not look as gloomy as many believe.

## CHAPTER TWO

# PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF HISTORY EDUCATION, 1960–1994

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the value which society and especially society in South Africa has attached and presently attaches to History education. The value which society assigns to History education will impact upon the perceptions which ordinary learners and educators, and society in general hold toward the subject. During the apartheid era, South Africa was a deeply divided society. It is not therefore surprising that perceptions toward school History education differed greatly between various racial, cultural and linguistic groups. The values which the government and its education departments wished to propagate through History education were not received with undiluted enthusiasm by most secondary school learners of the time who either questioned and rejected the school History to which they were subjected or reacted with a sense of indifference toward it.

### 2.2 Value of History education

Education has been considered by society to be something of great value. Behr noted that ‘... Education can influence so profoundly the thought and character of individuals and of nations that it matters greatly what its aims and principles are and how it operates, especially at school level.’<sup>1</sup> It seems obvious that society – and more especially those who have control over education – have the task of selecting the knowledge which best serves its needs. Chernis notes that:

Those who control education will in some way utilise it to further their own value systems. Control of education enables the dominant group to achieve several aims: to define what counts as education through the curriculum, to define methodology through accepted methods of pedagogy and, through the examination system, to

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Behr, *Education in South Africa: Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652–1988* (Cape Town and Pretoria, 1988), p. 86.



decide what is most significant in order to reward those who have grasped the essentials. The state defines the curriculum, approves texts, oversees examinations through its own agents and grants school-leaving certificates.<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally, History has been perceived as the most significant subject through which to transmit the values which a society believes are important. Chernis argues that since gaining knowledge of the past is one way in which people rationally try to understand the world around themselves and gain insight into the meaning of their lives and their place in the world, History education will be of special interest to various organisations such as the state, church and other interest groups. History is therefore 'undoubtedly the most important subject in which the values of a society and its national consciousness are verbalised and repeated'.<sup>3</sup>

History education has been valued by society as being able to inculcate good citizenship values. The socialisation provided by schools is for Trümpelmann normally that which affirms the existing status quo and encourages learners to accept society's existing social arrangements. Nevertheless, although not standing on the brink of change, there is a dialectical relationship between the school and the state.<sup>4</sup> Rob Siebörger, writing in 2008 notes that 'South Africa's democracy rests on an appreciation of its values by its citizens.' The strong sense of personal identity and tolerance needed to understand the purpose and workings of democracy are, for Siebörger best cultivated by the study of History which fosters the critical and empathetic thinking which enables learners to move beyond guilt or hatred.<sup>5</sup> Gerald Mazabow posits that one of the major purposes of studying History is to create good citizens,<sup>6</sup> not only in the narrow sense of being good citizens of a particular country, but as Dance notes, to be partakers of a broader patriotism as citizens of the

<sup>2</sup> R. E. Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present: A Study of South African School History Syllabuses and Textbooks, 1839–1990' (Ph.D thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present', p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> M. H. Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching in a Multi-cultural South Africa'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, conference papers, in M. H. Trümpelmann, ed., *Geskiedenis in 'n Multikulturele Samelewing/History Teaching in a Multicultural Society* (Johannesburg, 1990), p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> R. Siebörger, 'Don't Deprive Pupils of Chance to Study History', Newspaper article, Cape Times, 12 June 2008.

<sup>6</sup> G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools' (D.Ed thesis, University of South Africa, 2003), p. 154.

world.<sup>7</sup> This idea is echoed by Dean who comments on the worldwide influence of globalisation. Learners, as adults, will 'be world citizens and need understanding of and sympathy with other people, including those whose lives are very different from their own'.<sup>8</sup> Schoeman believes that one of the major purposes of studying History is to encourage 'an understanding of identity as a social construct, preparing future citizens for local, regional, national, continental and global citizenship'. A critical approach to the study of history in a democracy, apart from promoting the democratic values of the Constitution and encouraging civic responsibility, 'should enable people to examine with greater insight and understanding the prejudices such as race, class, gender, ethnicity and xenophobia still existing in our society and which must be confronted and addressed'.<sup>9</sup> Rüsen states that 'one of the most important objectives of History teaching in school is to breed citizens of the political system according to the way in which they use the memory of the past in order to place themselves in the social structure of present day life.'<sup>10</sup> Mulholland notes that particularly because of the cultural diversity which exists in South Africa a History syllabus with a consciously anti-racist stance which takes special cognisance of the dignity, individuality and rights of every citizen should be taught.<sup>11</sup> Schools are places where learners are trained for citizenship, and as they do this, they can support social change by the fostering of values such as honesty, openness, tolerance and patience and the building of positive social values.<sup>12</sup> History has been perceived as a subject which encourages learners to engage in critical thinking and to be able to accept that there are different points of view which need to be heard and expressed. Bam notes that through the process of studying History, '... pupils develop an appreciation that there is room for a variety of views ... The skills to comprehend, judge, extrapolate, synthesise and evaluate are interpreted as

<sup>7</sup> E. H. Dance, *The Place of History in Secondary Teaching: A Comparative Study* (London, 1970), p. 20, as quoted by Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness', p. 154.

<sup>8</sup> J. Dean, *Beginning Teaching in the Secondary School* (Buckingham, 1996), p. 3, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 154.

<sup>9</sup> S. Schoeman, *Subject Didactics: History* (Pretoria, 2003), p.3, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> J. Rüsen, 'Historical Consciousness and Historical Education'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*, p. 135.

<sup>11</sup> R. Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future – The Dilemma and Contradiction in Teacher Education'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, pp. 90–91.

those abilities through which pupils acquire 'critical thinking' in History ... the main objective of History teaching is to allow students to understand the world in which they live'.<sup>13</sup> Encouraging debate and the adoption of a questioning attitude should, for Mulholland, be one of the aims of History teaching.<sup>14</sup> She cites the History Working Group involved with producing the National History Curriculum of England (1990) who noted that History ought to give opportunities for different interpretations and illustrate different points of view.<sup>15</sup> Trümpelmann quotes Kapp who notes that History education should develop a critical openness to life which should allow people to more easily adjust to it.<sup>16</sup>

History education helps learners to understand the world in which they live. History helps learners to understand the realities of life.<sup>17</sup> Bam notes that through the medium of critical thinking learners should gain 'knowledge of change and continuity as integral to social process in history.' Learners should also understand more about the world as they understand more about how traditions are handed down from one generation to the next and understand the link between the past, present and the future.<sup>18</sup> Fisher points out that since the past is 'an essential part of a child's cultural knowledge and experience' that reflecting upon it can provide meaning from it that can illuminate the present and help prepare for the future. The present can only be properly understood by reference to the past.<sup>19</sup> Siebörger notes that learners find it difficult, indeed debilitating, to cope with 'incessant change'. History education provides learners with the needed tools to interpret and analyse the change happening around them. History, for Siebörger, 'is able to bring

<sup>13</sup> J. Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum for the Secondary School Level in South Africa: Considerations Related to the Possible Inclusion of Themes Drawn from Unity Movement History' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1993), p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, citing The History (National Curriculum) of England, Report of the Working Group, *Final Report*, April 1990.

<sup>16</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', quoting P. Kapp, 'Die Waarde van Geskiedenis as Skoolvak', [The Value of History as a School Subject] *Gister en Vandag*, 7 (1984), pp. 2–7, in Trümpelmann, p. 92.

<sup>17</sup> R. Livingstone, *The Future in Education* (Cambridge, 1941), p. 20, as quoted by J. J. Nel, 'Gesiedenis in die Openbare Skool onder die O.V. S. Departement van Onderwys (1933–1947)' (Dissertation in part fulfillment of M. A., University College of the Orange Free State/University of South Africa, 1949), p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum'.

<sup>19</sup> R. Fisher, *Teaching Children to Think* (Cheltenham, 1990), p. 231, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 153.

together the political, cultural and economic factors that contribute to globalisation and to provide learners with the opportunity to discuss and debate them meaningfully.’<sup>20</sup>

Mulholland notes that especially in societies undergoing a period of transition, a ‘sense of explanation’ is very important to help people establish a sense of identity. She adds that ‘... An exploration of the lives of previous generations gives students a context in which to analyse and observe their own society and in doing so make the study of history vital and relevant’.<sup>21</sup>

History education provides meaning to learners’ lives by helping to orientate their present lives into a broader context. Learners are able to see the past in its totality.<sup>22</sup> Rüsen believes that we cannot live as fully self-actualised people unless we orientate our deep-seated human need to know where we come from in terms of our past, and where we fit in terms of the present and future. Unacknowledged or not, as human beings we have a need to know how our lives fit into the stream of human history. History education is of great value because it is able to help learners to contextualise their lives, providing them with a sense of security and direction.<sup>23</sup> History education entails the telling of stories which function ‘in order to orientate one’s practical life in the course of time’, providing ‘cultural orientations for practical life’.<sup>24</sup> Crittenden posited that being familiar with the main features of history ‘develops a sense of continuity with past generations of the society, based on a critical appreciation of their achievements and failures; and it provides a perspective for recognising our responsibility toward those who will belong to the society in the future...’<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Sieborger, ‘Don’t Deprive pupils of Chance to Study History’.

<sup>21</sup> Mulholland, ‘What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?’, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 75.

<sup>22</sup> Nel, ‘Gesiedenis in die Openbare Skool’, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Rüsen’s theories about the development of historical consciousness and its importance are comprehensively outlined in the following papers: ‘Historical Education in a Multicultural Society’. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990 and ‘Historical Consciousness and Historical Education’. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990, in Trümpelmann, *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*.

<sup>24</sup> J. Rüsen, ‘Historical Consciousness and Historical Education’, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 141.

<sup>25</sup> B. Crittenden, ‘Education and Australian Identity’, *Discourse*, 10 (1) (1989), p. 35, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 209.

This idea is echoed by Southgate who believes that History education could 'expose us to other possibilities, to enable us to distance ourselves from our immediate present, and to view ourselves in a wider perspective; for we may then be made aware of alternative options for the future'.<sup>26</sup> When this wider perspective is presented, a confrontation with other norms and values may take place which can help 'to create an environment within which a dialogue between the past and present can take place'.<sup>27</sup> Heightening the historical consciousness of learners mobilises a specific kind of experience of the past: evidence provided by 'counter narratives', deviations which render problematic present values and 'lebensformen'. In the critical mode of historical consciousness history functions as the tool by which: 'continuity is ruptured, 'deconstructed', decoded – so that it loses its power as a source for present-day orientations ... we say no to pre-given temporal orientations of our life'.<sup>28</sup> History helps uncover the multi-faceted nature of our own communities, helping to create a sense of identity.<sup>29</sup>

History education helps learners to be able to discover their own values when they are able to challenge – and contradict – pre-existing value systems. Nel notes that History is the particular subject which helps to sharpen peoples' judgement-making ability.<sup>30</sup> Giroux suggests that the 'master narrative of a monolithic culture' may be challenged when the 'multi-layered and often contradictory voices and experiences' of learners interact with 'the weight of particular histories'.<sup>31</sup> History education, for Seixas, may help learners prepare for life, guided opportunities to confront differing accounts, meanings and interpretations of the past and assist learners to deal with what they will encounter outside of school.<sup>32</sup> Learners become socially and politically literate as they grapple with and debate about the controversy inherent in historic discourse. As learners recognise that historical events are

<sup>26</sup> B. Southgate, *History: What and Why?* (London, 1996), p. 135, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 216.

<sup>27</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 93.

<sup>28</sup> J. Rüsen, in P. Duvenhague, ed., *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria, 1993), p. 73, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 187.

<sup>29</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 75.

<sup>30</sup> Nel, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> H. A. Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education* (London, 1992), p. 50, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 217.

<sup>32</sup> P. Seixas, 'The Purpose of Teaching Canadian History', [www.quasar.Ualberta.-ca/css/Css362/Arpurposes\\_teaching\\_canadi](http://www.quasar.Ualberta.-ca/css/Css362/Arpurposes_teaching_canadi). (2002), p. 1, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 217. No access date provided.

the results of the choices people have made and that actions lead to particular results they begin to appreciate the decision-making process. Knowledge of the complexity and diversity of their history provides 'new cultural meanings to obsolete stereotypes'.<sup>33</sup>

History education is perceived as being able to inculcate good values into the lives of learners. Mazabow notes that learning not only be a cognitive exercise but must impact upon the affective domain of learners as positive values and attitudes are imparted to them.<sup>34</sup> Dance points out that an attitude toward life and not simply the transmission of a body of knowledge should be imparted by History education.<sup>35</sup> Mazabow points out that by the time a learner reaches the Further Education and Training (FET) phase<sup>36</sup> in his education and has achieved a greater degree of emotional and mental development, outcomes promoted by studying History such as the ability to make good value judgements; to understand and demonstrate civic responsibilities and democratic values should be able to be assimilated.<sup>37</sup> Mulholland concurs that History education ought to examine ideologies and value systems.<sup>38</sup>

Jordan and Taylor outline how History study provides a full and deep contact with values. These include seeing how values emerge from the study of events which happened in the past; examining different interpretations of these events to see how differing interpretations can change initial perceptions of value judgements; to utilise a variety of historical sources to ascertain the motivations which inspired historical events and the values which have been subsequently placed upon them and to explore the validity of information, motives and personal opinions so as to determine what a value judgement is.<sup>39</sup> These activities ought to happen as learners study History.<sup>40</sup> Rob Sieborger points out that

<sup>33</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, pp. 74–75.

<sup>34</sup> Mazabow, p. 153.

<sup>35</sup> Dance, *The Place of History in Secondary Teaching*, p. 15, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 152.

<sup>36</sup> The FET phase refers to the final phase of secondary school education in South Africa, the three years during which a learner progresses from Grade 10 through to Grade 12.

<sup>37</sup> Mazabow, pp. 152–153.

<sup>38</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 75.

<sup>39</sup> A. Jordan and P. Taylor, 'History', in S. Biggar and E. Brown., eds., *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education* (London, 1999) as cited by R. Phillips, *Reflective Teaching of History 11–18* (London, 2002), p. 146, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 153.

<sup>40</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 75.

one reason for teaching History at South African secondary schools entails an exploration of 'heritage' – which is in fact included in the curriculum itself. As learners undertake projects about local and national heritage and begin to understand why various monuments have been (or should be) erected they begin to comprehend the contributions which have been made by different people and groups to their localities. This inculcates the value of tolerance into learners.<sup>41</sup> Mulholland notes that '... A rigorous study of history ... imposes an obligation to explore the multicultural nature of society in a sympathetic way and in doing so begins to evoke tolerance through knowledge', so 'promoting a humane attitude'.<sup>42</sup>

History education has been perceived as a form of spiritual instruction for learners. Ebenezer Malie believed that a History educator needed first and foremost to be a spiritually inclined person with an upright and moral lifestyle, if he were to be properly equipped to teach History.<sup>43</sup> Malie denigrated the spiritual values of his own (black) community and perceived that History education could assist in turning black learners toward western, European spiritual values and practices.<sup>44</sup> This perception was no doubt shared by other politically and socially conservative black History educators of Malie's time. Job Mathunyane, who taught History in Mpumalanga from the 1970s through to the early 2000s, although politically more liberal than Malie, also believed that History education could assist learners in a spiritual way. According to Mathunyane, secondary school learners of the present century are caught up in a materialistic and commercially oriented world and History can help them appreciate the spiritual and aesthetic values of life so lacking in contemporary secondary school education.<sup>45</sup> The system of Christian National Education, increasingly adopted by apartheid-era educational authorities strongly linked History education to the spiritual values central to Afrikanerdom which the government of the time wished to nurture.<sup>46</sup> Muslim educators whom I interviewed in the course of my 2012 research explained that the study of history is seen as having great spiritual value. Islamic history is studied by learners as a component of their Madrassa studies, although in the

<sup>41</sup> R. Siebörger, 'Don't Deprive Pupils of Chance to Study History'.

<sup>42</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 75.

<sup>43</sup> E. Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary Schools of the Southern Transvaal Region' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1967), pp. 77, 80–82.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 88, 111, 118, 120–122, 127, 130.

<sup>45</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008.

<sup>46</sup> The relationship between Christian National Education and the value of History education is explored later in this chapter.

Middelburg Muslim community enthusiasm for Islamic history does not translate into an enthusiasm for History as an elective secondary school subject.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the most popular perception of secondary school History education in South Africa is that the subject has value as a political tool in the hands of the government of the day. Writing in 1949, Nel noted with regret that History had great value for the politician.<sup>48</sup> Education is always a political event<sup>49</sup> which, in terms of History, in relating the story of struggles between nations as well as the stories of great people has political connotations.<sup>50</sup> History education has been perceived by people who have regarded themselves as oppressed as a valued medium of indoctrination on the part of successive South African political administrations, from the post-South African War British administration through to the post-apartheid ANC government. Conversely, school History education has been valued as a liberation tool by those who have sought to resist these administrations. Challenging or approving of the value of History education as a form of government propaganda colours the perceptions of most of the pre and post-apartheid-era respondents I surveyed for the purposes of this thesis. Mohamed notes that in a divided society – and South Africa has certainly been one – education in general cannot claim to be neutral, acting in the interests of everyone. He further noted that at least in 1990 the South African History curriculum ‘ignored, denigrated or distorted’ the values of non-dominant cultures.<sup>51</sup> Bam supports this view, asserting that since History teaching has long been a contested terrain in South Africa, it has been perceived to have been ‘abused by the ruling class to “colonise” the minds of pupils. History teaching in South Africa has never been neutral; its role has been inextricably linked to the politics of the given hegemonic class in this country’.<sup>52</sup> History teaching serves

<sup>47</sup> Interviews, Mr I. Pilodia, Middelburg, 15 February 2011; Mr Jooma, Middelburg, 16 February 2011. Personalised questionnaires, Mr M. S. Badat, Middelburg, 29 November 2010; Ms A. Rajakumar, Middelburg, 6 February 2010. History teaching at the Middelburg Muslim School is examined in Chapter eight of this thesis.

<sup>48</sup> Nel, p. 28.

<sup>49</sup> Trümpelmann, ‘An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching’, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 90, quoting P. Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom* (Harmondsworth, 1977), p. 22.

<sup>50</sup> Trümpelmann, ‘An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching’, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 91.

<sup>51</sup> B. Mohamed, ‘Alternative History as a Response to Multiculturalism in History Teaching’. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, pp. 16–17.

<sup>52</sup> Bam, p. 19.



to legitimate or justify the existing political status quo. 'When referring to legitimation in History teaching, one is usually speaking of the legitimation of present authority...'<sup>53</sup>

History, notes Siebörger, imparts valuable work-related skills to learners. That History does not prepare learners for post-school employment is a fallacy. History imparts a variety of skills that can be utilised in all jobs. Siebörger points out that the insights and skills imparted by History will assist learners long after they have forgotten the content contained in their school subjects. History, for Mulholland, can play an essential humanising role in an age in which the advances of technology might have freed people from labour but alienated them from human values.<sup>54</sup> Making people, rather than the 'deification of science and technology' the measure of all things is a goal of History teaching which could assist learners in the environments which they will encounter after school. History can in fact provide learners with a broad general education<sup>55</sup> and can help learners develop the skill of making considered decisions.<sup>56</sup> Siebörger believes that 'departments of education, school principals, governing bodies and parents' need to 'think again what young adults most need when they leave school'.<sup>57</sup>

History education also serves to equip learners with various academic skills which assists them in post-school work-related or academic environments. The History Working Group which was involved in designing the new British History curriculum noted that a wide range of skills could be derived from historical methodology.<sup>58</sup> History study sets a premium on accuracy and adhering to facts;<sup>59</sup> helps learners to organise information in support of a theory; to express oneself clearly and understandably and enables its students to be able to discern the difference between what is possible and impossible.<sup>60</sup> Conceptual<sup>61</sup> and intellectual<sup>62</sup> development are fostered by studying History. Trümpelmann notes that

<sup>53</sup> Chernis, p. 38.

<sup>54</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 73.

<sup>55</sup> Nel, p. 22.

<sup>56</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 75.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> The History (National Curriculum) of England, Report of the History Working Group, *Final Report*, April 1990.

<sup>59</sup> A. L. Rowse, *The Use of History* (London, 1946), p. 182, as quoted by Nel, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> Livingstone, *The Future in Education*, p. 20, as quoted by Nel, p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> Mulholland, 'What Will Happen to the Past in the Future?', conference papers, p. 75.

<sup>62</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *'n Inleiding tot die Studie van Geskiedenis* (Cape Town, undated), p. 96.

History education ought to emphasise the acquisition and application of historical skills, rather than simply concerning itself with a body of facts,<sup>63</sup> while Kallaway and Siebörger posit that mastering facts is but one aspect of introducing learners into the historical mode of thought. 'The ability to recognise points of view or bias, interpret arguments, argue logically or consistently and detect inconsistencies or contradiction in historical accounts are all key aspects of the learning of History that are as appropriate to the classroom and the school textbook or examination as they are to the university lecture room or the researcher.'<sup>64</sup> Thomson emphatically states that History study is 'an opportunity of a unique intellectual experience ... perhaps the greatest humanist medium of our time.'<sup>65</sup>

One of the values of History education is that it is not simply oriented toward the past, but is also oriented toward the present and the future.<sup>66</sup> Nel notes that 'the real value of History is that history gives power to the present'.<sup>67</sup> For Trümpelmann, the ultimate purpose of History is not to study it for 'its own sake, but for the light which it throws on the destiny of man'.<sup>68</sup> Klopper-Lourens proposes that South African history must promote a perspective of the future in order that the past may be meaningfully interpreted. The future gives relevance and meaning to a study of the past.<sup>69</sup>

History assists learners with valuable life experience. Rowse notes that History can offer people 'an inexhaustible store of vicarious experience upon which they may draw, instead of going through it all over again for themselves in ignorance and (often) suffering.'<sup>70</sup> Kloppers-Lourens points out that because of the way in which school level History is taught – namely

<sup>63</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 92.

<sup>64</sup> P. Kallaway and R. Siebörger, 'The Crisis of History Education in our Schools: The Challenge to Professional Historians'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Historical Society, Pietermaritzburg, 1989, conference papers, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 91, quoting Thomson, *The Aims of History* (London, 1969), p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 92, quoting G. Barraclough, *History and the Common Man* (London, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Nel, p. 31.

<sup>68</sup> Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 93.

<sup>69</sup> J. Kloppers-Lourens, 'Bemark Geskiedenis Rondom 'n Nuwe "Leidmotiv"' [Market History with a new Paradigm]. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996, conference papers, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Rowse, *The Use of History*, p. 29, as quoted by Nel, p. 30.

that it has a developmental role in promoting a new perspective for the future – as opposed to academic history ‘which rather looks at things from the perspective of content and in an analytical way,’ prepares learners for life. This preparation for life includes providing learners with practise in intellectual development and critical method as well as providing cultural , moral and citizenship orientation.<sup>71</sup>

History is perceived to have value in helping people to learn from the mistakes which have been made in the past. Many lacks and mistakes can be eliminated with the benefit of historical knowledge.<sup>72</sup> The general knowledge of learners is greatly increased when they study History. Nel notes the obvious – historical knowledge is necessary if one is to read newspapers and magazines with intelligence.<sup>73</sup> History can also illuminate and complement other academic subjects, especially literature. Poetry, for example, should be correlated with history which ought to provide unity to all other arts subjects.<sup>74</sup>

It is clear that History education is perceived – at least by its practitioners – as having great value in a multitude of ways. History education can assist the proponents and opponents of governments in their cause. It can be used as a method of life orientation to help prepare young people for their futures. It can provide learners with useful career and academic skills. It can help to orientate a learner in terms of his own culture and in terms of knowing his place in the world and in the stream of history. It can increase the general knowledge of learners. It can inculcate good values and even spiritual lessons into learners. Despite these undoubted potentialities however, it is clear that at least since the 1960s History has been a struggling subject in South African secondary schools. The value attached to the subject by South African school authorities, educators, learners and the general public has clearly been less than positive.

### 2.3 Value of History education in apartheid-era South Africa

Statistics indicate that History education became increasingly less valued during the apartheid era. Perceptions toward it became increasingly negative, for various reasons.

<sup>71</sup> Kloppers-Lourens, ‘Bemark Geskiedenis Rondom ’n Nuwe “Leidmotiv”’, conference papers, pp. 4–5.

<sup>72</sup> Nel, p. 30.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>74</sup> Rowse, p. 160, as quoted by Nel, pp. 25–26.

Although secondary school History education appeared to enjoy a brief rise in popularity after South Africa's 1994 democratic election, from at least 1960 academics were complaining that History as a school subject was in decline.

Writing in 1995, Leo Barnard bemoaned the fact that History education at both school and university level was in a state of serious decline. He was especially concerned about the state of History at traditionally white secondary schools. He noted the disconcerting trend that History had been phased out by secondary schools which believed that it was no longer worth presenting History as an examination subject. This trend impacted upon the numbers of students taking History at universities. It was, stated Barnard, not uncommon to find that an undergraduate History class only had 10 or 20 students. Barnard noted that during the 1940s, 80 per cent of all matriculants in traditionally white secondary schools had taken History at Standard 10 (Grade 12) level but that by 1994 less than 20 per cent of matriculants in comparable secondary schools took the subject.<sup>75</sup> A. G. Coetzee, also referring to statistics representing the position of History at traditionally white secondary schools notes that in the Cape Province the percentage of matriculants presenting History in Standard 10 had dropped from 66.1 per cent in 1953 to 53.9 per cent by 1962.<sup>76</sup> The progressive nature in the drop in the popularity of History in traditionally white secondary schools in the Cape Province was noted by Bam who pointed out that the 82 per cent of History-taking Standard 10s in 1940 dropped to 66 per cent in 1953; 51 per cent in 1973 to only 32 per cent in 1981.<sup>77</sup>

J. J. van Tonder (1965) expressed a deep concern about the state of History education within traditionally white secondary schools.<sup>78</sup> He provided statistics to show that the state of History education in white and particularly Afrikaans-medium secondary schools was a real cause for concern. Again, the statistics below indicate that the rather dismal reception which History as a secondary school subject obtained among the Afrikaans community was

<sup>75</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het Geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms? Enkele Perspektiewe', [Does History at School Level have a Future? Some Perspectives'], *The Free State Teacher*, April/May 1995, pp. 13–14.

<sup>76</sup> A. G. Coetzee, 'Kruispaaie in ons Geskiedenisonderrig', [Crossroads in our History Education], *Historia*, 8, 4 (1963), p. 237.

<sup>77</sup> Bam, p. 29, footnote.

<sup>78</sup> J. J. Van Tonder, 'Geskiedenis: Knelpunte en Gevaartekens', [History: Crisis Points and Danger Signs], *Historia*, 10, 4 (1965), pp. 257–264.

not what Van Tonder or other proponents of CNE would have hoped for. I have tabularised and reproduced these findings below:

**TABLE 2.1<sup>79</sup>**

<b>NUMBER OF WHITE STANDARD 10 LEARNERS TAKING HISTORY IN 1953</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape Province</b>
<b>Total number of (white) Std 10 learners</b>	3, 666	1 136	733	?
Total number of History-taking Std 10 learners	2 332	851	347	5 131
% learners who took History	63	74	47	66

**TABLE 2.2<sup>80</sup>**

<b>NUMBER OF WHITE STANDARD 10 LEARNERS TAKING HISTORY IN 1964</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape Province</b>
<b>Total number of (white) Std 10 learners</b>	11 289	2 467	3 768	?
Total number of History-taking Std 10 learners	5 908	1 241	2 115	?
% learners who took History	52	50	56	?

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present the statistics for matriculation entries for 1953 and 1964. There was a decline in the percentage of learners who presented History as a subject. The fact that the Transvaal dropped from 63% to 52%; the Orange Free State from 74% to 50% and that it was 56% in Natal (the figure of 47% for Natal in 1953 was regarded by the writer as mistaken), indicates that there was a real drop in the interest which young people had in History. Even though statistics for the Cape were incomplete, there was also certainly a decreasing tendency for learners to take History there as well.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

**TABLE 2.3**<sup>81</sup>

<b>LEARNERS IN AFRIKAANS-MEDIUM HIGH SCHOOLS (FOR WHITES) IN 1964 WHO TOOK HISTORY AS A MATRICULATION SUBJECT</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape</b>
Total entrants for the Std 10 examination	7 193	2 016	428	?
Total entrants for the Std 10 History exam	3 098	1 055	106	?
Percentage Std 10 learners who took History	43%	52%	24%	?

**TABLE 2.4**<sup>82</sup>

<b>LEARNERS IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM HIGH SCHOOLS (FOR WHITES) IN 1964 WHO TOOK HISTORY AS A MATRICULATION SUBJECT</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S.</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape</b>
Total entrants for the Std 10 examination	3 679	431	2 067	?
Total entrants for the Std 10 History exam	2 487	166	966	?
Percentage Std 10 learners who took History	67%	38%	46%	?

**TABLE 2.5**<sup>83</sup>

<b>LEARNERS IN WHITE PARALLEL-MEDIUM HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1964 WHO TOOK HISTORY AS A MATRICULATION SUBJECT</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape</b>
Total entrants for the Std 10 examination	718	1 629	520	?
Total entrants for the Std 10 History exam	222	861	222	?
Percentage Std 10 learners who took History	30%	52%	42%	?

Tables 2.3 to 2.5 present information about the total learner samples from both language groups who took history as a matriculation subject. Van Tonder noted that it was disturbing to note how far interest in History had fallen. This especially applied to learners from Afrikaans-medium high schools.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

In 1964, 43% of matriculation candidates from Afrikaans-medium high schools in the Transvaal took history; in the Orange Free State the figure was 52% and in Natal it was 24%. In English-medium high schools, the figures were 67% for the Transvaal, 38% for the Orange Free State and 46% for Natal. These are very interesting statistics indeed, especially for the Transvaal. The fact that History appeared to be a far more popular subject at English-medium secondary schools is surprising. In parallel-medium schools the following percentages apply: Transvaal 30%, Orange Free State 52% and Natal 42%.

**TABLE 2.6**<sup>84</sup>

<b>AFRIKAANS-MEDIUM HIGH SCHOOLS FOR WHITES: 1964</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S.</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape</b>
Total number of schools which entered learners for the Std 10 examination	109	7	5	?
Total number of schools which entered learners for the History examination	106	7	1	?
Total number of schools where all learners entered the History examination	7	1	0	?
Total number of schools which entered no learners in the History examination	3	0	4	?

**TABLE 2.7**<sup>85</sup>

<b>ENGLISH-MEDIUM HIGH SCHOOLS FOR WHITES: 1964</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S.</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape</b>
Total number of schools which entered learners for the Std 10 examination	52	10	36	?
Total number of schools which entered learners for the History examination	52	8	29	?
Total number of schools where all learners entered the History examination	12	1	4	?
Total number of schools which entered no learners in the History examination	0	2	7	?

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

**TABLE 2.8<sup>86</sup>**

<b>PARALLEL-MEDIUM HIGH SCHOOLS FOR WHITES: 1964</b>				
	<b>Tvl</b>	<b>O.F.S.</b>	<b>Natal</b>	<b>Cape</b>
Total number of schools which entered learners for the Std 10 examination	10	70	12	?
Total number of schools which entered learners for the History examination	10	66	12	?
Total number of schools where all learners entered the History examination	1	17	0	?
Total number of schools which entered no learners in the History examination	0	4	0	?

Tables 2.6 to 2.8 display interesting statistics for schools where all the learners took History as a matriculation subject. In 1964 there were seven Afrikaans-medium high schools in the Transvaal where all Std 10 learners took History as an examination subject (6.4 per cent of the total number of schools); there was one in the Orange Free State (14.3 per cent) and none in Natal.<sup>87</sup> It is interesting to note that 23.1 per cent of English-medium secondary schools in the Transvaal entered all matriculation candidates into the History examination. In the Transvaal in 1964 there were three Afrikaans-medium high schools who entered no Std 10 learners in the matriculation examination and there were four such schools in Natal.<sup>88</sup> No English-medium secondary school in the Transvaal failed to enter candidates into the History examination.

**TABLE 2.9<sup>89</sup>**

<b>STANDARD 10 STATISTICS FROM THE CAPE PROVINCE FOR 1964</b>	
Total number of white learners who entered the Cape Senior Certificate examination	7383
Total number of white learners who presented History as a Standard 10 subject	4165
Percentage learners who took History in Standard 10	56%
Number of candidates from Afrikaans-medium high schools	744
Number of candidates at Afrikaans-medium high schools who presented History as an examination subject	447
Percentage of Afrikaans-speaking learners who took History	60%
Number of candidates from English-medium high schools	584
Number of candidates at English-medium high schools who presented History as an examination subject	363
Percentage of English-speaking learners who took History	62%
Number of candidates at parallel and dual-medium high schools	5879

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.



Number of candidates at parallel and dual-medium high schools who presented History as an examination subject	3355
Percentage of learners at parallel and dual-medium high schools who took History	57%
There were 15 parallel and dual-medium high schools where no candidates were entered for History	
All of the Afrikaans and English high schools entered for History in the Standard 10 examination	

Table 2.9 displays statistics relating to the state of white secondary school History in the Cape Province for 1964. In the Cape Province, History proved to be popular with Afrikaans-speaking learners, 60 per cent of whom presented History as a matriculation subject. As with the Transvaal (67 per cent), History proved popular with English-speaking matriculants from the Cape province, with 62 per cent presenting it as a subject.

These very interesting statistics surprise in several ways. Between 1953 and 1964 the percentage of white learners presenting History as a matriculation subject had dropped, particularly in the Transvaal (11 per cent) and the Orange Free State (24 per cent). Even more unexpected was the dramatic difference in the numbers of Afrikaans and English-speaking learners presenting History as a matriculation subject – 43 and 67 per cent for Afrikaans and English-speaking learners in the Transvaal respectively. This statistic is supported when it is noted that in 1964, unlike Afrikaans-medium secondary schools, no English-medium secondary school failed to enter History candidates into the matriculation examination. These statistics speak to the fact that English-speaking schools (and learners) had less objection to studying History as a school subject – in fact these statistics demonstrate that by 1964 History was more popular at English-medium high schools. Van Tonder, De Klerk, A. G. Coetzee and other academics who worried about the popularity of History as a secondary school subject within the Afrikaans community had every reason to be worried. The fear that the unique identity and history of the Afrikaner people would be lost with the apparent decline in interest in secondary school History education was a very real one.

In order to understand Afrikaner perceptions of history and to understand why a sense of history was so important to Afrikaners of the twentieth century, it is vital to recognise where this significant emphasis upon history originated from. Historians have never been

agreed as to when the Afrikaner people discovered a sense of their own existence as a cultural and linguistic group that would enable them to have a real sense of their own unique identity and history. Van Jaarsveld believed that before the discovery of minerals and gold in the late nineteenth century that the national awareness of Afrikaners was dormant. 'In short, they had not become 'nationally' minded... They had few interests, political realisation, solidarity and the concept of a common cause.'<sup>90</sup> The threat to Afrikaner independence by British imperialism galvanised a sense of common nationalism among Afrikaners. Making use of Minogue's three stage identification in the development of nationalism – the first being loosely termed 'stirrings', when a nation first becomes aware of itself as a nation, seeks a cultural identity and develops legends of its own; the second stage being 'the centrepiece of nationalism', entailing a struggle for independence and the third stage being one of consolidation – Chernis asserts that the first stage of Afrikaner nationalism may be identified between 1877 and 1895. Chernis places the end of the second stage in the development of Afrikaner nationalism at either 1948 or 1961. The majority of the school History textbooks analysed by Chernis reflected legends and heroes from the second stage of Afrikaner nationalism, the 'heroic epoch' of Afrikaner history.<sup>91</sup> It is generally agreed that the Great Trek (1835–1838) and its aftermath and the South African War (1899–1902) were the two major events which shaped and unified the Afrikaner people. Chernis notes that these two events formed the two major poles or foci of the Afrikaners' view of the past.<sup>92</sup> These two events became the central themes in early Afrikaner historical writing.<sup>93</sup> De Kiewet notes that the bitter memory of the South African War became for Afrikaners a seedbed of nationalist feeling and racial passion.<sup>94</sup> Quoting van Jaarsveld, Chernis notes that this was the period of heroic deeds and resistance to the oppressive British policy toward Afrikaners. The threads of persecution and injustice are the backdrop to the Afrikaner struggle for freedom. The story is one of suffering and martyrdom which led to a view of the past 'which was fundamentally good-bad: the

<sup>90</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History* (Cape Town, 1964), pp. 33–34, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 90.

<sup>91</sup> Chernis, p. 14.

<sup>92</sup> Chernis, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> N. D. Southey, UNISA Department of History, History Honours Paper 1: The Practice of History, Tutorial letter 502/2010, p. 42.

<sup>94</sup> De Kiewet, *The Anatomy of South African Misery* (London, 1956), pp. 10–16, as quoted by Chernis, p. 18.

wicked and the innocent, the persecutors and the persecuted, injustice versus justice, imperialism versus patriotis.<sup>95</sup>

Van Jaarsveld notes that a reading of Afrikaans school History textbooks demonstrates an image of the past which was typically Afrikaans, because of the language used and the themes which were chosen. A unique nationalism had developed. This unique Afrikaans view of history with its own distinctive character was the foundation for all individual histories.<sup>96</sup> By the 1960s, history was regarded as a foundational pillar of Afrikaner survival. Van Jaarsveld notes that for Afrikaners, history proved to be the cement which bound the nation together, an arsenal of weapons which assisted in the continuance of the political struggle.<sup>97</sup> It was considered vitally important that Afrikaans young people knew and valued the history of the *Volk* [People]. History education was considered an indispensable subject at secondary school, particularly in the whites only, Afrikaans-medium secondary schools.

Religious belief, and more especially Calvinistic Protestantism provided Afrikaners with a spiritual foundation and also served as a powerful medium in uniting them. Chernis notes that from the beginning white settlers venerated the Bible. Not only was the Bible revered and held in awe but because of the isolation and educational poverty which the first white settlers had to endure, it also became their standard reading and study material. As a particular affection for the Old Testament developed, so to did the belief that Afrikaners were God's chosen people. A belief that white settlement in South Africa had not simply happened by chance developed, accompanied by the belief that the Afrikaner was called upon by God to fulfil the dual callings of evangelising and civilising the indigenous inhabitants of Africa as well as to become the leader in Africa by virtue of assisting other African states. The Trekkers perceived themselves as God's instruments – as civilisers of the indigenous inhabitants and as bearers of civilisation in Africa.<sup>98</sup> Patterson notes that

<sup>95</sup> Chernis, p. 16, quoting F. A. van Jaarsveld, *Lewende Verlede* (Pretoria, 1961), pp. 68–69.

<sup>96</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *Lewende Verlede* (Pretoria, 1961), pp. 68–69, as quoted by Chernis, p. 15.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–76, as quoted by Chernis, pp. 18–19.

<sup>98</sup> Chernis, pp. 19–20. It must be noted that the important role which Calvinism played in Afrikaner belief has been questioned. Chernis points to the work of A. du Toit, 'No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism' in *American Historical Review* 88 (1983), pp. 120–152; and 'Puritans of Africa: Afrikaner "Calvinism" and Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century South

history was viewed as 'the fulfilment of God's decreed plan for the world and that history revealed that God ... willed separate nations and peoples, and He gave to each separate nation and people its special vocation, task and gifts'.<sup>99</sup> This is, as Mulholland points out, a dangerous way to see the world. As the Afrikaner perceived that he was the divinely appointed guardian of civilisation in Africa it became 'possible to see in God's actions your own and thus justification is easy'.<sup>100</sup>

Secondary school History curricula and syllabuses were not only politically motivated attempts to justify apartheid policies but 'had a generous portion of religious motivation added to them through the dogma of Calvinism'. This religious policy, pressed into the service of the political policy of separate development was evident in apartheid-era History syllabuses.<sup>101</sup> Mulholland observes that Calvinism dignifies the status quo by interpreting history as God's manifest plan on earth. In fact, a strict Calvinist approach toward history serves to remove the need of a History student to exercise critical faculties. Different points of view become irrelevant if the philosophy of a chosen race accompanies Calvinism.<sup>102</sup>

This view reached its full potential when Dr D. F. Malan could claim that the Afrikaner was not the work of man, but the work of the Almighty. 'We have the right to be Afrikaners. Our history is the highest work of art of the Architect of Centuries'.<sup>103</sup> Moodie noted that after the centenary of the Covenant, celebrated in 1938, a sense of civil religion was accepted by most Afrikaners when 'civil religious enthusiasm seized Afrikanerdom'. Afrikaners enthusiastically embraced Christian-National 'myth and ritual'. This entailed the embracing of heroes, martyrs and emotive symbols. Afrikaners felt united with a sense of unique destiny and identity.<sup>104</sup> Mulholland notes that national history came to occupy a significant

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Africa', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (1985), pp. 209–240.

<sup>99</sup> S. Patterson, *The Last Trek* (London, 1957), p. 225, as quoted by Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol. I and II' (M.Ed dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981), p. 242.

<sup>100</sup> Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching', p. 262.

<sup>101</sup> D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009), p. 31.

<sup>102</sup> Mulholland, pp. 325–326.

<sup>103</sup> B. Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (Harmondsworth, 1964), p. 7, as quoted by Mulholland, p. 268.

<sup>104</sup> T. D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom. Power, Apartheid and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 11–27, as quoted by Chernis, p. 22.

place in the thinking of those who wielded political power. The concept of divine election and of a common purpose with the Voortrekkers was closely tied to a consciousness of self acquired through national awareness. This awareness originated in history as all national sensibilities do, but in the case of the Afrikaner it originated in the history of strife, wars with the tribes in the interior and British attempts at annexation and denationalisation. This served to harden Afrikaner resolve. Success, against what must have seemed like incredible odds, provided Afrikaners with a sense of mission and the feeling that God's Hand was protecting his chosen people. History as a consequence is not simply a bare chronicle of events, but becomes the revelation of God's Will.<sup>105</sup>

Writing in 1983 J. M. du Preez analysed 53 textbooks used in black and white Afrikaans and English schools. Du Preez identified a series of Afrikaner master symbols that lay at the core of the Afrikaner identity during the apartheid era. According to Chernis, master symbols are the dominant symbols which both individuals and the wider community strongly identify with.<sup>106</sup> Careful selection and use of master symbols are powerful weapons in the process of manipulation.<sup>107</sup> Since they include subjects such as the nation, race, destiny and the Supreme Being, the reactions which master symbols provoke from people can be strongly emotional.<sup>108</sup> The master symbols identified by the Du Preez study were:

- Whites are superior, while blacks are inferior.
- Legal authority is not questioned.
- The Afrikaner has a privileged relationship with God.
- South Africa rightfully belongs to the Afrikaner.
- The Afrikaner is a Boer [farmer] nation.
- South Africa and the Afrikaner are isolated.
- The Afrikaner is militarily innovative and resourceful.
- The Afrikaner has always felt threatened.
- World opinion of South Africa is important.
- South Africa is a leader in Africa.
- The Afrikaner has a God-given task to fulfil in Africa.

<sup>105</sup> Mulholland, p. 261.

<sup>106</sup> Chernis, p. 54.

<sup>107</sup> J. M. du Preez, *Africana Afrikaner: Meestesimbole in Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolhandboeke* (Alberton, 1983), pp. 60–61, as quoted by Chernis, p. 56.

<sup>108</sup> Chernis, pp. 54–55.

- South Africa is an afflicted country.<sup>109</sup>

Referring to the information contained in school textbooks, Engelbrecht notes that master symbols 'determine the sociocultural generalisations of a society to the extent that they become part of society's collective consciousness, that is, deep rooted perspectives according to which the world is interpreted'.<sup>110</sup> Using master symbols places one in a position to change the perceptions of people toward other people as master symbols are richly endowed with stereotypes 'which dramatically strengthen socio-cultural values; they are also sometimes described as myths'.<sup>111</sup> Du Preez noted that the deep seated points of view which master symbols entail become so closely a part of a person that he will no longer even be consciously aware of them. They become the spectacles through which the individual perceives the world.<sup>112</sup> Perceptions rapidly become irrefutable facts and become regarded as sound opinion.<sup>113</sup> These master symbols were, for Engelbrecht, deeply entrenched in apartheid-era South African education for nearly 40 years. Their reproduction in schools and the textbooks they employed were, according to Apple a 'reproductive force in an unequal society'.<sup>114</sup>

One of the results of a community being influenced by the stereotypes and generalisations inherent in master symbols is the development of hostile and negative attitudes and images of those who are perceived to be outside the dominant group, the development of 'an implicit other'.<sup>115</sup> These master symbols encouraged the teaching of History at schools in a manner which justified Afrikaner domination and the Afrikaner struggle for self-determination. The core of the South African History curriculum was bound up with this

<sup>109</sup> Du Preez, *Africana Afrikaner*, p.70, as cited by A. Engelbrecht, 'Textbooks in South Africa from Apartheid to Post-apartheid: Ideological Change Revealed by Racial Stereotyping', in *Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for using Textbooks and Curricula*, ed. E Roberts-Schweitzer in consultation with V. Greaney and K. Duer (Washington D. C., 2006), pages unnumbered.

<sup>110</sup> A. Engelbrecht, 'Textbooks in South Africa from apartheid to post-apartheid: ideological change revealed by racial stereotyping', in *Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for using Textbooks and Curricula*, ed., E. Roberts-Schweitzer, in consultation with V. Greaney, and K. Duer, (Washington D. C., 2006), quoting the works of du Preez, Chernis and S. Polakow-Suransky, 'Historical Amnesia? The Politics of Textbooks in Post-apartheid South Africa'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA', 2002, pages unnumbered.

<sup>111</sup> Chernis, p. 55.

<sup>112</sup> Du Preez, pp. 6–8, quoted by Chernis, p. 55.

<sup>113</sup> Chernis, pp. 55–56.

<sup>114</sup> M. W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (New York, 1990), p. 31, as quoted by Engelbrecht.

<sup>115</sup> Engelbrecht, citing Chernis generally.

'heroic struggle for survival'.<sup>116</sup> Kallaway believes that apartheid-era History teaching, instead of being deliberate distortion, was more a case of the taking for granted and subsequent enforcement of a particular perspective.<sup>117</sup>

It must be noted that the development of master symbols is not something limited to Afrikanerdom. Master symbols may develop within any culture. The master symbols British imperialists believed in, for example, included the ideas that British rule was beneficial, that Britain had a calling to conquer and improve the lives of other peoples, that British soldiers were very brave and disciplined and that British settlers were industrious.<sup>118</sup> Although master symbols are not unique to Afrikanerdom, they do help one to understand the context in which white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans developed perceptions toward school History in particular and toward life in general during the apartheid era.

The perceptions of self and the place of their troubled and challenging history which had developed within Afrikaner culture were formalised with the adoption of the policy of CNE by the National Party government and apartheid-era education departments. Lowry notes that since History came to be used at school level as an apology for the apartheid system and a perpetuation of an Afrikaner Nationalist interpretation of history, the subject was perceived as essential to the system of Christian National Education and Bantu Education.<sup>119</sup> Mulholland notes that one of the declared aims of the 'intensely nationalistic', 'all Afrikaner government' which came to power in 1948 was the separation of the races<sup>120</sup> and language groups, viewed as essential to the maintenance of the people.<sup>121</sup> In order to meet this aim, it was necessary to establish separate educational institutions. This became one of the cornerstones of National Party policy.

<sup>116</sup> Engelbrecht, pages unnumbered.

<sup>117</sup> Engelbrecht, quoting P. Kallaway, in History Education Group, *History Matters: Debates about a New History Curriculum for South Africa* (Cape Town, 1993), pages unnumbered.

<sup>118</sup> Chernis, p. 57.

<sup>119</sup> S. Lowry, 'History Syllabi for South Africa – A Reappraisal'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996, conference papers, p. 5.

<sup>120</sup> Mulholland, p. 289.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

in 1948, the same year as the National Party election victory, the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church appealed to the three main Afrikaans church denominations to formulate a joint policy on education. In the same year the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies (FAK), a powerful body in Afrikaans circles, founded the Institute of Christian National Education (ICNE) and published a document which sets out its theory and policy.<sup>122</sup> The policy statement of the ICNE in 1948 includes reference to History having value in a new curriculum intended for South African schools:

We believe that history must be taught in the light of the Divine revelation and must be seen as the fulfilment of God's plan for the world and man ... We believe that youth can faithfully take over the task and mission of the older generation ... only if the youth, in the teaching of history, obtains a true vision of the origin of the nation and of the nation's cultural heritage ... we believe that ... the national history of the people is the great means of cultivation of love of one's own.<sup>123</sup>

To promote the policy of CNE, an Interchurch Commission was founded in 1953. This commission presented several memoranda to the Government in the period 1954 to 1962 and emphasised the need for a national system of education and the ending of the divided control of education.<sup>124</sup>

Nel, writing in 1949 noted that the two population groups – namely white English and Afrikaans-speakers – should have their own schools, based on Christian and National education, so as to foster a love for their 'shared fatherland and national culture'.<sup>125</sup> 'National' education, in the form of History education, meant the education had to be aligned to the national life of the *Volk*.<sup>126</sup> Mulholland notes that the primary aim of CNE was to protect the Afrikaans child by emphasising 'his ideas, language, political persuasion [and]

<sup>122</sup> A. L. Behr, *Education in South Africa: Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652–1988* (Cape Town and Pretoria, 1988), p. 98, quoting R. J. Raath, ed., *'n Volk Besin oor sy Opvoeding en Onderwys* (Pretoria, 1970).

<sup>123</sup> Mazabow, pp. 94–95, quoting A. N. Boyce, 'The Teaching of History in South African Schools with Special Reference to Methods of Evaluation and Syllabuses' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1966), pp. 46–47. A fuller representation of this quote from the 1948 Policy Statement of the 'Instituut vir Christelik-Nasionale Onderwys', is found in Chernis, p. 26.

<sup>124</sup> Behr, *Education in South Africa*, p. 98, citing Raath, ed., *'n Volk Besin oor sy Opvoeding en Onderwys*.

<sup>125</sup> Nel, p. 33.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.



race attitudes'.<sup>127</sup> 'National' was perceived as a love for one's particular culture and heritage. The school is at the centre of national life, within which a broad national character was to be imprinted.<sup>128</sup>

CNE civic philosophy was generously supported by religious dogma. Coetzee noted that the CNE 'system demanded from the beginning that all the subjects should ... serve religious instruction, and that the national spirit be the rightful foundations for the education system'.<sup>129</sup> God had ordained that an Afrikaner nation should exist with its own land, language and religion based on orthodox Protestantism wherein education should make sure that each individual is moulded in God's image.<sup>130</sup> Afrikaner nationalist history arose out of a desire to have a 'fatherland history' written from an Afrikaner point of view. History was ascribed a value second to the Bible. Christianity became one of the foundations of the Afrikaner's '*geskiedenisbeeld*' [historical image]. This version of their history was informed by an interpretation of the '*uitverkore volk*' [chosen people] as based on the Old Testament.<sup>131</sup> The concept of Christian Nationalism had for Mulholland come to include 'a sense of Afrikaner destiny as caretakers in the sub-continent, with a mission to uphold Christianity and Western Civilisation, as interpreted in fundamentalist Calvinism'.<sup>132</sup> This attitude is made clear by Nel who claimed that:

Nations and peoples are in His hand and they are simply instruments to carry out the will of God. For this reason Christian national ideas should be conveyed through History education. We in South Africa must see God's hand in history. We must believe that God had a particular aim when placing our people in South Africa.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Mulholland, p. 247.

<sup>128</sup> Behr, pp. 98–99.

<sup>129</sup> Mazabow, p. 91, quoting J. Coetzee, 'Christian National Education in South Africa' in *Year Book of Education, 1957*, p. 145.

<sup>130</sup> Behr, p. 98.

<sup>131</sup> Bam, p. 47.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247–248.

<sup>133</sup> Nel, p. 32.

'Nasies en volke is in Sy hand en hulle is maar net instrumente om die wil van God uit te voer. Om hierdie rede moet die Christelike nasionale gedagte deur ons geskiedenis-ondererrig uitgedra word. Ons in Suid-Afrika moet in die geskiedenis Gods hand sien. Ons moet glo dat God met die volksplanting in Suid-Afrika 'n besondere doel gehad het'.

History could teach about God's guidance.<sup>134</sup> History education was perceived by some to adopt an almost mystical role: 'History will clarify many of the complicated relationships and will shed light where there previously was darkness'.<sup>135</sup> History was seen to 'pass on to the younger generation the sacred flame from previous ages'.<sup>136</sup>

Nel, like so many other Afrikaner academics of his time felt that the value of History education could not be separated from the philosophy of CNE. The history of the people was, for Nel, an anchor which gave direction to the development of the people [*Volk*] and provided stability during the storms and troubles which the people had to endure. Should the anchors be broken, the people would drift aimlessly, like a cork in water.<sup>137</sup> Nel believed that 'in a country like South Africa with three large population groups, *'Boer, Brit en Bantoe'* it was utterly necessary that history had to be seen in its 'correct' perspective.<sup>138</sup> Quoting from Keyter, Nel noted that History education ought not to simply provide knowledge but provide the necessary unity and continuity in the life-processes of the *volk*.<sup>139</sup>

Nel noted that History could teach valuable life lessons. It could teach learners to treasure their heritage. 'Let us, as the Voortrekkers learnt, gather in a foursquare laager to protect our heritage in the face of threatening danger. Only then can we hope to become a people *volk*.'<sup>140</sup> History should stir a healthy love of the fatherland.<sup>141</sup> History is a reliable guide and teacher.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Nel, p. 31, quoting Bingle and Coetzee, *Beginsels en metodes van die Middelbare Onderwys* (Pretoria, 1946), p. 194.

History teaches us 'om die leiding van God met land en volkop te merk'.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

'Die geskiedenis sal baie van die ingewikkelde verhoudings vir ons verklaar en daar sal lig kom waar daar vroeër duisternis was'.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21, quoting M. W. Keatinge, *Studies in the Teaching of History* (London, 1910), p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

'Die geskiedenis van 'n volk ... is die anker wat die volksgebou orent en staande hou temidde van al die woelinge en skommeling, wat die volk moet deurmaak. Die verbreking van die ankers sal die volk laat rondobber soos 'n prop op water...'

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

'In 'n land soos Suid-Afrika met die drie groot bevolkingsgroepe, Boer, Brit en Bantoe, is dit gebrekend noodsaaklik dat geskiedenis in sy regte perspektief gesien moet word'.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20, quoting J. de W. Keyter, *Opvoeding en Onderwys* (Cape Town, 1936), p. 206.

'Geskiedenis bring verder nie net kennis on kennis ontwil nie, 'maar dit bring ook die noodsaaklike eenheid en kontinuïteit in die lewensproses van die volk!'

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13, quoting D. F. Malherbe *Die Mens en sy Kuns*, 'n Huldingswerk by geleentheid van Prof. D. F. Malherbe se sestigste verjaarsdag. Saamgestel deur oud-student van die U. K. O. V. S. onder leiding van Dr. B. Kok. No date provided, p. 206. 'Laat ons, soos die Voortrekkers geleer het, in die vierkant laer

Some of the advantages of taking History which were emphasised by Nel, such as 'History works fruitfully in relation to the morale of the people. A *volk* gets its power, inspiration and persistence from its past'<sup>143</sup> relate to the concept of CNE. Bam, quoting the 1948 CNE Policy Document noted that the goal of building 'separate nations' and preserving 'Afrikaner Nationalist identity' required that special attention be given to teaching History. CNE policy highlighted the importance of teaching '*moedertaal*' (mother language) and '*volksgeskiedenis*' (peoples' history) as the main method of fostering 'tribal identities'. The history of the fatherland is the main medium to cultivate love for one's own.<sup>144</sup> National history was perceived by advocates of CNE to promote national understanding. Respect and love for the national cultural heritage is fostered, the togetherness of the nation is strengthened and future great deeds are inspired by the great deeds of the past.<sup>145</sup> Van Tonder, in noting that history, religious instruction and language were the three pillars upon which Afrikanerdom was built, noted that History allowed young people to take stock of their origins, existence and survival of the nation and encouraged a love of fatherland and a sense of calling.<sup>146</sup>

As was the case with the development of Afrikaner nationalism and the historical outlook which developed with it, it must be noted that the perceptions inherent within a CNE world view were not exclusive to Afrikanerdom. Interestingly, most of the sources which Nel used to promote his pro-Afrikaner CNE view of secondary school History education were drawn from the work of English educationalists/writers such as Welton,<sup>147</sup> Rowse<sup>148</sup> and Keatinge<sup>149</sup> whose views on the purpose of History education were as nationalist and racially exclusive as anything produced by later CNE Afrikaner writers. Mulholland has noted

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trek om ons erfenis te beskerm as die gevare dreig. Dan eers kan ons hoop om 'n volk te wees'.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13. 'Vaderslandliefde'.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

'Die geskiedenis werk bevrugterend in op die volksgevoel. 'n Volk put sy krag, inspirasie, durf en moed uit sy verlede'.

<sup>144</sup> Bam, p. 21, quoting from the CNE Policy Document, 1948, pp. 8–15. 'Die vaderlandse geskiedenis van die nasie is die groot middel om liefde vir die eie te kweek'.

<sup>145</sup> Chernis, p. 27, quoting Greyling, *Christelike en Nasionale Onderwys Deel I*. Die Tweede Reeks, No. VIII., Bloemfontein, p. 145.

<sup>146</sup> Chernis, p. 27, quoting J. J. van Tonder, 'Geskiedenis Staar by die Wegwaaiende', p. 4.

<sup>147</sup> Welton, *Principles and Methods of Teaching* (London, 1909).

<sup>148</sup> Rouse, *The Use of History* (London, 1946).

<sup>149</sup> Keatinge, *Studies in the Teaching of History* (London, 1910).

that the jingoistic views of British educationalists and the British educational administration in South Africa particularly during the period following the South African War (1899–1902) were in reality little different from their rival CNE counterparts.<sup>150</sup>

CNE attained its greatest influence during the 1960s. This influence was embodied by two Acts of Parliament passed during this decade – the *National Advisory Education Council Act*, Act No. 86, of 1962 and the *The National Education Policy Act*, Act No. 39 of 1967. These Acts were to substantially influence the History taught at South African secondary schools. The *National Advisory Education Council Act*, Act No. 86, of 1962 established an advisory council whose main task was to determine ‘the broad fundamental principles of sound education for the country as a whole’.<sup>151</sup> The opposing perceptions of some parliamentarians toward CNE are outlined by Mulholland as she describes the responses of members of a select committee considering the 1961 introduction of the Bill which aimed to set up a National Education Advisory Council. While some members recommended avoiding a system of education which would stereotype individuals into a set mould and rejected the idea of a political base for education, the perceptions of others were different. Mulholland notes that one exponent of CNE made the point that the Afrikaner had been waging a fierce political struggle since 1910 for his national identity and that education should therefore be revised to conform with the peoples’ aspirations.<sup>152</sup> Such a view, holds Mulholland, unintentionally reveals that the people this speaker represented would be comfortable in seeing education used for political and sectional interests.<sup>153</sup> The debate about the Bill, continues Mulholland, revealed that contradictory theories of man were opposing each other. A call for individualism which afforded learners the ability of making independent judgements was opposed by an authoritarian approach which in reality decided in advance what learners’ judgements ought to be.<sup>154</sup> The Act with modifications was passed in 1962 and a Council was established which was to be largely advisory.

<sup>150</sup> Mulholland, pp. 263–264.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253, quoting the National Advisory Education Council Act, Act No. 86, of 1962, 7 (2).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252, quoting the *Report of the Select Committee*, Chairman – D. Mostert, Minutes, 14 February 1962, Government Printer, p. 127.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

*The National Education Policy Act*, No. 39 of 1967 is regarded as the pinnacle of CNE legislation. Chernis notes that this Act established the guiding principles for white education. The Act was hailed by apartheid politicians as having attained a milestone in the history of education in South Africa. The Act made sure that white education was equal in all provinces and it established a framework of principles to regulate white education.<sup>155</sup> The 1967 Act is widely held to be the triumphant result of the ongoing efforts of the Potchefstroom academics who had proclaimed CNE to be the best educational system for the Afrikaans community.<sup>156</sup> Dr. Connie Mulder, member of parliament for Randfontein at the time, noted during the debate about the Act that all should accept ‘that we have been planted here, as a nation with a task and calling in Africa’, and must thus support a Christian National point of view.<sup>157</sup> For Mulholland, this is an admission that the Calvinistic-nationalist viewpoint of the Afrikaner was to be transmitted in schools.<sup>158</sup> The response of Mr. J. C. B. Schoeman, a government member, encapsulates the position of the National Party about the 1967 Act – and clearly demonstrates the link between CNE and history:

Do those honourable members and their party prefer vague, colourless and neutral attitudes with regard to religion which is advocated by the Liberalists and in which Christian, Jew and Mohamedan, and heathen may take part ... Our history, our culture, our national character and our idealism and our awareness of our calling are inseparably part of our Christian faith. Would there have been any white nation whatsoever in this country if it had not been for the fact that our forefathers trekked into the interior with the Bible in the wagon-box and our unshakable faith? Wherever a strong national faith arises, educational means are utilised as potent institutions for the survival of a nation’s ideals, culture and traditions.<sup>159</sup>

CNE held significant implications for secondary school History teaching. The various Education Acts which were founded upon CNE policy propounded ideas such as God having

<sup>155</sup> Chernis, p. 161.

<sup>156</sup> Mulholland, p. 254.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255, quoting *House of Assembly Debates*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 3<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, Wed. 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1967, Dr. C. Mulder, Randfontein, 1719–1723.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256, quoting *House of Assembly Debates*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 3<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, Wed. 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1967 Mr. J. C. B. Schoeman 1908.

willed separate nations and peoples; the unique identity [*eiesoortigheid*] of nations; that every nation is different and that the education of black people ought to be firmly grounded in white philosophy.<sup>160</sup> If one adds the goal of expanding every learner's knowledge of the fatherland,<sup>161</sup> it is easy to see how History education was regarded as so important in the transmission of CNE values. Chernis notes that white education had a specifically political bias and that such an education could never be based on neutral or value-free principles.<sup>162</sup>

The extent to which CNE captured the allegiance of South Africans in general and white Afrikaners in particular may be questioned. Chernis notes that although the system unquestionably influenced the country's education after 1948, there is much disagreement over the extent of its influence.<sup>163</sup> Mulholland reflects the findings of a Transvaal Education Department (TED) commission on secondary school education which recommended that the focus of education should be upon the child and not the subject, which for Mulholland implied a more fluid viewpoint than that espoused by CNE.<sup>164</sup> Another Afrikaans educationalist found CNE to be intolerant and unchristian, calling it 'a return to the Middle Ages'.<sup>165</sup> Responses I received in the 2012 educators' questionnaire indicate a rather mixed experience of CNE principles by respondents while at secondary school. The ideals of CNE appeared to be rather lost for many of the respondents who had taken History as a school subject at secondary school before 1994. Not all responses to the question which probed how History education was received by their community as a whole reflected the patriotic fervour which the architects of CNE would have hoped for:

We did not talk about history.<sup>166</sup>

Waste of time, not job related.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Bam, p. 21, adapted from Articles 14 and 15 of the CNE document.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20, citing E. G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa. Volume 2* (Johannesburg, 1977), pp. 147–148.

<sup>162</sup> Chernis, p. 165.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>164</sup> Mulholland, p. 250, quoting the Transvaal Education Department (TED) Commission on Differentiated Secondary Education, Chairperson Dr. A. H. du P. van Wyk, 1955.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250, quoting Prof. M. C. Botha, *Die Suidersstem*, 'A 20<sup>th</sup> Century Inquisition', 15/2/1949.

<sup>166</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1. [Afrikaans; 1978–1982; Hoërskool F. H. Odendaal]

<sup>167</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8. [Afrikaans; 1977–1981; Hoërskool Amajuba]

Viewed history as a “nice to have” subject, but with no real value.<sup>168</sup>

While these responses would not have pleased the architects of CNE, I received other responses which would have made the proponents of CNE proud:

To the Afrikaans community, it was very, very important, as they believe in the fact that if you “do not have and know your past you do not have a future”.<sup>169</sup>

At that time it was important because it helped build national pride, etc. Pretty much the whites against ‘die swart gevaar’ and ‘die rooi gevaar’. I can recall the indoctrination we were subjected to at veld school.<sup>170</sup>

The less than enthusiastic perceptions recorded above about the impact of secondary school History education would not have surprised apartheid-era Afrikaans academics who were aware that the state of History education within Afrikaans-medium secondary schools was not as healthy as the architects of CNE would have hoped for. As early as 1949 Nel expressed his concern with the state of History education among Afrikaans youth.<sup>171</sup> Nel believed that History was indeed a subject which could teach learners valuable life lessons but that it was being threatened by poor teaching. He worried that learners were losing interest in taking History, largely due to pragmatic career-related issues.

Writing in 1967 Willem De Klerk passionately pleaded the case that the Afrikaner people were in danger of forgetting their history.<sup>172</sup> *Volksgeskiedenis* [peoples’ history] as a living heritage was, according to De Klerk, in a weak state. Referring to one of the many addresses given by Dr J. J. van Tonder,<sup>173</sup> de Klerk noted that [Afrikaans-speaking] learners in secondary schools had a ‘critical deficiency when discerning causal tendencies and trends in

<sup>168</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 17. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

<sup>169</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 14. [Afrikaans; 1961–1965; Eunice High School]

<sup>170</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 37. [English; 1979–1983; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>171</sup> Nel, ‘Gesiedenis in die Middelbare Skool’.

<sup>172</sup> W.A. de Klerk., ‘Ons Volksgeskiedenis as Lewende Erfenis’, *Historia*, Vol.12 Issue 4 Dec 1967, pp. 242–249. Presentation to the *Historiese Genootskap van Suid-Afrika*, Kaaplandse Afdeling te Stellenbosch, November 1966.

<sup>173</sup> J. J. van Tonder, ‘History in our Schools’, address to the Congress of the *Natal Onderwyserunie*, 4 October 1966.

history and in international relations'.<sup>174</sup> Referring to the decline in the number of Afrikaans-speaking matriculants presenting History as a Standard 10 subject, De Klerk expressed his surprise since the previous decade had witnessed more public celebrations [of Afrikanerdom] than had ever before been the case. Even English-speaking learners seemed to be taking more interest in History at secondary school. Instead of encouraging an interest in history, the opposite had, to De Klerk's puzzlement, seemed to happen.<sup>175</sup> The historical awareness of Afrikaner youth, was, for De Klerk, on the decline.<sup>176</sup>

As possible reasons for this decline in historical interest among Afrikaans-speaking young people, De Klerk pointed to media such as films, books and newspapers which, in his view, were cheapening factual history and providing the public with a distorted view of history. He noted that Afrikaans historical figures were depicted as absurd, something which would have dismayed Afrikaans historical icons such as 'Oom Paul' and Christiaan de Wet.<sup>177</sup> The Slagtersnek historical site, 'saturated with history' was not publicised on the roadside. De Klerk refers poetically to the 'rocks alongside the roadside ... wanting to speak about what happened! ... [as] the rocks around ten thousand historical sites in South Africa speak' – but there 'is nothing to indicate that I should stop to listen to them for a moment.' De Klerk bemoans the fact that as a rule, historical sites in South Africa, from the Drakenstein Valley to Paarl are not maintained or promoted.<sup>178</sup> The attitude of Afrikaners is what for De Klerk needed to change. De Klerk called for history to be presented at schools in a real and concrete way rather than as an intellectual abstraction which could not appeal to learners' emotions.<sup>179</sup> De Klerk was bemoaning what he perceived to be a lack of interest on the part of Afrikaans people in popular history – and more specifically their own popular history. This mindset could threaten the very long term existence of Afrikaner culture.

What De Klerk was describing were the changing perceptions which were held by Afrikaners toward life in general and toward History education in particular. Grundlingh noted that as early as the 1950s and 1960s, 'a confluence of political and economic developments saw to

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246–247.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 248–249.



it that public interest in history gradually waned'. The ideal of establishing a Republic had been achieved by 1961 and the dramatic economic boom of the 1960s and resultant prosperity it engendered made 'an immediate interest in the past less compelling. An increasingly confident Afrikanerdom could afford to be less dependent on the past'.<sup>180</sup> Rapid urbanisation also served to weaken the old Afrikaner Republican values which did not thrive in a new 'urbanised materialistic environment'.<sup>181</sup> By the 1970s, as represented by the works of Hermann Giliomee and other enlightened Afrikaans academics, Afrikaner historical writing had become more liberal although Bam and Visser stress that History teaching 'continued to be actuated, not by the desire to impose harmony upon the different groups in society, but through the stressing of differences, separation, and the superiority of one group over the others'.<sup>182</sup> This dichotomy between apartheid-era History school teaching and the realities of a changing society in South Africa may account for the clear difference in the perceptions of the value of History education between the official proponents of CNE and many of the secondary school educators I surveyed who were the recipients of it.

Mazabow notes that by 1994 the traditional Afrikaner perception of history had become irrelevant because of factors which included decolonisation in Africa; liberal resistance; world pressure and the advent of a new liberal radical historiography.<sup>183</sup> Ehlers, in discussing the role of the celebrating of the Battle of Blood/Ncome River in the historical consciousness of Afrikaners, notes that by 1998 the traditional interpretation of this landmark event had lost its grip on the Afrikaner psyche and notes that the Afrikaner people experienced a 'mythology vacuum' after 1994.<sup>184</sup> My research indicated that Afrikaans-speaking adults who had received their secondary school education between the 1960s and the early 1990s did not universally accept the traditional Afrikaner view of history as propounded by the dogma of CNE and that Afrikaans-speaking young people who are

<sup>180</sup> A. M. Grundlingh, 'Politics, Principles and Problems of a Profession: Afrikaner Historians and their Discipline, c.1920 – c.1965', *Perspectives in Education*, 12, 1 (1990), p. 13.

<sup>181</sup> Mazabow, p. 97, quoting Grundlingh, p. 25.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96, quoting J. Bam and P. Visser, *A New History for a New South Africa* (Cape Town, 1996), pp. 15–22.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>184</sup> A. Ehlers, 'Apartheid Mythology and Symbolism. Desegregated and Reinvented in the Service of Nation Building in South Africa: The Covenant and the Battle of Blood River/Ncome', *Revue Alizes* No. 24 (2003), p. 21.

presently at secondary school no longer subscribe to, or are even aware of the world view promoted by CNE.

Mazabow notes that unlike white Afrikaners, there were no strong historical bonds which served to draw white English-speaking South Africans together. It was when South Africa became a Republic in 1961 that English speakers attained a stronger degree of self-awareness. Van Jaarsveld noted that this had happened as a result of a feeling among the South African English community that they had been severed from Britain, were a clear minority within an Afrikaner republic and believed 'that their identity might well be at hazard'.<sup>185</sup> As a new interest in the activities of the 1820 settlers developed among the South African English-speaking community a new feeling of national consciousness emerged.<sup>186</sup> The perceptions of English-speaking educators and learners toward the secondary school History education they received during and beyond the apartheid era is examined in subsequent chapters of this thesis. What is clear is that many of the traditional assumptions which hold that the perceptions of white English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans were vastly different need to be questioned. The statistics noted earlier in this chapter which illustrate that secondary school History education was at times more popular among English than Afrikaans-speaking learners may indicate that Paton's assertion that '... To them history means something quite different from what it means to the Afrikaner... they do not have the urge – which for the Afrikaner seems to be an historical necessity – to find an identity...' may be questioned.<sup>187</sup> Even if a sense of historical consciousness and national culture were not as strong among the white English-speaking community as was the case with their Afrikaans counterparts, the perceptions which most English-speakers held toward History education at secondary school during the apartheid era were not significantly different to those of the Afrikaans community.

During the apartheid era, History was a more popular subject at traditionally black than at traditionally white secondary schools. Kloppers-Lourens notes that by 1995, 14.48 per cent of Asian matriculants and 23.57 per cent of whites took History while 49.63 per cent of

<sup>185</sup> Mazabow, p. 89, quoting F. A. van Jaarsveld, 'Historiography', in *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa. Volume 5* (Elsie River, 1972), p. 541.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89, quoting A. Paton, *Save the Beloved Country* (Melville, 1987), p. 118.

coloured matriculants and 41.06 per cent of black matriculants took the subject – the third most popular subject choice among the coloured and black groups.<sup>188</sup> Chernis tabulated the number of South African secondary school learners taking History during the mid-1980s:

**TABLE 2.10**<sup>189</sup>

STANDARD 10 SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY TAKERS 1986 -1988					
	Blacks	Indians	Coloureds	Whites	Whites as % of Total
1986	37 651	2 438	7 831	26 163	33.9%
1987	46 419	2 682	8 892	27 887	32.5 %
1988	56 814	3 269	10 565	30 492	30.1%

Chernis notes that by 1988, 51. 5% of Standard 8 learners at traditionally black secondary schools included History in their subject combination for the Senior Certificate compared to only 26% of learners at traditionally white secondary schools in the same standard. The percentage of white Standard 10 learners taking History appeared to be holding steady at around 26%, while that of Indians had increased from 21% in 1986 to 24% in 1988, and that of coloureds from 45% to 48% during the same period.<sup>190</sup> Chernis believed that this increase reflected a growing historical consciousness in these communities, which may have arisen from an increased political awareness. In 1971 there were only 2 735 blacks in Standard 10 taking History (Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 1971: 115, 117); in 1988 there were 56 814 *excluding* TBVC candidates.<sup>191</sup> Chernis notes that by 1988 there were 374 624 blacks in Standard 5, 323 925 in Standard 6 and 257 297 in Standard 7, almost one million learners, who all took History, which (as was the case with other population groups) was a compulsory subject in the junior secondary phase.<sup>192</sup>

Black secondary school History education was dominated by the impact of Bantu Education which in turn was influenced by the dogma of CNE. In order to understand the negative perceptions which most black South Africans held toward the secondary school History

<sup>188</sup> Kloppers-Lourens, 'Bemark Geskiedenis Rondom 'n "Leidmotiv"', conference papers, p. 4.

<sup>189</sup> Chernis, p. 296. My own calculation reveals that 33.9 per cent (row one of the table) should be 35.3 per cent.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296, quoting SANOP Information Service: Department of National Information.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296, quoting Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 1988, pp. 322.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296, quoting Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 1988, pp. 322.

education offered to them during the apartheid era it is necessary to examine Bantu Education which so thoroughly impacted upon every aspect of education performed at black secondary schools of the time. The positive perceptions of the National Party government toward Bantu Education in general and History education in particular were in stark contrast to the largely negative perceptions held by black South Africans.

The Eiselen Commission begins the story of black school education in apartheid South Africa. The establishment and subsequent report of this Commission are essential in understanding later Afrikaner nationalist educational history as well as the history of black education in South Africa until 1994. The Commission was established in 1949, soon after the National Party election victory and its findings were reflected in several subsequent major pieces of legislation, the most important for black education being the Bantu Education Act, no. 47 of 1953. The ideology of CNE provided the foundation for the Commission's recommendations. CNE principles underpinned the Bantu Education Act of 1953. In line with the CNE principle of preventing the mixture of different languages and cultures, the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction throughout primary and secondary schools was advocated. Bantu Education was designed to prepare black people for their designated station in life which was one of inferiority compared to that of whites. Black people, regarded as being in a condition of 'cultural infancy' needed to be guided by 'senior white trustees'. This process had to be organised and administered by white people as guardians. The Commission called for the teaching of religion at schools, notably Calvinism. Civics, Geography and History were subjects which should be taught in accordance with Calvinistic tenets.<sup>193</sup>

The Bantu Education Act gave expression to the main ideas of the Eiselen Commission's report. The Act made continued missionary education difficult. According to the Commission, missionary education had been poorly run and a system of black education which was better coordinated was called for. Control of black education which had been in the hands of the missionaries and provincial education departments was now transferred to

<sup>193</sup> J. Seroto, 'The Impact of South African Legislation (1948–2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Perspective', (D. Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2004), pp. 105–107, as quoted by Black, p. 25.

the central government through the Native Affairs Department (NAD). Every black school would in future have to be registered with the government, any such registration being at the pleasure of the Minister. By 1959, virtually all black schools, apart from some 700 Catholic schools had been brought under the control of the NAD.<sup>194</sup> While it could be argued that black education needed to be coordinated, this effectively meant that the ideology behind schooling could now be used to support other policies of the government.

Dr H. F. Verwoerd, at that time was Minister of Native Affairs, left little doubt about the philosophy which was to be the foundation of Bantu Education and that this education was to be the handmaiden of other apartheid policies in his famous 1953 and 1954 speeches:

Racial relations cannot improve if the wrong type of education is given to Natives. They cannot improve if the results of Native education is the creation of frustrated people who, as a result of education they have received, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled immediately, when it creates people who are trained for professions not open for them ... Therefore good racial relations are spoilt when the correct education is not given. Above all good racial relations cannot exist when the education is given under the control of people who create wrong expectations on the part of the Native himself, if such people believe in a policy of equality ... It is therefore necessary that education should be controlled in such a way that it should be in accord with the policy of the state.<sup>195</sup>

My department's policy is that education should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society ... The Bantu must be guided to serve his community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community, however, all doors are open...<sup>196</sup>

While the perceived aim of missionary education was to evangelise black people, there is no doubt that the government's educational aim was to educate and prepare black people for a

<sup>194</sup> Ndlovu, 'Perceptions of History', p. 11, as quoted by Black, p. 25.

<sup>195</sup> Union of South Africa. *House of Assembly Debates*, Volume 83, Column 3576, September 1953, as quoted by Black, p. 26.

<sup>196</sup> Union of South Africa. *Senate Debates*, Volume II, Columns 2618–2619, 1954, as quoted by Black, p. 26.

subordinate status in society and as far as possible to keep them located in rural areas. Seroto outlines the aims of Bantu Education as follows: maintenance of white domination – politically and economically; subordination of black people by whites; separate development by preserving separate identities of different racial groups; inequalities among different racial groups by perpetuating differentiated educational systems; preservation of separate identities with black people located to rural areas and education being diverted towards the needs of rural population and prescribed by differentiated and discriminatory legislation.<sup>197</sup> The Department of Native Affairs was responsible for Bantu Education between 1954 and 1958. Syllabuses which conformed to the aims of Bantu Education had to be devised for all subjects and were implemented by 1956. In 1958, a separate Department of Bantu Education was established. When the National Education Policy Bill was passed in 1967, black secondary schools were well and truly separate from white education. In fact, during the 1960s and early 1970s, the desire for complete racial separation was at its strongest within National Party circles. Mulholland quotes Dr Kotze, who in 1971 was the Director of Education in the Transvaal as saying: ‘Racial integration would be nothing less than a crime against humanity’.<sup>198</sup>

From the beginning of the 1970s, black secondary schools were embroiled in the liberation struggle which was beginning to gather momentum in South Africa. Legodi perceives black schools as having been used as tools to achieve political objectives in the liberation struggle at the cost of a culture of learning and teaching which slowly began to erode.<sup>199</sup> The Soweto Uprising of 1976 may rightly be perceived as the landmark event in the history of black education in South Africa. Hartshorne identifies the two major educational causes of the uprising. The first was a departmental decision to change the structure of black education from a thirteen-year school system to a twelve-year system, so as to accord with the system prevailing in white schools. The result was a ‘chaotic’ bulge in school numbers, especially in Standard 10 (Grade 12) which caused much unhappiness for educators and learners alike. The second educational cause of the uprising was the much better-known departmental decision to apply the 50/50 language medium policy more strictly and inflexibly. Half of the

<sup>197</sup> Seroto, ‘The Impact of South African Legislation’, pp. 112–113.

<sup>198</sup> Mulholland, p. 248, as quoted by Black, p. 27.

<sup>199</sup> M. R. Legodi, ‘The Transformation of Education in South Africa since 1994: A Historical-Educational Survey and Evaluation’ (D.Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2001), p. 75, as quoted by Black, p. 27.

subjects taken by learners would have to be taught through the medium of either English or Afrikaans. Schools thereafter became centres of disruption and conflict as learners themselves organised or became embroiled in unrest.<sup>200</sup>

Disruptions and school boycotts continued during 1977 and 1978. Hartshorne characterises the period after the Soweto Uprising as a period of 'disintegration of learning'.<sup>201</sup> The response of the Bantu Education Department to the chaotic educational situation was to effect a name change. In March 1978, it was announced that the Bantu Education Act would be replaced. On 10 November 1978, the draft of the proposed Act was circulated for general comment. This bill, which aimed to provide for the education and training of Africans to replace the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Bantu Special Education Act of 1964, was enacted by parliament on 29 June 1979 as Act 90 of that year. The Bantu Education Department was duly replaced by the Department of Education and Training.<sup>202</sup>

The series of reforms which were enacted by the government to deal with the root causes of the 1976 unrest simply papered over the problems. The De Lange Commission of 1981, which had the mandate of addressing a number of educational issues, did not provide any lasting solutions to the ongoing unrest in black schools.<sup>203</sup> From 1981, black education continued within a culture of school boycotts which climaxed in 1985 as the school system collapsed under the relentless pressure of students and working-class communities.<sup>204</sup> Hartshorne, in examining the matriculation results for the decade 1980–1989, reflects upon 'a dismal record of failure', and wonders how any government could have permitted such a devastating situation, with the accompanying waste of human potential, as well as lost economic development and social health and stability, to continue.<sup>205</sup> The wider context briefly outlined above was not a happy one. Understanding this sad history of abuse and

<sup>200</sup> Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge*, pp. 73–74, as quoted by Black, p. 28.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80, as quoted by Black, p. 28.

<sup>202</sup> S. Blignaut, *Statistics on Education in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1981), p. 9, as quoted by Zwane, 'An Examination of the Position and Role of History in Black Secondary Schools, with Particular Reference to the Period since the Introduction of Bantu Education' (Research Report in partial fulfilment of M.Ed., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), p. 91, as quoted by Black, p. 28.

<sup>203</sup> I. E. Zwane, 'An Examination of the Position and Role of History in Black Secondary Schools', pp. 91, 42, as quoted by Black, p. 28.

<sup>204</sup> Zwane, p. 86, as quoted by Black, pp. 28–29.

<sup>205</sup> Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge*, p. 81, as quoted by Black, p. 29.

oppression is necessary if one is to appreciate the diverse perceptions of educators and learners alike toward the value of History education.

During the apartheid era most black South Africans came to perceive History education at schools as a liberation tool – a weapon in their struggle for freedom. Mazabow notes that just as Afrikaners developed a historiography in reaction to their sufferings under British rule, so the perceptions of black people in South Africa were forged by the prejudice and discrimination to which they were subjected, especially after 1948.<sup>206</sup> Van Jaarsveld notes that since the inception of the armed struggle after 1961, ‘... Blacks in their struggle against the Whites developed a historical perception, which had as future perspective a Black majority government. From this view the past was interpreted as a ‘Black’ past and the present was understood as a struggle to attain the future goal.’<sup>207</sup> Van Jaarsveld adds that any new future would need a new history ‘which would radically transform the traditional White image to an ‘alternative’ vision of the past in which the history of Black societies would be given a rightful place as fellow players on the historical stage’.<sup>208</sup>

Sadly, there were black South Africans whose negative experience of life in South Africa resulted in their devaluing history. Grundlingh notes that during the apartheid era it was difficult for black people to gain a sense of direction and meaning from a past which was not coherent and meaningful. Cut off from their roots, the past came to represent negative experiences of dislocation and harassment. The ‘white’ past was viewed as ‘exemplary’ and the ‘black’ past as ‘paltry and objectionable’. The result was an inability to value the importance of history on the part of black people.<sup>209</sup> Rösen proposed that the culture of white supremacy served to deprive South African black people of history. Rösen felt that black people lived within a negative historical culture, feeling that the historical memory which had been proclaimed at schools and even at universities, was not their own. Black people, held Rösen, felt alienated, and the result of the existing traditional historical culture was a substantial gap between official collective memory and the specific historical memory

<sup>206</sup> Mazabow, p. 98.

<sup>207</sup> F. A. van Jaarsveld, *Historical Consciousness and the Reinterpretation of History* (Zululand, 1989), pp. 30–31, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 98.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 98.

<sup>209</sup> A. M. Grundlingh, ‘George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-four*: Some Reflections on its Relevance to the Study of History in South Africa’, *Kleio*, 16 (1984), pp. 23–24, as quoted by Mazabow, pp. 98–99.



the blacks in South Africa needed to develop so as to obtain a positive historical identity. A new historical memory had to be developed which could provide excluded people with a history which would allow them to be respected and acknowledged by the other groups<sup>210</sup> – and most importantly, themselves. Bam notes the feeling of alienation from their own history which black learners experienced during the apartheid era ‘because the history of their traditions and experiences [are] not represented in school History...’<sup>211</sup>

Gebhard notes that History was not a cultural fit for black people. History if anything served to convince those taking it that it was founded upon a ‘fabric of falsification that made a very ill-fitting suit of cultural identity’. Black people became estranged from their cultural roots, and were made to believe that these were reprehensible. They also became gradually estranged from the culture that had deliberately distorted their past. Writing in 1990, Gebhard noted that History was used to ‘explain, justify and transmit the behaviour patterns that characterise contemporary South African society. The result was a rejection on the part of black people not of a status quo perceived to be unfair but of History, the subject that conveyed and helped legitimate it.’<sup>212</sup>

During the apartheid era some black writers did however look to the past with a sense of pride so as to be able to face the future with confidence. Maphahlele proclaimed that black people should attempt to re-establish an ‘African personality’ by establishing a ‘dialogue between two streams of consciousness: the present and the past’.<sup>213</sup> Ka I Seme imagined the echo of the past as a leavening ferment that would ‘raise the anxious and aspiring masses to the level of their ancient glory’.<sup>214</sup> Many modern black writers have turned for inspiration to the leaders of the past and especially to those ‘who had the wisdom to see that resistance to subjugation was the only alternative to dispossession’.<sup>215</sup> Mazabow notes

<sup>210</sup> Rösen, ‘Historical Education in a Multicultural Society’, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, pp. 3–5.

<sup>211</sup> Bam, p. 2.

<sup>212</sup> W. R. L. Gebhard, ‘Does History Teaching Ask and Answer Relevant Questions in a Multicultural Society – Some Suggestions for Enlarging the Vision of History’. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990, in Trümpelmann, *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*, pp. 123–125.

<sup>213</sup> W. Gebhard, *Shades of Reality: Black Perceptions of South African History* (Essen, 1991), p. 50 as quoted by Mazabow, p. 100.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50, as quoted by Mazabow, p.100.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 100.

that this creation of heroes was an essential process to people who had been deliberately presented with an image of the past 'denuded of heroes'.<sup>216</sup> The role of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement from the 1970s, in stressing that black history ought to be valued in its own right with a sense of pride is well known. Biko strongly felt that the history presented to black people was biased:

Colonialism is never satisfied with having the native in its grip but, by some strange logic, it must turn to his past and disfigure and destroy it. Hence the history of the black man in this country is most disappointing to read. It is presented merely as a long succession of defeats ... We would have to be naïve to expect our conqueror to write unbiased histories but we have to destroy the myth that our history starts in 1652.<sup>217</sup>

Ndlovu notes that History could be used to great effect to create historical and national consciousness among Africans. During the apartheid era, History came to be a significant oppositional tool in South Africa's political culture. Liberation movements emphasised the resistance displayed by Africans so as to inculcate national identification and pride in African heritage and culture. Nevertheless Ndlovu further points out that during the apartheid era, black perceptions of history were in fact complex. They received an informal education in history which contradicted the formal school History teaching they received and which contributed to the perceptions they hold about the subject. Secondary school learners gained conceptions of history from other institutions such as liberation movements, community and student organisations, the handing down of oral tradition and the media. Ndlovu points out that learners who completed secondary school were not blank slates but rather held views which were quite developed. The perceptions which apartheid-era school learners held toward History depended on, amongst various things, the type of matric education they had received, whether or not they were involved with community

<sup>216</sup> Mazabow, p. 100.

<sup>217</sup> B. S. Biko, 'Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity', originally published in B. Moore (ed), *Black Theology: The South African Voice*, (New York, 1973) subsequently published in A. Stubbs (ed), *Steve Biko - I Write What I Like. A Selection of His Writings* (New York, 1978), p. 95, as quoted by Gebhard 'Does History Teaching Ask and Answer Relevant Questions', in Trümpelmann, p. 125.

organisations, the degree of their exposure to various kinds of media or whether they had access to resource centres within their community.<sup>218</sup>

Sadly, there were learners who simply regarded History as a subject which served no function other than to assist learners to pass examinations. Matthews observed that since it was difficult for black people 'to accept the white man's account of his own past doings, it was utterly impossible to accept his judgements on the actions and behaviour of Africans, of our own grandfathers in our own lands. Yet we had to give back in our examination papers the answers the white man expected. So we approached history as one does an unavoidable ordeal, all steeled up and determined to get through it somehow.'<sup>219</sup>

## 2.4 Conclusion

It is clear that the manifold positive values perceived to be inherent within school History education were neither propounded by the architects of apartheid-era History syllabuses or appreciated by the majority of its recipients during this time. Statistical evidence rather surprisingly suggests that within Afrikaans-medium secondary schools, History was a subject in decline. Whilst English-medium and black secondary schools appeared to fare somewhat better in terms of the number of learners who took History and schools which offered the subject, the perceptions of learners toward it ranged from lukewarm to outwardly hostile. My own research indicates that few white learners embraced History with the eagerness which the authorities might have hoped for. Most black learners and educators rejected the biased history which they were presented with. For many learners the subject was simply something to be passed as part of the matriculation examination.

<sup>218</sup> S. Ndlovu, 'Conceptions, Perceptions of History and Experiences of Learning among African Students in the Department of Historical Studies [DHS], in the Early 1990s – University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996.

<sup>219</sup> Z. K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People: An Autobiography of ZK Matthews. Southern Africa: 1901–1968* (Cape Town, 1983), pp. 58–59.

## CHAPTER THREE

# OFFICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF HISTORY EDUCATION, 1985–2012

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the perceptions of post-apartheid educational authorities toward the value of History education as revealed in official Education Department publications. From the first efforts at curriculum reform toward the end of the apartheid era, through to the introduction of Outcomes-based education (OBE), Curriculum 2005 and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and its most recent update the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), great effort has been made to articulate and incorporate sound and relevant values into secondary school History education.

### 3.2 Value of History education in post-apartheid South Africa

The positive values promoted by post-apartheid History education are in stark contrast to those which were promoted by apartheid-era educational authorities. It must be noted that fresh perceptions of the value of History education emerged toward the end of the apartheid era.

Although Angie Motshekga, the current Minister of Education introduces the recent CAPS policy to educators by reviewing the introduction of educational reform as the introduction of OBE in 1997,<sup>1</sup> the reality is that a fresh, post-apartheid approach toward History teaching (and indeed the entire system of school education) in South Africa enjoyed consideration some years before the formal ending of apartheid in 1994. From 1985, various initiatives were undertaken by interest groups concerned to promote the adoption of a fresh approach toward South African school History education and a new syllabus. The Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC), formed in 1985, led to the call for 'People's Education for People's Power'

<sup>1</sup> Department of Basic Education, National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: CAPS (History) Further Education and Training Phase 10–12. Government Printer, 2012, Foreword by Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education.

and the accompanying demand that all stakeholders, including learners, teachers, parents and workers, ought to have a say in the kind of education which was provided. A Consultative Conference, convened by the SPCC, formed the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in March 1986. A History Commission was established in June 1986 with the aim of helping educators and learners to present the syllabus in different ways and to produce resources to enable communities themselves to present their own alternative educational programmes outside of the school system. Sadly, the fate of the History Commission was not happy. Kallaway notes that the initiative failed to make headway with regard to school History, as the Department of Education and Training (DET) refused to allow any NECC publications into its educational institutions. By 1988, the Commission had stopped functioning effectively. Kallaway notes that its work was not altogether in vain in that it did at least promote political conscientisation and provided a space for considering the nature of school History for the curriculum of the future.<sup>2</sup>

In 1987, the NECC published an 'alternative' history textbook titled *What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities*. The aim of the book was to enable learners to perceive the distortions of school History. The material was intended to supplement gaps in the official History syllabus or to provide a complete alternative to it. The aims of this project were outlined by its initiators:

History – properly taught – should not just tell of the deeds and sayings of people in authority; it should recover and comprehend the doing and thoughts of ordinary men and women. It should identify the historical sources of dispossession, oppression and exploitation, and examine the ways in which these were resisted.<sup>3</sup>

Popular professional historical opinion was reflected by Mazabow when he asserted that the book was widely criticised for presenting the idea that South African history was little else but a

<sup>2</sup> P. Kallaway, 'History Education in a Democratic South Africa', *Teaching History*, 78 (1995), p. 14, as quoted by D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), *What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities* (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 1, as quoted by G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools' (D.Ed thesis, University of South Africa, 2003), p. 103, as quoted by Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', p. 43.

series of conflicting opinions.<sup>4</sup> He quotes Dean and Siebörger who note that the main issue in the teaching of History is that there should be ‘more than one view of the past’ and that existing views ‘take account of each other, and inform and react against each other’.<sup>5</sup> Bam criticised the NECC initiative, noting that its focus was on content change and that the development of critical skills was seen as ‘a mere vehicle towards comprehending the past in full’.<sup>6</sup>

Another important initiative to formulate an appropriate educational policy for a democratic society was that undertaken by the National Educational Policy Investigation (NEPI) in 1992. NEPI was a project of the NECC. Major emphasis was given to issues like equity and resource provision, the redress of inequalities and democratic policy-making decisions. With regard to school History education, NEPI made a case for retaining the subject in schools on the grounds that an alternative History curriculum could help address past wrongs in the interpretation of history and restore the history of the oppressed as part of a common heritage. History was also perceived as being able to teach valuable academic skills and assist in the development of historical insights and offer a perspective on the changing world of work.<sup>7</sup>

These initiatives, undertaken during the last years of the apartheid era together contributed to the eventual formulation of a fresh approach toward school History, the fruits of which were to be realised during the time of the Government of National Unity (GNU), when school History was to enjoy a new-found popularity.<sup>8</sup> In 1995 Sibusiso Bengu, then Minister of Education, established the National Education and Training Forum. The task of this forum was to ‘cleanse’ some of the Further Education and Training (FET) syllabuses of their racist, sexist and undemocratic undertones. The products of this process were the ‘interim’ syllabuses that in 2012 are being phased out of schools and were known as Report 550.<sup>9</sup> The

<sup>4</sup> Mazabow, ‘The Development of Historical Consciousness’, p. 103, as quoted by Black, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Dean and Siebörger, ‘After Apartheid: The Outlook for History’, pp. 32–33, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 103, as quoted by Black, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> J. Bam, ‘The Development of New History Curriculum for the Secondary School Level in South Africa: Considerations Related to the Possible Inclusion of Themes Drawn from Unity Movement History’ (M.Ed dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1993), pp. 25–26, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 103, as quoted by Black, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> National Educational Policy Investigation (NEPI), *Curriculum: Report of the NEPI Curriculum Research Group* (Cape Town, 1992), p. 163, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 104, as quoted by Black, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Black, p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Mpumalanga Department of Education, *NCS Training: Gr. 10–12 (A – General) NCS Training: Gr. 10–12 (B – Subject Specific) Participants’ Guide History* July 2005, p. 3.

National Department of Education regarded NATED 550 as a temporary measure in the process of curriculum reform noting that '... What drove the compromise was not a genuine philosophy of History but the result of political expediency resulting in a hybrid document with little coherence'.<sup>10</sup> The aims and objectives of NATED 550 defined History as a study of the past based on evidence. The subject was presented as a mode of enquiry and as a way of investigating the past, which required the acquisition of skills. Learners should develop personally through the development of a sense of citizenship and positive attitudes and values. In NATED 550, History placed emphasis on an understanding and appreciation of history as an academic discipline and the intellectual skills and perspectives involved in the subject. The syllabus was designed to integrate the teaching of content, skills and attitudes. NATED 550 urged for a balance between the content, skills and attitudes although skills and attitudes were considered to be less concrete. A focus on content drove the curriculum.<sup>11</sup>

NATED 550 was criticized because it was not perceived to embrace the principle of developing a South African nation within an African perspective. The syllabus continued to see history from a Eurocentric perspective and to study the activities/events directed or carried out by Europeans as being the driving force of historical change in society. NATED 550 was perceived to offer very little in terms of including other histories. The African continent remained marginalised. This interim curriculum was seen to extend the life of the essentially apartheid curriculum which embodied the ideology of CNE and which viewed the past as the triumph of white domination and used History as a vehicle to legitimise the apartheid state.<sup>12</sup>

It is easy to criticise the educational changes brought about by the GNU which assumed power after the watershed 1994 general election and functioned until 1999. Bam and others have criticised the interim History syllabus brought out during the time of the GNU as not departing enough from the apartheid-era syllabuses which had preceded it.<sup>13</sup> The reality however is that the GNU inherited some unfortunate social realities which had existed before 1994 and remained intact for its duration. These negative social features included

<sup>10</sup> National Department of Education, Republic of South Africa *National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10–12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: History* January 2005 Draft, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum'.

crime, violence, poor discipline as well as the habit of emphasising rights at the expense of responsibilities. The GNU inherited a society weakened by many years of misgovernment, mismanagement and exploitation.<sup>14</sup> Enslin describes the extent of the difficult situation which the new government was faced with:

It is difficult to find an example of a more divided society than South Africa was in 1994, when its first democratic elections marked the transition from apartheid to democracy. The new government of national unity assumed responsibility for a society systematically fractured across a range of divisions: not only by race, class and gender, but also by ethnicity and language, and between rural and urban dwellers as well as between those with land and the landless.<sup>15</sup>

The GNU attempted a process of educational reform within this difficult environment.

The *White Paper on Education and Training* asserted the right to education of all people, including adults, youths and children.<sup>16</sup> This document made a significant shift from a traditional approach to education which aimed through education to determine how far learning had been mastered, to a new integrated approach based on a system of credits for achieving certain learning outcomes.<sup>17</sup>

From 1994, the GNU began the task of enacting new educational laws. In 1994, the new Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu, set about an interim revision of school syllabuses in order to remove inaccuracies and contentious and outdated content. Siebörger notes that an important proviso to Bengu's syllabus revisions was that any changes made would not call for the production of new textbooks.<sup>18</sup>

The GNU was also responsible for producing Curriculum 2005. In March 1997 Bengu announced that Curriculum 2005 would be implemented in Grade 1 from 1998, to be

<sup>14</sup> M. R. Legodi, 'The Transformation of Education in South Africa since 1994: A Historical-Educational Survey and Evaluation' (D.Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2001), p. 194, as quoted by Black, p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> P. Enslin, 'Citizenship Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa' *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33, 1 (2003), p. 73, as quoted by Black, p. 114.

<sup>16</sup> White Paper on Education and Training. Notice No. 196 of 1995 (Pretoria, 1995), p. 40, as quoted by Legodi, 'The Transformation of Education', p. 160, as quoted by Black, p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> Legodi, p. 163, as quoted by Black, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> R. Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience', *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, 1, 1 (2008), pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 115.



phased in until the curricula of every school grade had changed. Legodi notes that the government's plan was to introduce OBE while at the same time phasing out the old content-based system of learning.<sup>19</sup> Pela reported Bengu describing Curriculum 2005 as encompassing cultures of human rights, multi-lingualism and sensitivity towards reconciliation and nation building.<sup>20</sup>

Two documents produced by the GNU, namely the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 were to prove significant for education. Chapter Two of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights, a list of the basic human rights which all South Africans have. These rights include the right to a basic education; the right to adult education and the right to further education.<sup>21</sup> The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 was first implemented in January, 1997. The main objectives of the Act were to facilitate a transition from the old to a new education system, to create a single national system, to impart a foundation for improving the quality of education, to create fair systems of funding, to create an understanding among educators that they were paid and employed by (and therefore responsible to) the state, to establish school governing bodies which were representative as well as learner representative councils, to restore school discipline, to ensure that education was compulsory for people between the ages of six and fifteen and to make sure that all learners had access to public schools.<sup>22</sup>

It was clear that by the time of the GNU, a new order in education had arrived even though massive inequalities in access and facilities continued, crime at schools intensified, learner problems such as unwanted pregnancies and dishonesty, educator non-professionalism and even criminal practices continued unabated which served to make a transition to a brighter educational future for South Africans difficult to achieve.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless the GNU facilitated some positive changes in History education. Legodi notes that History as a school subject became more popular between 1994 and 1999.<sup>24</sup> The tone of history writing improved

<sup>19</sup> Legodi, pp. 180–181, as quoted by Black, p. 115.

<sup>20</sup> M. Pela, 'School Curricula need Questions', *Sowetan* 26 March 1997: 8, as quoted by Legodi, p. 181, as quoted by Black, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, as quoted by Legodi, 'The Transformation of Education', p. 159, as quoted by Black, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> Legodi, p. 162, as quoted by Black, p. 116.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170, 201–209, 217–220, as quoted by Black, p. 116.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185, as quoted by Black, p. 116.

considerably during this time.<sup>25</sup> Under the GNU, the Minister of Arts, Culture and Technology launched the Legacy Project in 1998. The aims of this project included acknowledging the contribution of all to the heritage of the country; acknowledging the previously neglected, distorted and marginalised South African heritage and the interpreting of historical events in a way which did not entail the domination of any single race. A number of new school History textbooks with a new approach were published. The Oxford University Press launched a new book *In Search of History* and Maskew Miller Longman released two series for primary schools, *The Broken String* and *Looking into the Past*. The tone and approach to history writing in these books represented an effort to transform the narrative of South Africa's history.<sup>26</sup>

A revision of the History syllabus was undertaken by the GNU as part of Minister Bengu's interim revision of school syllabuses. Siebörger has outlined the disconcerting process which was used to revise the different syllabuses.<sup>27</sup> The National Education and Training Forum (NETF) conducted the syllabus revision. The NETF was a bargaining forum of various stakeholders in education and represented education departments, business, parent, teacher and student organisations.<sup>28</sup> In the same way, the History sub-committee was made up of a selection of stakeholders, which included a departmental official who had served on apartheid-era syllabus committees, five representatives of teacher organisations, a high school and a university student.<sup>29</sup>

History was now regarded together with Geography, as a sub-field of a new subject termed Human and Social Sciences, which as Siebörger points out, was an arrangement first conceived of by the previous Department of National Education as part of the educational

<sup>25</sup> N. C. G. Vakalisa, 'Construction of a school Curriculum Consistent with the Needs of the Country and its People: Uniting and not Polarizing Them', *Paidonomia*, 19, 1 (1996), p. 12, as quoted by Legodi, 'The Transformation of Education', p. 186, as quoted by Black, p. 116.

<sup>26</sup> Legodi, p. 187, as quoted by Black, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> Y. Selati, *From History to Human and Social Sciences. The New Curriculum Framework and the End of History for the General Education and Training Level* (Durban, 1997), p. 10, as quoted by Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 117.

<sup>29</sup> S. Lowry, 'A Review of the History Curriculum Process', in J. Reid and R. Siebörger, *Proceedings of the Workshop on School History Textbook Writing from Principles to Practice* (Cape Town, 1995), p. 20, as quoted by Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 117.

renewal strategy of the early 1990s. This educational renewal strategy was a reaction to the NECC and ANC curriculum initiatives of that time.<sup>30</sup>

The interim History syllabus was designed to be flexible. The syllabus, first introduced into schools in January 1995, was a five-page document which listed a choice of topics to be covered in each grade and which left individual educators to select various topics and then encouraged them to create their own specific content and methodology.<sup>31</sup> Dryden recognised that the rationale provided for the study of History given to guide the educators' implementation of the curriculum in their classrooms was positive:

History is a systematic study of the past. It is a study based on evidence: a selection of facts and events that are arranged, interpreted and explained. Thus history, in addition to its content, is also a mode of enquiry, a way of investigating the past which requires the acquisition of skills. The events, communities and peoples of the past are studied in order to develop an appreciation of other times and places, but also because they are interesting in themselves. History develops both the imagination and the understanding of people and communities, while a study of recent history is essential for an understanding of the present, just as an understanding of the present is necessary to understand the past.<sup>32</sup>

The specific aims of the interim syllabus, which are mentioned in the same document also positively confirm the importance of the discipline and give an indication of how far the reasons for studying school History had moved in the short time since the apartheid era:

To give pupils the sense of such characteristics of historical knowledge as its time dimension; the importance of placing events in their historical context; the concepts and terminology and the interpretations and perspectives of historical knowledge; the changing state of historical knowledge and contribution made by the related disciplines to historical knowledge ... To give pupils an understanding of such historical skills as the ability to locate

<sup>30</sup> Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 118.

<sup>31</sup> S. Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition: Case Studies of History Teachers and Students in Cape Town Schools' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1999), p. 6. as quoted by Black, p. 118.

<sup>32</sup> Western Cape Education Department, 'Interim Syllabus for History Ordinary Grade, Standards 5, 6 and 7', 1995, p. 10, as quoted by Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation', p. 6, as quoted by Black, p. 118.

evidence (sic), to organise, classify and interpret this evidence in a logical way and to communicate historical ideas.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the positive elements which the interim History syllabus contained, the interim syllabuses were little more than adaptations of old syllabuses and few people involved in History education were pleased.

Writing in 1996, Klopper-Lourens asserted that the situation in South Africa made it essential to develop a fresh grand motive and historical awareness. A history acceptable to the majority of South Africa's people needed to be presented. Previous grand narratives, for example imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism were redundant, particularly when seen against the task of building a new nation.<sup>34</sup> Lowry noted that a new approach to History needed to be developed which would help us to understand South African society:

An honest history of our society and country gives us a window through which to view the current economic, political, social, cultural and other concerns of our society. A critical view of the past, one that exposes the warts as much as the beauty spots, empowers us to be critical judges of the present policies and concerns of those that wield the most influence and power. It enables us to try and avoid past mistakes and look for lessons in past achievements. It can help us in developing tolerance of other people (a necessary ingredient in a diverse society such as ours), in detecting bias, prejudice or indoctrination, and can give us the ideas and courage necessary to change that which is the antithesis of such ideas and values.<sup>35</sup>

Van Der Merwe, writing about the teaching of History in post-apartheid South Africa pointed out that the *Norms and Standards* (1996) held three significant consequences for the teaching of History in South African schools. Firstly, it was clear that the place of History in the school curriculum had been accepted, albeit as part of a Social Studies course.

<sup>33</sup> Western Cape Education Department, 'Interim Syllabus for History Ordinary Grade, Standards 5, 6 and 7', 1995, as quoted by Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 118.

<sup>34</sup> J. Klopper-Lourens, 'Bemark Geskiedenis Rondom 'n Nuwe "Leidmotiv"'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Society of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996, conference papers, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> S. Lowry, 'History Syllabi for South Africa – A Reappraisal'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Society of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996, conference papers, p. 7.

Secondly, a paradigm shift in the method to be employed in teaching History had been made in that a skills-based, rather than a knowledge-based approach had been endorsed. This approach had in any event not been totally new as from the 1980s historians had been campaigning for it. By 1996, several provinces were, according to Van der Merwe well on the way to using this approach. The third change impacting upon History teaching was to acknowledge that History was no longer so much about learners gathering a content knowledge designed mostly to help them pass examinations, but rather that the subject had great value in providing learners with training in life-skills which would enable them to cope better with life.<sup>36</sup>

In 1997, OBE was introduced to South Africa's schooling system.<sup>37</sup> The introduction of OBE marked a watershed in the history of education within South African schools. Every subsequent modification of the educational system has retained OBE principles and features. Methods of educating as well as the content of subjects and learning areas underwent substantial change. History educators were swept along by this tide of educational change together with all secondary school educators.

Lifelong learning, flexible education and training structures, the integration and transfer of learning, the need to teach towards critical cross-fields and specific outcomes and the need to develop learner competence are the principles which OBE emphasises.<sup>38</sup> Mazabow notes that OBE places great emphasis on learning outcomes.<sup>39</sup> According to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* a learning outcome is defined as 'a description of what (knowledge, skills and values) learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do'.<sup>40</sup> This emphasis upon doing and not simply knowing is the cornerstone of OBE.

<sup>36</sup> J. van der Merwe, 'The Teaching of Cognitive Skills in History in a process-based Skills Approach'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Society of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996, conference papers, pp. 2–3.

<sup>37</sup> Department of Basic Education, National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: CAPS (History) Further Education and Training Phase 10–12. Government Printer, 2012, Foreword by Angie Motshegka, Minister of Basic Education.

<sup>38</sup> C. Lubisi, *et al.*, *Understanding Outcomes-Based Education: Teaching and Assessment in South Africa: Learning Guide* (Cape Town, 1998), p. 56, as quoted by Black, p. 119.

<sup>39</sup> Mazabow, p. 17, as quoted by Black, p. 119.

<sup>40</sup> Department of National Education, *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (Pretoria, 2002), p. 14, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 17, as quoted by Black, p. 120.

OBE is geared towards social transformation. The future role that learners will play after completing their formal school education is integral to the OBE approach. The perceived economic, social and political needs of the country were included in the formulation of the learning outcomes. Mazabow points to the *Senior Phase (Grades 7–9) Policy Document* which notes that learners should be ‘empowered through the internalisation of competencies to contribute to the development of the country’.<sup>41</sup> The *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training* expresses the desire that learners will ‘articulate, activate and energise rigorously, the South African perspective of transformation’.<sup>42</sup>

The OBE approach argues against the content-based teaching approach of the past which has been perceived to neglect the needs of learners, the community and the business sector.<sup>43</sup> OBE argues in favour of empowering learners and emancipating critical skills and attitudes, to assist learners in constructing their own meanings and knowledge and assisting them to become competent citizens.<sup>44</sup> The OBE approach is a learner-centered one, rather than teacher-centered. Learners assume the central position and educators become organisers and facilitators in the learning experiences of the learners.<sup>45</sup>

Assessment methods which are based mainly upon rote learning and memory work are questioned by OBE. The progress of a learner is measured in terms of the effectiveness of the practical application of the skills which they have been taught. The personal performance of the learner is regarded as critical, instead of the traditional methodology of measuring one learner against the performance of others.<sup>46</sup> The *Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines* notes that the assessment should ‘help students to make judgements about their own performance, set goals for progress and improve further learning’.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Department of National Education, *Department of Education. Senior Phase (Grades 7- 9) Policy Document* (Pretoria, 1997), p. 8, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 18, as quoted by Black, p. 120.

<sup>42</sup> Department of National Education, *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training* (Pretoria, 1996), p. 17, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 18. as quoted by Black, p. 120.

<sup>43</sup> African National Congress (ANC), *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (Pretoria, 1995), p. 17, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 18, as quoted by Black, p. 120.

<sup>44</sup> Department of National Education, *Revised National Curriculum Statement R–9 (schools)* (Pretoria, 2002), p. 12, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 18, as quoted by Black, p. 120.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 18, as quoted by Black, p. 120.

<sup>46</sup> Mazabow, pp. 18–19, as quoted by Black, pp. 120–121.

<sup>47</sup> Department of National Education, *Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines* (Pretoria, 2002), p. 18, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 19, as quoted by Black, p. 121.

OBE engendered a great deal of criticism from educators. Some of the criticism was valid while other criticisms of the new system were not founded on educational principles. There is no doubt that an OBE curriculum model possesses certain advantages. Clearly stated outcomes and assessment criteria imply that learners are aware of what is expected of them and can assess their own progress. Learners are provided with support especially in terms of the assistance of peers in learning situations. Learners cannot fail in the sense that they enjoy further opportunities to meet required standards. Understanding concepts is considered more important than rote learning and the simple task of absorbing unrelated facts. Knowledge, skills and values applicable to real-life situations are emphasised, rather than an artificial classroom situation.<sup>48</sup>

The perceived weaknesses of OBE have been identified and in fact received much more publicity than did the advantages of the system. The OBE concept has been widely perceived as a theory which was developed in other countries and then somewhat artificially transplanted to South Africa. The system has been perceived as being vague in that few, if any precise and clear answers as to what is to be achieved are provided to educators seeking to implement it. Issues such as the importance of acquiring much needed social values such as non-racism were not included in the curriculum. The Curriculum Review Committee, which was commissioned by Minister of National Education, Kader Asmal, to review Curriculum 2005, found that educators, officials, managers and learners were confused, and did not understand what was expected of them. Other complicating factors around OBE and Curriculum 2005 included too many design features, lack of specifications, terminology which was difficult and complex, too many learning areas, a lack of effective implementation of techniques, not enough resources such as textbooks and stationery and insufficient provision of effective in-service training for educators.<sup>49</sup>

Legassick noted that there were some areas in which Curriculum 2005 did not advance the teaching of History in particular. A chronological framework, or context of the past needs to be provided so as to understand the interactions of people and the forces of change at particular times. The design of the learning programmes with their accompanying specific

<sup>48</sup> H. Van der Horst and R. McDonald, *Outcomes-Based Education: A Teacher's Manual* (Pretoria, 1997), pp. 14–16, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 141, as quoted by Black, p. 121.

<sup>49</sup> Legodi, pp. 184–185, as quoted by Black, p. 122.

outcomes, range statements and assessment criteria made it difficult for History to be taught and learned in this way. Insufficient care had been taken in the use of documents as a method of understanding and analysing the past and in considering different interpretations of history. Very little about human agency was apparent in the documents, which led to the idea that change was something that occurred subject to fixed laws in a mechanistic and deterministic way. Legassick felt that the way in which the concept of identity was presented in the curriculum did not break with the South African patterns of the past which viewed communities as fixed and unchanging. Even though a somewhat wider definition of community was allowed for, human agency was again neglected.<sup>50</sup>

In Mpumalanga, reactions to the introduction of OBE were overwhelmingly negative among educators in all subjects, including History.<sup>51</sup> My own observations of educator reactions toward the system confirm the well-worn criticisms levelled against OBE and Curriculum 2005, as outlined above. Educators complained unceasingly about the fact that OBE was essentially an educational import and that it did not suit local conditions, whatever these were believed to be. The system was perceived to be very difficult to implement. OBE was seen to be a watering down of traditional academic study, to be less factual and subject to the imposition of an individual educator's nebulous personal values. I noticed an intense reluctance on the part of educators to deal with the prospect of change. Departmental training seminars which were organised to train educators in the new ways of OBE were poorly attended, and those educators who did attend often displayed negativity, pre-judging the courses even before they began. White educators with whom I worked developed the habit of attending training workshops on the first day simply to sign an attendance register. Presenters were harshly judged with the underlying attitude of 'What can they possibly teach me?' OBE was perceived to be a full frontal attack on educators' professional comfort zones. Nevertheless, despite the perceived shortcomings of OBE and Curriculum 2005, the new educational approach had much merit. Many secondary school History educators found that the OBE approach was conducive to History teaching. OBE methods had in any event already been employed within History classrooms by educators

<sup>50</sup> M. Legassick, 'Statement by the South African Historical Society on the Implications of Curriculum 2005 for History Teaching in the Schools', *Kleio*, 30 (1998), p. 8, as quoted by Black, p. 122.

<sup>51</sup> My 2009 dissertation referred to the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga, especially the Middelburg, Emalahleni and Hendrina areas.



who had attempted to use various sources to teach the subject and who attempted to encourage learners to self-explore the syllabus content. Legassick noted that many features of OBE suit History education at secondary schools.<sup>52</sup>

Siebörger and Dean, discussing the values of teaching History in relation to the post-apartheid Revised National Curriculum of 2005, referring to the findings of the 2000 History and Archaeology Panel, tasked by the Ministry of Education to examine the state of History teaching in South Africa, noted that the Panel pointed out the contribution of History to the school curriculum. The Panel observed that History:

- encourages civic responsibility and critical thinking, which are key values in a democratic society
- contextualises weighty issues and assists constructive debate over them in an informed manner, through the discipline of carefully weighing and evaluating evidence and reading a range of viewpoints
- fosters the invaluable mental powers of discriminating judgement
- is important in the construction of identity. Historical perspective fosters a proper understanding of the growth of multiple and overlapping human identities
- enables us to listen to the formerly subjugated voices and to redress the invisibility of the formally marginalised
- encourages us to examine in concrete terms, through rich examples of narratives of real-life situations, the challenging nature of truth
- provides a critically important perspective on the pathways to economic development and economic growth
- is a vital ingredient in promoting democratic values and a significant instrument for desegregating society
- is deliberately [sic] about the crucial role of memory in society.<sup>53</sup>

Mazabow noted that the report of the History/Archaeology Panel attributed key importance to the value of teaching History and its role in the creative nurturing of historical consciousness when it stated: 'When taught by imaginative teachers, the richness of history has a larger capacity than any other discipline to promote reconciliation and reciprocal respect of a meaningful kind, because it encourages a knowledge of the other, the unknown

<sup>52</sup> Legassick, 'Statement by the South African Historical Society', p. 6, as quoted by Black, p. 123.

<sup>53</sup> R. Siebörger and J. Dean, 'Values in a Changing Curriculum', in A. McCully and C. O'Neil, eds, *Values in History Teacher Education and Research* (Lancaster, 2002), p. 3, quoting Department of National Education, *Report of the History/Archaeology Panel* (Pretoria, 2000), pp. 9–10.

and the different'.<sup>54</sup> Chapter eight of this study will reveal that the contribution of dedicated and imaginative History educators is the factor which most impacts upon the success of History within Mpumalanga's secondary schools.

Human and Social Sciences (HSS) was duly introduced to Grades seven, eight and nine. The Learning Area (subject) was comprised of a broad mixture of History and Geography. The 'Introduction to the Learning Programme' (syllabus) explains the rationale of the subject as follows:

Human and Social Sciences contribute to developing responsible citizens in a culturally diverse, democratic society within an interdependent world. They will equip learners to make sound judgements and take appropriate actions that will contribute to sustainable development of human society and the physical environment ... Human and Social Sciences comprise the study of relationships between people, and between people and their environment. These interactions are contextualised in space and time and have social, political, environmental and spiritual dimensions ... They develop distinctive skills and a critical awareness of social and environmental patterns, processes and events, based on appropriate investigations and reflection within and across related focuses.<sup>55</sup>

Like all other Learning Areas, Human and Social Sciences was based on the attainment of certain Critical Outcomes. Many of these were conducive to History education:

An educated person should have the following competencies:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made. (Thinking skills/problem solving)
- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community. (Groupwork/people skills)
- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively. (Independence and self-management skills)
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. (Research skills)

<sup>54</sup> Report of the History/Archaeology Panel, p. 6, as quoted by Mazabow, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Department of National Education, 'Rationale for Human and Social Sciences' from *Human and Social Sciences: Senior Phase* (Pretoria, 2004), p. 4, as quoted by Black, p. 124.

- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical, and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written persuasion. (Communication skills)
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others. (Technological and environmental health)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a collection of interrelated systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation. (Cognitive skills)

Contribute to the personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of society at large, by making it the underlying intention of any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:

- Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively. (Learning skills)
- Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities. (Citizenship)
- Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts. (Cultural and aesthetic sensitivity)
- Exploring education and career opportunities. (Employment seeking skills)
- Developing entrepreneurial opportunities (Entrepreneurship)<sup>56</sup>

As well as these general Critical Outcomes, the following nine Specific Outcomes applied to Human and Social Sciences:

- SO 1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of how South African society has changed and developed.
- SO 2 Demonstrate a critical understanding of patterns of social development.
- SO 3 Participate actively in promoting a just, democratic and equitable society.
- SO 4 Make sound judgements about the development, utilisation and management of resources.
- SO 5 Critically understand the role of technology in social development.

<sup>56</sup> P. Avery, et al., *Shuters Human and Social Sciences: Grade 8 Educator's Guide* (Pietermaritzburg, 2000), p. iv, as quoted by Black, pp. 124–125.

- SO 6 Demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between society and the natural environment.
- SO 7 Address social and environmental issues in order to promote development and social justice.
- SO 8 Analyse forms and processes of organisations.
- SO 9 Demonstrate the ability to use a range of skills and techniques in the Human and Social Sciences context.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to all the Critical and Specific Outcomes which had to be attained by learners, various 'Phase Organisers' also had to be covered within a learning programme. These Phase Organisers were broader areas of interest which had to be incorporated within the designated Critical and Specific Outcomes. To put it more simply, the idea behind 'Phase Organisers' was that common themes should be followed in the teaching of all the learning areas to which a learner was exposed. In Grade 8, for example, these included such themes as 'Communication', 'Culture and Society', 'Personal Development and Empowerment', 'Environment' and 'Economy and Development'.<sup>58</sup> Educators also had to be conversant with various 'Assessment Criteria' in order to assess their learners' attainment of the Outcomes and also had to ensure that the instruction in one Learning Programme (e.g. Human and Social Sciences) integrated successfully into what was being taught in all the other learning areas. Assessment Criteria were accompanied by various 'Range Statements' which were in reality something of a vaguely defined syllabus, giving guidance to the educator about what topics might assist learners to achieve the Specific Outcomes. 'Performance Indicators' stated what demonstrated skills would indicate whether or not the Specific Outcomes had been achieved. Within the 'Phase' (i.e. the General Education and Training Band, Grades 7–9) some 66 Critical Outcomes had to be successfully attained by a learner across the entire range of learning areas.

Needless to say, this well-intentioned but complex system of education proved to be understood by very few educators, despite intense training drives by the Education Department. Few educators were able to properly implement the system, or even tried to do so. History educators complained that their subject had been watered down to a kind of limpid social science course. Another strong perception held by History educators was that

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v, as quoted by Black, p. 125.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v, as quoted by Black, pp. 125–126.

when Geography-qualified educators taught HSS the History component of the course was neglected.<sup>59</sup> Most History educators held very negative perceptions of HSS, an attitude which cannot help but have influenced their learners. It was clear that a new approach to OBE education in secondary schools had to be formulated.

The Ministerial Review Committee of 2000, concerned about the implementation of Curriculum 2005 produced a report during May of the same year which was critical of many aspects of it, including teacher training in and understanding about the new curriculum, the perceived lack of provision of learner support material and design features inherent to the curriculum itself. This review led to the first curriculum revision: the *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9* and the *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12* in 2002.<sup>60</sup> Siebörger quotes the report of this Review Committee, which states that the curriculum 'is strong in integration and weak on conceptual coherence or progression. It overemphasises connective relations and fails to provide structured guidelines for sequence, progression and pacing...'<sup>61</sup> The committee recommended a rationalisation of learning areas, which entailed Human and Social Sciences (HSS) becoming Social Sciences (SS). Siebörger quotes the Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 as specifying:

These (the disciplines of History and Geography) should not be integrated mechanically but should ensure that the distinctive concepts and 'ways of thinking' of each is fostered and developed. The teaching of History should ensure that learners develop a 'narrative' and a conceptual understanding of the history of South Africa and their place in the world...<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> These views emerged strongly in the survey which this researcher conducted among black secondary school History educators in the Nkangala area of Mpumalanga during May 2008.

<sup>60</sup> Department of Basic Education, National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: CAPS (History) Further Education and Training Phase 10–12. Government Printer, 2012, Foreword by Angie Motshegka, Minister of Basic Education.

<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Education, *Values, Education and Democracy: Report of the Working Group on Values in Education* (Pretoria, 2000), p. 44, as quoted by Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 127.

<sup>62</sup> Ministry of Education, *Values, Education and Democracy: Report of the Working Group on Values in Education* p. 138, as quoted by Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 127.

Siebörger perceived this as a positive development. He felt that a lifeline had been thrown to the school subject of History, which once more had a real place in the curriculum.<sup>63</sup>

There are six Learning Outcomes in Social Sciences, three of which relate to History and three of which relate to Geography. These replace the previous nine outcomes which applied to HSS. Each Learning Outcome is accompanied by various Assessment Standards which are statements designed to measure whether the requirements of the Learning Outcomes have been practically attained by a learner. The Social Sciences Learning Outcomes (LOs), accompanied by their respective Assessment Standards (ASs) which relate to History are:

LO 1 Historical Enquiry: *The learner will be able to use enquiry skills to investigate the past and present.*

AS 1: Investigates a topic by asking key questions and identifies a variety of relevant sources to explore this topic (find sources).

AS 2: Asks significant questions to evaluate the sources (e.g. to identify bias and stereotypes, omissions and gaps) (works with sources).

AS 3: Analyse the information in the sources (works with sources).

AS 4: Presents an independent line of argument in answering questions posed, and justifies (using evidence) the conclusions reached (answers the question).

AS 5: Communicates knowledge and understanding by constructing own interpretation and argument based on the historical sources (including extended writing, artwork, graphics and drama); uses information technology where available and appropriate (communicates the answer).

LO 2 Historical Knowledge and Understanding: *The learner will be able to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding.*

AS 1: Places events, people, and changes in the period of history studied within a chronological framework (chronology and time).

AS 2: Identifies categories of causes and effects (e.g. immediate and long-term, direct and indirect) (cause and effect).

AS 3: Explains and analyses the reasons for and the result of events

<sup>63</sup> Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 127.

in history (cause and effect).

AS 4: Recognises that change and development does not always mean progress (change and continuity).

LO 3 Historical Interpretation: *The learner will be able to interpret aspects of history.*

AS 1: Understands the contested nature of content, and that historians construct histories when writing about events from the past (source interpretation).

AS 2: Constructs an interpretation based on sources, giving reasons for an interpretation (source interpretation).

AS 3: Analyse issues which influence the way history has been written (influences on interpretation).

AS 4: Explains the way in which symbols are used to remember events and people from the past, and how oral histories can contribute to our understanding of the symbols (representation of the past).<sup>64</sup>

The History section of the Grade 8 Social Sciences syllabus includes The French Revolution; Industrialisation (in Britain and South Africa); Resisting British control (in South Africa); The Experience of Colonialism (in Africa); and a section on the First World War. The History section of the Grade 9 Social Sciences syllabus includes Nazi Germany and the Holocaust; Human Rights (the United Nations and human rights issues in Africa); Apartheid in South Africa; The Cold War and the Nuclear Age; and a section on various Issues of our Time (crimes against humanity; xenophobia and genocide; globalisation and Africa's economic recovery).<sup>65</sup>

The result of this revision, the National Curriculum Statement of 2001 and 2002 demonstrated that the new post-apartheid History curricula were/are not as one-sided as they were widely perceived to be by certain sections of the South African community. This National Curriculum Statement applied to History education at primary school level through to Grade 9.

<sup>64</sup> J. Earle, *et al.*, *Learners Book, Social Science Today: Grade 9* (Cape Town, 2006), Introduction, as quoted by Black, pp. 127–128.

<sup>65</sup> J. Earle, *et al.*, *Learners Book, Social Sciences Today: Grade 8* (Cape Town, 2005), Contents page and Earle, *et al.*, *Learners Book, Social Sciences Today: Grade 9*, Contents page, as quoted by Black, pp. 128–129.

The Statement noted 16 'strategies for familiarising young South Africans with the values of the Constitution'. These strategies ranged from curriculum development issues (putting History, Arts and Culture and Religion into the curriculum; facilitating multiculturalism; and promoting school sport), through to issues of access (race and gender equality; ensuring basic literacy and numeracy), ethical citizenship and environmental education, and fundamental rights such as a safe learning environment. 'Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility'<sup>66</sup> is included. Provision was also made for suggestions about the values and approach to the curriculum content in each grade in History and Geography. The introduction to the new National Curriculum Statement includes the following: 'The Revised National Curriculum Statement has tried to ensure that all Learning Area Statements reflect the principles and practices of social justice, respect for the environment and human rights as defined in the Constitution. In particular, the curriculum attempts to be sensitive to issues of poverty, inequality, race, gender, age, disability and such challenges as HIV/AIDS'.<sup>67</sup>

The curricula of the National Curriculum Statement (2005) were first applied in Grade 10 in 2006 and the first Grade 12 group to complete the new curriculum completed their National Senior Certificate in 2008. The expectations of the NCS when it comes to the kind of learner produced by the end of Grade 12 are high indeed. According to the National Education Department the kind of learner envisioned is one 'who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society and social justice as promoted in the Constitution'.<sup>68</sup>

The following principles were seen to underpin the curriculum of which History was a part:

- Social transformation
- Outcomes-based education
- High knowledge and high skills
- Integration and applied competence
- Progression

<sup>66</sup> Sieborger and Dean, p. 4, quoting Department of National Education *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 9 (Schools) [Draft]* (Pretoria, 2002), p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4, quoting Department of National Education *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 9 (Schools) [Draft]* (Pretoria, 2002).

<sup>68</sup> Department of Education, *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10–12 (General) HISTORY* (Pretoria, 2003), p. 5.



- Articulation and portability
- Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice
- Valuing indigenous knowledge systems
- Credibility, quality and efficiency<sup>69</sup>

Section Two of the document deals more specifically with History education. History is viewed as the study of change and development in society over time and space. This study in addition draws upon archaeology, palaeontology and oral history. By investigating the past, History enables one to understand and evaluate how past human action impacts on the present and may influence the future.<sup>70</sup> The purpose of studying History is to build peoples' capacity to make informed choices so as to contribute constructively to society and to advance democracy. History as a vehicle of personal empowerment may engender in learners an understanding of human agency, which brings with it the knowledge that, as human beings, learners have choices that they can make in order to change the world for the better.<sup>71</sup>

The National Curriculum Statement states that the values of the South African Constitution form the basis of values in History. These values are essential for the understanding of and the addressing of human rights in South Africa. History ought to make a crucial contribution to transforming society by helping learners to apply the values that are embodied in the Constitution to their lives and to the lives of those around them. History should explore issues of race, gender, class, xenophobia and genocide and the impact that these issues have had both in the past and the present. These critical issues need to be challenged as part of the process of transforming society. When working with content, questions need to be raised around human rights and should guide learners in exploring issues of power relations, how political power is exercised, gender relations and the influence these issues have had and continue to have on peoples' lives.<sup>72</sup> History taught well should promote non-discrimination, raise debates, confront issues and build capacity in people to be able to address current social and environmental concerns. Learners who study History should be

<sup>69</sup> National Department of Education, Republic of South Africa *National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10–12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: History* January 2005 Draft, p. 10.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

trained to use the insights and skills of historians. As they do this, they must be provided with the opportunity to analyse sources and evidence, study different interpretations and divergent opinions and voices, and build historical imagination. This is so that they might develop the ability to think in a rigorous and critical manner about society.<sup>73</sup> History is a subject which should contribute to the realisation of the vision for South Africa as stated in C2005:<sup>74</sup>

A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice.<sup>75</sup>

History is related to the principles of the National Curriculum Statement in that it is intended to promote the development of a high level of knowledge and skills; integration and applied competence; progression; articulation, portability, credibility, quality and efficiency; human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice as well as promoting the valuing of indigenous knowledge systems. Valuing indigenous knowledge systems implies that there are various ways of processing information to make sense of the world. A redefined intelligence means that different approaches to understanding the world must be taken into account. One can no longer value only logical, mathematical and specific linguistic abilities, as has been the habit in the Western world and classify people as 'intelligent' only if they are competent in these ways. The broad diversity of knowledge systems through which people make sense of and attach meaning to the world in which they live is now recognised. In the South African context indigenous knowledge systems refer to a body of knowledge embedded in African social practices and philosophical thinking which have evolved over thousands of years. The National Curriculum Statement Grade 10–12 (Schools) has infused indigenous knowledge systems into the Subject Statements so as to acknowledge the richness of South African history and heritage as well

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

as its constitution as a source of change to help transform the values of learners, in order to bring in as many different perspectives as possible to assist problem-solving in all fields.<sup>76</sup>

A learner produced by the FET band should be able to demonstrate the achievement of the following Critical and Developmental Outcomes:

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
- Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community.
- Organise and manage themselves and their abilities responsibly and effectively.
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes.
- Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.<sup>77</sup>

The Developmental Outcomes require learners to be able to:

- Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
- Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities.
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a broad range of social contexts.
- Explore education and career opportunities.
- Develop entrepreneurial opportunities.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to all the above, learners produced by the FET band should:

- Have access to, and succeed in, lifelong education and training of good quality.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2, as quoted by Black, pp. 129–130.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2, as quoted by Black, p. 130.

- Demonstrate an ability to think logically and analytically, as well as holistically and laterally.
- Be able to transfer skills from familiar to unfamiliar situations.<sup>79</sup>

All investigations in History are organised around key questions. The two overall key questions for FET are:

- How do we understand our world today?
- What legacies of the past have shaped our present?<sup>80</sup>

Unlike previous school History syllabuses, content is no longer divided between South African and World history. South Africa is located within Africa as well as within a global community. Human rights and indigenous knowledge are both emphasised, and a comparative approach to the past is taken, as case studies from various continents are explored. Content has been organised around various broad organising themes, which are: power alignments in the world (both past and present), human rights, issues of civil society and globalisation. It is emphasised that any 'old' content needs to be explored in new ways.

The definition offered of NCS History appears both comprehensive and interesting:

History is the study of change and development in society over time and space. It also draws on archaeology, palaeontology, genetics and oral history to interrogate the past. The study of history enables us to understand and to evaluate how past human action impacts on the present and influences the future.<sup>81</sup>

The purpose of the study of History is to build the capacity of people to make informed choices in order to contribute constructively to society and to advance democracy. History should be a vehicle of personal empowerment for a learner and lead to an understanding of human agency. Learners should come to realise that they have the power of choice and that the choices which they make can change the world for the better.<sup>82</sup>

A rigorous process of historical enquiry should:

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5, as quoted by Black, p. 130.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, page unnumbered, as quoted by Black, p. 131.

<sup>81</sup> Department of Education, *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10–12 (General)*, p. 9, as quoted by Black, p. 132.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, as quoted by Black, p. 132.

- encourage and assist constructive debate through careful evaluation of a broad range of evidence and diverse points of view;
- provide a critical understanding of socio-economic systems in their historical perspective and their impact on people; and
- support the view that historical truth consists of a multiplicity of voices expressing varying and often contradictory versions of the same history.<sup>83</sup>

The study of History supports democracy by:

- engendering an appreciation and an understanding of the democratic values of the Constitution;
- encouraging civic responsibility and responsible leadership;
- promoting human rights, peace and democracy; and
- fostering an understanding of identity as a social construct, preparing future citizens for local, regional, national, continental and global citizenship.<sup>84</sup>

As a vehicle for human rights, History:

- enables people to examine with greater insight and understanding the prejudices involving race, class, gender, ethnicity and xenophobia still existing in society and which must be challenged and addressed;
- enables us to listen to formerly subjugated voices and focus on the crucial role of memory in society. This comes particularly through an emphasis on oral history and an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems;<sup>85</sup>
- History promotes non-discrimination, raises debates, confronts issues and builds capacity in individuals to address current social and environmental concerns.<sup>86</sup>

The National Curriculum Statement outlines the principles underpinning the FET History curriculum as follows:

That History is a process of enquiry based on evidence from the past.

This means that learners must be given opportunities to engage with authentic sources from the past.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, as quoted by Black, p. 132.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, as quoted by Black, p. 132.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, as quoted by Black, p. 133.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10, as quoted by Black, p. 133.

That South African history within an African continental perspective is prioritised

South Africans need to accept that South Africa is part of the continent of Africa and that we should embrace our South African identity. Africa has a rich history, which in school texts has either been ignored or subsumed under a Eurocentric narrative. Curriculum developers and textbook writers have failed to take account of the wealth of contemporary research in African history, archaeology and palaeontology. This curriculum seeks to redress this imbalance.

That knowledge in history is constructed

The FET curriculum is guided by the constructivist philosophy of education. Within History education we emphasise knowledge construction from the evidence derived from historical sources as an approach.<sup>87</sup>

The National Curriculum Statement claims that the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards it contains introduce teachers and learners in South Africa to a new vision of History teaching and learning in schools. Historical enquiry skills are developed in the first three outcomes, as well as conceptual understanding and the ability to construct knowledge based on evidence from the past. Learners engage with issues around heritage and crucial questions of analysis, interpretation and presentation in the fourth outcome. This outcome needs to be closely linked to the other three. The assessment standards related to these outcomes include issues related to human rights and indigenous knowledge systems. The learning outcomes for History in the FET band are identical for all grades, while the assessment standards show progression in the development of skills, concepts, knowledge and processes from grade to grade. They describe the expected level of performance and range of performance for each learning outcome for each grade. The performance of learners in the learning outcomes is measured against the assessment standards. Each grade builds on the competences which have been developed in the previous grade.<sup>88</sup>

In the FET band, History has four Learning Outcomes. The various Learning Outcomes work together but have been written separately. The first three focus on the way in which

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

historians investigate the past. Historical enquiry, conceptual understanding and knowledge construction skills are developed. The fourth Learning Outcome deals with issues around heritage, and critical questions such as analysis, interpretation and presentation are raised. The various Assessment Standards related to the Learning Outcomes include issues related to human rights and indigenous knowledge systems.<sup>89</sup>

The four Learning Outcomes for History in the FET band are:

Learning Outcome 1: Enquiry Skills (Practical Competence)

*The learner is able to acquire and apply historical enquiry skills.*

In the Further Education and Training band, learners will be expected to raise questions about the past, identify issues relating to the past and use a range of enquiry skills in order to extract and organise evidence from a variety of historical sources and information. By the end of the band, learners will be expected to demonstrate an ability to work independently, formulating enquiry questions and gathering, analysing, interpreting and evaluating relevant evidence to answer questions.<sup>90</sup>

Learning Outcome 2: Historical Concepts (Foundational Competence)

*The learner is able to use historical concepts in order to analyse the past.*

Learners will be expected to work progressively towards acquiring an informed understanding of key historical concepts as a way of analysing the past. They will be expected to understand and explain the dynamics of change in the context of power relations operating in societies. They will also be expected to compare and contrast points of view/perspectives of the past and draw their own conclusions based on evidence.<sup>91</sup>

Learning Outcome 3: Knowledge Construction and Communication (Reflexive Competence)

*The learner is able to construct and communicate historical knowledge and understanding.*

<sup>89</sup> Department of Education, *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10–12 (General)*, p. 11, as quoted by Black, p. 135.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11, as quoted by Black, p. 135.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12, as quoted by Black, p. 136.

In the Further Education and Training band learners will be expected to work and draw conclusions from a variety of forms of data, and to synthesise information about the past in order to develop, sustain and defend an independent line of historical argument. They will be expected to communicate and present information reliably and accurately in writing and verbally.<sup>92</sup>

#### Learning Outcome 4: Heritage (Reflexive Competence)

*The learner is able to engage critically with issues around heritage.*

This Learning Outcome introduces learners to issues and debates around heritage and public representations, and they are expected to work progressively towards engaging with them. Links are drawn between different knowledge systems and the various ways in which the past is memorialised. Learners also investigate the relationship between palaeontology, archaeology and genetics in understanding the origins of humans and how this has transformed the notions of race.<sup>93</sup>

South Africa is located within Africa and the FET History curriculum places Africa at the centre of its perspective. It has the aim of making History relevant to young people and of providing them with tools to understand and analyse the modern world. Content has been arranged so as to emphasise links between countries and continents rather than to view histories as being separate or hierarchical. The National Curriculum Statement claims that the history of South Africa within the African continent has gained its rightful place at the centre of studies.<sup>94</sup>

Past imbalances are addressed by including the histories of marginalised peoples in the South African context, for example, women's history, labour and rural history. Independent African pre-colonial societies, colonial transformations and African responses, African independence struggles, post independence and African renewal are studied within the History of Africa. Indigenous knowledge systems are emphasised, as well as heritage and oral history as a way of understanding the past and its relationship to the present. Emerging issues of the late twentieth century are included in order to help learners understand

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13, as quoted by Black, p. 136.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



present-day world issues. These issues include a study of the collapse of communism in Europe, new forms of capital and supra-national corporations, the challenges of gender, human rights, diversity, multiculturalism and internationalism, the new militarism, competing world views and conflict over control of resources, fundamentalist reactions and African renewal.<sup>95</sup>

The National Curriculum Statement is infused with issues of human rights and social justice. In History, this is expressed in the content and in the outcomes and assessment standards. In the content, human rights issues are raised in the questions asked about the past. Key questions concern societal issues such as power relations, the analysis of colonialism and the consequences of industrialisation. Moral questions around issues like forced removals and genocide are posed. The National Curriculum Statement emphasises that content on its own will not be assessed but nevertheless remains important in any assessment task.<sup>96</sup>

The perceptions which the Mpumalanga Education Department held toward the value of History education in 2009 are revealed in the 2008 Grade 12 History Examination Feedback Document. The document notes that when answering questions, learners are expected to display a wide variety of academic skills, including the ability to extract and explain, interpret evidence, synthesise evidence, compare evidence and select and analyse it.<sup>97</sup> The apparent replacement of the narrative style of school History education in favour of teaching History as a mode of inquiry has however been criticised. The present approach assists learners to understand that the making of history is a human construction and that texts ought to be read with a critical eye. Nevertheless, care should be taken that all that is good in the narrative approach is not lost.<sup>98</sup> Bertram conducted a survey at three KwaZulu-Natal secondary schools in 2007 to ascertain how learners were exposed to contextual source-based questions and what skills were required in answering them. Her findings were that the manner in which sources were used did not require learners to display the insights

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>97</sup> Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2008 HISTORY EXAMINATION FEEDBACK DOCUMENT GRADE 12, pp. 1–12. Published 2009, no publication details given.

<sup>98</sup> C. Bertram, 'Doing History?: An Analysis of Grade 10 Assessment Tasks in the New History Curriculum', Paper presented at the South African Society for History Teaching Conference, 2007, as quoted by Black, p. 137.

and skills of historians. Learners were not required to study sources in an in-depth way or to look for the bias, nuance, context, author or context of a source.<sup>99</sup> Source-based tasks lapsed into simple visual comprehension exercises. An analysis conducted of tests written by Grade 10 learners in 2006 at one secondary school surveyed revealed that one test involved a simple comprehension exercise while the other was a test involving a list of simple recall questions.<sup>100</sup>

My own experience in teaching FET History resonates with Bertram's rather sober findings about the misuse of the source-based method of teaching and assessing school history, namely that source-based assessments tend to be little more than simple visual comprehensions. Matriculation examiners in all subjects are not renowned for the latitude of interpretation which they apply to learners' scripts. The FET matriculation examinations are now assessed nationally with the result that the marking memoranda used to assess them have quite understandably become more rigid, allowing for less divergence in interpretation. The reality is that within their schools, educators are primarily judged on their Grade 12 results. As was often the case with the old-style narrative History education favoured by South African education departments, so too the new source-based FET History is also likely to be taught mainly with a view to coaching learners in examination-answering techniques, with the negative connotations which this implies.

Motshegka<sup>101</sup> notes that ongoing implementation challenges with the National Curriculum statement resulted in another *review* in 2009. The *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002) and the *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12* were revised to produce the existing CAPS document. From 2012 the two National Curriculum Statements, for *Grades R-9* and *Grades 10-12* respectively, were combined in a single document to be simply known as the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*. The *National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-12* builds on the previous curriculum but also updates it and aims to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis. The CAPS curriculum, which included an updated History syllabus, was introduced into Grade 10 in 2012 and is due to be implemented in Grade 12 by 2014. Angie Motshegka points out that

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11, as quoted by Black, p. 137.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 6, as quoted by Black, p. 137.

<sup>101</sup> Ms Motshegka was Minister of Education in 2012.

the values which inspired the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) have been the building block for the CAPS curriculum:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;  
and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.<sup>102</sup>

Other values incorporated in the CAPS curriculum include: that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives; that they are equipped, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country; that an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths is encouraged; human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice are promoted as well as issues such as diversity, poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age and disability. In addition, indigenous knowledge systems are valued and the rich history and heritage of this country is acknowledged.<sup>103</sup>

CAPS also indicated that History is perceived as the study of change and development in society over time. The point of History study is to enable the understanding of how past human action affects the present and influences the future, and it allows for the evaluation of these effects. History is perceived as learning how to think about the past, which affects the present, in a disciplined way. It is a process of enquiry which asks questions of the past such as: What happened? When did it happen? Why did it happen then? and What were the

<sup>102</sup> Department of Basic Education, National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: CAPS (History) Further Education and Training Phase 10–12. Government Printer, 2012, Foreword by Angie Motshegka, Minister of Basic Education.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

short-term and long-term results? History is seen to involve thinking critically about the stories people tell us about the past, as well as our own stories.<sup>104</sup>

The study of history is perceived to support citizenship within a democracy by:

- upholding the values of the South African Constitution and helping people to understand those values;
- reflecting the perspectives of a broad social spectrum so that race, class, gender and the voices of ordinary people are represented;
- encouraging civic responsibility and responsible leadership, including raising current social and environmental concerns;
- promoting human rights and peace by challenging prejudices that involve race, class, gender, ethnicity and xenophobia; and
- preparing young people for local, regional, national, continental and global responsibility.<sup>105</sup>

The specific aims of history are to create:

- an interest in and enjoyment of the study of the past;
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past and the forces that shaped it;
- the ability to undertake a process of historical enquiry based on skills; and
- an understanding of historical concepts, including historical sources and evidence.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

In the study of History, the following concepts are pertinent:

Historical sources and evidence: History is not the past itself. It is the interpretation and explanation of information from various sources. Evidence is created when sources are used to answer questions about the past.

Multi-perspectivity: There are many ways of looking at the same thing. These perspectives may be the result of different points of view of people in the past according to their position in society, the different ways in which historians have written about them and the different ways in which people today see the actions and behaviour of people of the past.

Cause and effect: This is the reason for events and the results of them. The consequences of something drive future events and help explain human behaviour.

Change and continuity: Over a period of time, it is possible to contrast what has changed and what has remained the same. Closely related contrasts that are used to teach history are 'similarity and difference', 'related to then and now', which help to make sense of the past and the present.

Time and chronology: History is studied and written in time sequence. It is important to be able to place events in the order in which they happened. Timelines are often used to develop this concept.<sup>107</sup>

Key questions are used to focus each topic. The purpose of this is to remind learners that:

- (a) questions convey that history is a discipline of enquiry and not just received knowledge;
- (b) historical knowledge is open-ended, debated and changeable;
- (c) history lessons should be built around the intrigue of questions; and
- (d) research, investigation and interpretation are guided by posed questions.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

### 3.3 Conclusion

The FET approach to History education – including the update offered by CAPS – can only be regarded as a huge improvement upon the syllabuses they replaced. The cornerstone of the current approach is that History has departed from the old content orientation of the past. Memory skills remain significant, although it is emphasised that content knowledge should not be assessed simply for its own sake, but rather as a way of measuring whether or not the History skills as outlined in the various Learning Outcomes have been achieved. The History presently offered at secondary schools has not only significantly departed from the content offered in the past – and particularly the skewed content offered during the days of apartheid History education – but also signals a new and exciting conception of what is important about the subject. The present day History syllabus attempts to encompass the totality of human experience. It aims to be politically and socially redemptive, as it attempts to address the needs of post-apartheid society. This approach to and definition of school History education can only be praised for both the broadness and depth of this new vision. Whether this vision has been actualised in South African secondary schools, is however another matter.

Since the apartheid era History education has undergone great change at secondary school level. The philosophy and rationale underlying the subject as well as the content and teaching method have all changed. Although many academics and History educators themselves have been critical of certain aspects of the final FET and GET product which had its first implementation in Grade 12 in 2008, there is universal consensus that History as a school subject is founded on a much more sound basis than was the case during the time of apartheid education. Secondary school History now boasts a broader, more inclusive syllabus and appears to be interesting to those learners who take the subject. African history is given a place of greater prominence. The open-minded emphasis on heritage issues is an improvement on the rather one-sided cultural emphasis which many felt had characterised the South African History offered in school History syllabuses of the past. Less blatant bias is present in the school History textbooks which present the content than was the case in the past, despite the perception of some educators that the old subjectivity of apartheid History has merely been replaced by a new subjectivity which favours the new

political order. GET and FET History may be criticised on technical and educational grounds, but what is clear is that it is no longer founded on the presumption that school History is a form of blatant propaganda, or a tool for political indoctrination.

The post-apartheid approach to History education in South African secondary schools has ushered in new perceptions of the subject – mostly positive – on the part of most educators and learners. However, these positive perceptions have not been shared by all post-apartheid educators and learners. Many educators are still uninformed and prejudiced against secondary school History. Learners' perceptions have improved but this does not seem related to the teaching they receive, but rather a product of the development of more open thinking and a more open-minded society. School administrations and even the Education Department do not appear to have become more favourably disposed toward History.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# PERCEPTIONS CREATED BY SYLLABUSES AND TEXTBOOKS, 1960–2012

### 4.1 Introduction

As much as educators have in recent years been encouraged to move beyond using textbooks as the basis upon which their lessons are presented, they remain the major and at times the only source of information available to learners. Textbooks reflect the perceptions of those who compile syllabuses as much as and perhaps even more than the perceptions of their authors. Together with the content of subject syllabuses, textbooks are responsible for determining learners' perceptions toward the subject and its content. Since their perception creating power is so potent, an overview of apartheid-era and post-apartheid-era textbooks and syllabuses is necessary.

### 4.2 Apartheid-era History syllabuses

A 'curriculum' can be defined as a set of courses offered by an educational institution or one of its branches, or a set of courses containing an area of specialisation.<sup>1</sup> Within the context of secondary school education, a curriculum refers to an overall, broad learning plan to be followed by learners in a particular school grade or phase. A 'syllabus' may be defined as: 'a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, course of study or of examination requirements'.<sup>2</sup> The syllabus in the context of secondary school education refers to a list of topics which are required to be studied in a particular grade during the course of an academic year for a particular subject. The topics and aims of a particular syllabus must conform to the expected outcomes of the curriculum of which it forms a part.<sup>3</sup> Chernis notes that the 'official' content of education is reflected in the curriculum, syllabuses and textbooks.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H.B. Woolf, ed., *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield Massachusetts, 1980), p. 277, as quoted by D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1171, as quoted by Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Black, pp. 29–30.

<sup>4</sup> R. E. Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present: A Study of South African School History Syllabuses and Textbooks, 1839–1990' (Ph.D thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990), p. 42.



The perceptions of at least apartheid-era government and educational authorities toward History education, as well as the perceptions of many of those who supported the separate development philosophy of the National Party are evident within the History syllabuses and their accompanying textbooks of the time. Mulholland notes that traditionally, school syllabuses and curricula are decided by those who wield power and that it is they who decide 'on the meaning and uses of history'.<sup>5</sup> Bernstein, referring to the hidden curriculum implicit within curricula offered at schools, posited that the way in which subjects are taught and examined reveal a great deal about the distribution of power in society, not least about issues of social control.<sup>6</sup> School knowledge, as a product, reveals much about the society which produces and uses it.<sup>7</sup> Despite the importance of other factors such as how schools are organised or how subjects are taught, 'in the final analysis the content of the curriculum and syllabi decides what beliefs are imparted to pupils.'<sup>8</sup> The curriculum, History included, is powerful since 'in the formative years of a child's life it has the power to define and control the meaning of the very categories and modes of thinking which the child will use'.<sup>9</sup>

School syllabuses serve to maintain the existing status quo and support the ideology proclaimed by society's elite.<sup>10</sup> Walsh supports the idea that the ideology found within curricula or syllabuses are in a politically oppressive society inherently conservative in nature. His description aptly represents education in apartheid South Africa:

The political system will tend to be reflected in the educational system it supports. In a dictatorship there will be little emphasis on criticism and analysis, teaching will tend to be doctrinaire and the system will be standardised and carefully controlled, once the cycle has started, it becomes extremely difficult to break it ... The

<sup>5</sup> R. Mulholland, 'What will Happen to the Past in the Future – the Dilemma and Contradiction in Teacher Education'. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990, conference papers, in M. H. Trümpelmann, ed., *Geskiedenis in 'n Multikulturele Samelewing/History Teaching in a Multicultural Society* (Johannesburg, 1990), p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control: Vol. 3* (London, 1975), p. 85 as adapted by Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present', p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> R. B. Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol. I and II' (M.Ed dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981), p. 322.

<sup>8</sup> Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching', p. 251.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54, as quoted by Black, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

emphasis is on preservation of the past, rather than a concern with the future.<sup>11</sup>

Chernis points out that particularly within plural societies, educational policy-making is a political activity. It is designed to socialise the youth in a particular way and to protect and enhance group interests. In short, it is a vehicle of domination.<sup>12</sup> Mulholland points out that the nature of a society will determine just how much control over the education offered to its citizens is needed. The greater the degree of autocratic features in a society, especially if it is perceived to be under threat, the greater the level of interest shown by the authorities in education. Of all subjects offered at school, History will be given special attention as it is perceived that the subject can be effectively used to mould opinion to conform to approved criteria. Content of curricula will be selective – not only will truth be distorted, but unsound methodology will inevitably be imposed. Societies split by racial, religious, moral or linguistic differences will tend to regard History teaching and learning as very important.<sup>13</sup> Chernis observes that the greater the degree of fragmentation of society, the more controversial its History teaching will be.<sup>14</sup> In such autocratic and divided societies, History is used not to encourage harmony among society but rather to stress differences, separation and the superiority of the group which desires to remain dominant.<sup>15</sup>

Bam (1993) was acutely aware that apartheid-era school History syllabuses robbed learners who were not part of the ruling elite from gaining a full and realistic picture of the past. Writing about the 1985 History syllabus, she noted that all the traditions and experiences of all in South African society were not incorporated. A sense of alienation was felt by black learners because their own traditions and experience was not represented in the History they learned at school – ‘they are still denied the pedagogical experience of identifying with the content and exploring ‘relevant’ alternative ‘perspectives’ of that content.’<sup>16</sup> Learners are not provided with the chance to fully understand the world in which they live. They are denied the opportunity of making a coherent link between past, present and future. They

<sup>11</sup> J. E. Walsh, *Education and Political Power* (New York, 1964), p. 8, as quoted by Mulholland, p. 48, quoted by Black, pp. 30–31.

<sup>12</sup> Chernis, ‘The Past in Service of the Present’, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> Mulholland, p. 322.

<sup>14</sup> Chernis, p. 330, as quoted by Black, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Mulholland, p. 323.

<sup>16</sup> J. Bam, ‘The Development of New History Curriculum for the Secondary School Level in South Africa: Considerations Related to the Possible Inclusion of Themes Drawn from Unity Movement History’ (M.Ed dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1993), p. 2.

are unable to see History as a 'social interaction of all human beings'. In short, they are denied a place in history.<sup>17</sup> The unfortunate result of this domination of History by the ruling group is that History can become irrelevant to those who cannot identify with the experiences of the ruling group.<sup>18</sup>

The perceptions and beliefs of the ruling group are verbalised and repeated through the teaching and learning of school History, through the state curriculum which 'seeks to generate a normative consensus amongst the future citizens of the country.'<sup>19</sup> The dominant group, which may be represented through state, church, political parties or other interest groups will not adopt a neutral stance toward the image of the past which they seek to impart to the youth. Chernis notes that those in control of education will certainly attempt to use it to promote their own value systems. Through its appointed agents, the state will define the curriculum, approve texts, supervise examinations and issue school-leaving certificates.<sup>20</sup> Knowledge regarded as valuable by the ruling class will be incorporated into school syllabuses to be passed on to future generations.<sup>21</sup> History syllabuses will therefore reveal much about the perceptions of the elite, ruling class within society toward life in general and History education in particular.<sup>22</sup>

Although this thesis seeks to explore perceptions of History education from 1960, it is necessary to briefly describe curriculum developments as they relate to secondary school History education before this, in order to understand the varied reactions which people had to the History syllabuses which they were presented with after 1960. A selection of various apartheid-era History syllabuses will be analysed.

The Cape Senior Certificate History syllabus of 1961 was the same as that offered by the Cape Education Department in 1956. (Cape of Good Hope. Department of Public Education. Senior Secondary Course, 1961: 126–130).<sup>23</sup> The 1956 syllabus enjoined the aims of providing learners with a knowledge of the history of South Africa; how the country was governed; the events which influenced the South African way of life; to explain the heritage

<sup>17</sup> Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum', p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Chernis, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Chernis, pp. 281–282.

which had created the learners' past; to provide insight into current problems and to assist learners to meet the challenges of the future. Chernis believes that the fact that the content of the syllabus was focused less on distant and more upon modern history had political undertones.<sup>24</sup> Trends which are so evident in later apartheid-era secondary school History syllabuses are evident in this syllabus. Two aspects of 'Bantu Studies' were included, namely 'The Bantu Peoples of South Africa' and 'Native Policy and Administration'. The dual aspects of black migration into Southern Africa – with the intention, so Chernis asserts, of proving that black people as immigrants had no greater claim to South Africa than had whites, and a study of ethnic groups – with the intention of exaggerating the differences between the two groups, formed a theme of the syllabus.<sup>25</sup> Other aspects of black history and culture to be studied included 'Aspects of their Culture and Organisation'; 'Their Contact with the European'; 'The Impact of Western Civilization on the Bantu';<sup>26</sup> 'Native Policy and Administration'; 'Formation of Native Reserves'; 'Natives in Urban Areas'; their past and present political status; the various functions of the Governor-General, the Minister of Native Affairs, the Department of Native Affairs, the Native Commissioners and Chiefs and Headmen; the various Land Acts; the Trust system; present economic and social conditions in the reserves as well as in the urban areas and the legislation which dealt with their political status. Where black people featured elsewhere in the syllabus was predominantly as sources of labour, as evidenced by topics such as 'Slave Labour', 'Hottentot Labour', 'the Role of Native Labour' and 'Indian Labour'. Chernis regards the basic approach as being Eurocentric.<sup>27</sup>

The 1966 History syllabus is charged by Mulholland with being Eurocentric and as presenting History from an Afrikaner point of view. Among other observations made about the content of the 1966 syllabus, Mulholland notes that the South African section of the Standard 8 (Grade 10) syllabus was concerned almost exclusively with political history, more specifically the policy of separate development under the revealing heading 'The Bantu: New Approach since 1948'.<sup>28</sup> Mulholland highlights the presentation of the section of the syllabus which deals with British imperialism in which Van Jaarsveld ignores the intangible factors like

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280–281.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280–281.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>28</sup> Mulholland, pp. 280–281.

subtleties, good intentions and personal motives which underlie history.<sup>29</sup> Mulholland does however note that the stated aims of the syllabus encouragingly closely resembled those given in other parts of the world, calling for ‘a critical approach to modern conditions’ as well as a tolerant and impartial attitude.<sup>30</sup> Any critical and tolerant trends apparent in this syllabus were however to be endangered by the imminent introduction of the National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967, which sought to subordinate South African school education to the influence of the philosophy of Christian National Education (CNE) and the dictates of the National Party government.

The 1969 Cape Senior Secondary Course History syllabus reflected changes in government policy and emphasis. Chernis notes that more attention was given to the coloured and Indian population. Political developments such as the establishment of a Republic (1961) and the emergence of South West Africa and Ian Smith’s Rhodesia were included in the syllabus. The section on Africa, which included a study of various African independence movements was, according to Chernis, a reflection of Prime Minister John Vorster’s new outward looking foreign policy.<sup>31</sup>

The close relationship between government policy and History syllabuses is evident in the 1972 syllabus, which followed the adoption of the National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967, which sought to impose the philosophy of Christian National Education upon South African schools. The principles and values propounded by CNE were upheld in the 1972 History syllabus. These principles are outlined by Behr:

- Education provided by the State ‘shall have a Christian character’.
- Education ‘shall have a broad national character’.
- Co-ordination on a national basis in respect of syllabuses, courses and examination standards shall be effected.<sup>32</sup>

In line with the stated objectives of CNE, the intention of the 1969 Act was that the entire educational system and its subject content was to be Christo-centric, reflecting a ‘Christian

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 281–282.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>31</sup> Chernis, p. 282.

<sup>32</sup> A. L. Behr, *New Perspectives in South African Education* (Durban, 1978), p. 42, as quoted by Chernis, p. 289.

character', which was defined as 'education founded on the Bible'.<sup>33</sup> Chernis points to the clear significance of History education in this ideal of education:

National character, according to the Act, was to be imprinted, amongst others, though 'the conscious expansion of every pupil's knowledge of the fatherland, embracing language and cultural heritage, history and traditions, national symbols ... and national achievements'; and by developing this knowledge by presenting it 'in the teaching of the ... national history of the fatherland, Civics and Geography ... and further through the participation of pupils in national festivals and their regular honouring of the national symbols, so as to ... inculcate a spirit of patriotism, founded on loyalty and responsibility toward the fatherland ...'<sup>34</sup>

It is clear from the values, symbols and events described above that the Act envisioned History playing a crucial role in the development of the 'National' character of education in South Africa. Chernis notes that in order to co-ordinate syllabuses, courses and examination standards, a joint interdepartmental committee was appointed which consisted of representatives from all the provincial Education Departments as well as the Department of National Education.<sup>35</sup> New core syllabuses were drawn up by the joint subject committees of all the education departments, following which each education department compiled its own syllabuses around these cores, taking local needs and circumstances into consideration.<sup>36</sup> These syllabuses again apologised for government policy, as evidenced by the inclusion of constitutional history up until 1970 and sections dealing with the social, economic and political development of non-white people. With regard to black people, provision was made for the study of 'separate development' and 'separate homelands' while the Indian Council and the Coloured Representative Council were also in the syllabus. Again, Vorster's outward looking African foreign policy was included 'to legitimise current

<sup>33</sup> Chernis, p. 289.

<sup>34</sup> Republic of South Africa, *Government Gazette*. Vol. 120, No. 4749 of 20 June 1975, Notice No. R. 1192, as quoted by Chernis, pp. 289–290.

<sup>35</sup> Chernis, p. 290.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291. Chernis furnishes two examples of provincial syllabuses which were based on and differed little from the 1972 core syllabus, namely, the Transvaal Education Department *TED Syllabus vir Geskiedenis Hoër en Standaard-graad*. *Standaard* 8, 9, 10, Junie 1972 and the Natal Education Department *NED Syllabus for History Higher and Standard Grade*, 1974.

political policies'. The Junior Secondary Course of 1972 included the study of South African political history to the end of the Verwoerd era (1966).<sup>37</sup>

Mulholland points even more strongly to the politically apologetic nature of the 1972 History syllabus, emphasising the religious intent to nurture firm religious conviction in every learner together with 'the realisation that he is a member of various groups such as a community, cultural group, nation, political party, church and state'. Given this, indoctrination would of necessity have to be a feature of the syllabus.<sup>38</sup> Standard 10 (Grade 12) History was, for Mulholland little more than the history of the National Party together with an explanation of the Party's policies – a syllabus 'clearly intended to reinforce a political point of view'.<sup>39</sup> The syllabus stresses the role of the Afrikaner, but non-whites are regarded as if they had no history, aside from one which entailed conflict with whites. Mulholland asserts that what could be regarded as current political controversy is instead dealt with as factual history and the influence of CNE philosophy in the syllabus is very clear.<sup>40</sup> Chernis notes that these national core syllabuses were to remain in force until the mid-1980s when new national core syllabuses were introduced.<sup>41</sup>

During the 1980s a core History syllabus was drawn up for the use of all education departments, black and white included, by an authority consisting of the heads of 'white' education of the four provinces and the Director-General of National Education. This step, which might have been progressive, demonstrates how little had actually changed. It was clear that educational decision-making remained entirely under white control and more specifically with the Afrikaner elite. The result was that the History syllabus continued to reflect the ideology of the white ruling class.<sup>42</sup> Bam, writing about the core History syllabus

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291. Chernis cites two departmental History syllabi which included a study of South African political history to 1966, namely, the Transvaal Education Department *TED Syllabus for History Standards 5, 6, 7, 1972*; and the Natal Education Department *N. E. D. Syllabus for History Standards 5, 6, 7, 1974*.

<sup>38</sup> Mulholland, p. 292.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>41</sup> Chernis, p. 292.

<sup>42</sup> M.J. Walker, 'History and History Teaching in Apartheid South Africa', in J. Brown, *et al.*, eds, *History From South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 273, as quoted by Black, p. 34.

of the 1980s, noted that it still displayed 'eiesoortige', white bias in the content which it offered and that it continued to reflect a Nationalist Party perspective of history.<sup>43</sup>

The content of the syllabus was substantially rearranged. Chernis notes that the biographical approach of the previous syllabus has been dropped in the new Junior Secondary Course. The Standard 5 (Grade 7) syllabus dealt with the topic 'The Development of the Cape Colony 1707–1975', and the British and Batavian administration between 1795 and 1806. The Standard 6 (Grade 8) syllabus, which had been shifted from the old Standard 8 (Grade 10) syllabus, covered events from 1806 to 1854. The three subdivisions into which it was divided dealt with the Mfecane, the Second British Occupation and the Great Trek, which also happened to comprise two thirds of the Standard 6 (Grade 8) syllabus. The Standard 7 (Grade 9) syllabus covered the period between 1854 to 1961 and required learners to study three of five themes: Mineral Discoveries, The Anglo-Boer War, from 'Union to Republic', 'The Basic Principles of how the Republic of South Africa is at present governed at all levels', and finally 'Any topic in modern South African history determined by an education department'. Interestingly, the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War were the only two themes in the course which recommended additional reading from learners. The Standard 8 (Grade 10) syllabus, which lost a large section of South African history to the Standard 6 (Grade 8) syllabus, started South African history with a 'brief revision' of the Mfecane and the Great Trek, but was mainly concerned with the relationship between the British and the Trekker communities through to the 1880s. The syllabus also allowed for a regional study. A section of the old Standard 9 (Grade 11) syllabus has been included in the new Standard 8 (Grade 10) syllabus. The Standard 9 (Grade 11) syllabus covered a shorter period – from 1882 to 1910 and focused on the socio-economic effects of the discovery of diamonds and gold; on the clash between 'British Imperialism' and 'Afrikaner Republicanism'; on 'the incorporation of independent chiefdoms' and on events leading to Union. The Standard 10 (Grade 12) syllabus again covered the period 1910 to 1970, but grouped the material into three chronological periods (1910–1924, 1924–1948, 1948–1970), two consecutive periods of which had to be studied, the choice of which could be determined by each examining

<sup>43</sup> Bam, p. 22, as quoted by Black, p. 34.



body. In essence, large amounts of content had been rearranged but little had really changed. The same topics were offered, often verbatim.<sup>44</sup>

Writing about the content of late apartheid-era History syllabuses, Cuthbertson and Grundlingh note that in terms of syllabus, History education became more sophisticated during the late apartheid era in order to keep pace with constitutional developments such as the advent of tricameralism.<sup>45</sup> Bam confirms that the educational policies of the ruling National Party government shifted over time 'from the Verwoerdian dream toward a multi-cultural reformist dream. Curriculum content in schools evolved from being blatantly racist to more subtle forms of justifying white rule in South Africa'.<sup>46</sup> With regard to History education, a fresh ethnic landscape was created in which heroic black figures were shown to invoke and legitimise separate development. Shaka, and not Verwoerd, was depicted as the original creator of the homelands. The exploitation and resistance of the coloured people was replaced by an approach which emphasised their 'positive' contribution to white South Africa, an interpretation which better suited their proposed role as junior partners in government.<sup>47</sup>

Black learners, educators and academics were not deceived by the content or approach of late apartheid-era History syllabuses. Ndlovu, writing about the Core Syllabus for Standard 10 (Grade 12), Higher Grade, 1988: South African History Section B, confirms Cuthbertson and Grundlingh's belief that even though during the last years of apartheid the History syllabuses may have changed, an apology for apartheid was nevertheless presented, even if in a more refined way. Syllabus changes in black schools, notes Ndlovu, at this time were only cosmetic.<sup>48</sup> Commenting on the same syllabus, Zwane notes that it was 'dominated by Afrikaner-orientated actors and events. Whilst the English-speaking activities and events are

<sup>44</sup> Chernis, pp. 293–294. Chernis cites examples from the *Transvaal Education Department Syllabus for History, Standards 5, 6, 7, 1985*; the *Cape Education Department Junior Secondary Course Syllabus for History Standard Grade, 1984*; the *Cape Education Department. Senior Secondary Course. Syllabus for History Higher Grade 1985*; and the *Transvaal Education Department Syllabus for History Higher Grade Standards 8–10, 1985*.

<sup>45</sup> G. Cuthbertson and A. Grundlingh, 'Some Problematical Issues in the Restructuring of History Education in South African Schools', *South African Historical Journal*, 26 (1992), p. 158, as quoted by Black, p. 34.

<sup>46</sup> Bam, p. 22, as quoted by Black, p. 34.

<sup>47</sup> Cuthbertson and Grundlingh, 'Some Problematical Issues in the Restructuring of History Education', p.158, as quoted by Black, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> S. M. Ndlovu, 'Perceptions of History and Experiences of Learning among African Students in the Early 1990s, in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Pietermaritzburg' (M. A. mini-dissertation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1993), p. 17, as quoted by Black, p. 35.

presented in a low profile manner, those of blacks are portrayed as appendages not forming part of the South African history'.<sup>49</sup>

The perceptions of black people toward apartheid-era History syllabuses after 1960 need to be understood against the context of the educational legislation of the 1950s. In 1954 the Bantu Education Department was established. The result of this was that instead of using provincial syllabuses if black schools were under provincial control or the Joint Matriculation Board's (JMB) syllabuses if under church control,<sup>50</sup> new syllabuses, drawn up in 1953 were utilised. These syllabuses were drawn up by white officials of the Education Department, even though one of the stated intentions of the Bantu Education Act was to involve black parents in the education of their children.<sup>51</sup> Black educators, parents or interested organisations had little say in the compilation of the Bantu Education curriculum. Malie points out that the History syllabus was not framed by black people themselves and therefore did not emphasise their 'national heritage'.<sup>52</sup> The government was concerned that the curriculum for black learners should support the political and economic policies of the country. This entailed that the educational system for black people should support the premise that black people belonged in rural areas. Of necessity, the curriculum should address the issue of what knowledge black learners needed to know, assuming they remained in the homelands.<sup>53</sup>

By the 1960s, the ideas propounded by Dr Verwoerd in his 1954 Senate speeches concerning the content of the curriculum for black schools had not changed. These speeches reveal the great extent to which Bantu Education supported the separate development policies of the government:

The [old] curriculum ... and educational practice, by ignoring the segregation or 'apartheid' policy, was unable to prepare for service within the Bantu community. By blindly producing pupils trained on a

<sup>49</sup> I. E. Zwane, 'An Examination of the Position and Role of History in Black Secondary Schools, with Particular Reference to the period since the Introduction of Bantu Education', (Research Report in partial fulfilment of M.Ed., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), p. 168, as quoted by Black, p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Chernis, p. 294, as quoted by Black, p. 32.

<sup>51</sup> J. Seroto, 'The Impact of South African Legislation (1948–2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Perspective' (D.Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2004), p. 121, as quoted by Black, p. 32.

<sup>52</sup> E. Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary High Schools of the Southern Transvaal Region' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1967)', p. 92, as quoted by Black, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> Seroto, 'The Impact of South African Legislation', pp. 121–122, as quoted by Black, p. 32.

European model, the vain hope was created among Natives that they could occupy posts within the European community despite the country's policy of 'apartheid'. This is what is meant by the creation of unhealthy 'White collar ideals' and the causation of widespread frustration among the so-called educated Natives.<sup>54</sup>

It is clear that an education provided in this form must stand isolated from the life of Bantu society. It prepares them not for life within a Bantu community, progressively uplifted by education, but for a life outside the community and for posts which in fact do not exist – the curriculum therefore, envisages a system of education which is based on the circumstances of the community and aims to satisfy the needs of that community. The vehicle of instruction will be the mother tongue of the pupil. Besides the usual subjects – religious instruction, handicrafts, singing and rhythm must come into their own, that is self evident.<sup>55</sup>

Verwoerd's curriculum ideals for a segregated black school education never however quite reached the level aspired to in his 1954 speeches. At the level of Junior Certificate (Standards 6–8 or Grade 8–10) syllabuses were differentiated for black and white learners. The first distinctive Junior Certificate designed for black learners was introduced in 1957, with a major revision in 1967. Hartshorne maintains that it was at the level of these curricula that apartheid ideology was strongly emphasised.<sup>56</sup> He points to the preamble of the Social Studies syllabus, which states that institutions such as home, school and church should contribute toward the moulding of learners and their adaptation to life. The influence of the ideology proclaimed by Dr Verwoerd is evident:

To give the pupil a clear conception of his social and economic environment, taking into account that he must of necessity adapt himself to the environment in which he will have to live as an adult. To awaken in him a realisation of his relationship to others, and the nature of his social responsibilities and duties based on the knowledge and experience accumulated by him at school, as well as in other spheres of life.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Union of South Africa, *Senate Debates*, Volume II, Columns 2598–2599, 1954, as quoted by Black, p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> Union of South Africa, *Senate Debates*, Volume II, Columns 2610–2611, 1954, as quoted by Black, p. 32–33.

<sup>56</sup> K. B. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910–1990* (Cape Town, 1992), pp. 71–72, as quoted by Black, p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72, as quoted by Black, p. 33.

Black learners taking Senior Certificate courses (Standards 9–10 or Grades 11–12) between 1955 and 1975 however followed the same syllabuses as white learners. While white learners wrote various provincial examinations, from 1962 black learners wrote the examinations of the National Senior Certificate. The Bantu Education Department increasingly took over the administration of this examination, with examiners and markers coming from within this Department.<sup>58</sup> Black learners who wished to undertake a matriculation course had to follow the syllabuses offered by other Education Departments, but invariably those of the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB). Among History syllabuses taken by black learners were: the National Senior Certificate, Transvaal Senior Certificate, Natal Senior Certificate and the Cape Senior Certificate syllabus. The History syllabuses of the mid-1960s, used by those Education Departments, were followed in black secondary schools and the textbooks used were identical.<sup>59</sup>

The sidelining of black people and their history is evident in apartheid-era History syllabuses. This is clear in the Transvaal Education Department (TED) Standard Grade History syllabuses for Standards 8–10 (Grades 10 – 12).<sup>60</sup> An examination of the stated aims and contents of these syllabuses demonstrate that during the late apartheid era little had changed which might have created a more positive perception of the subject by a black community now demanding political and social reform. Several of the stated aims of the teaching of History, which form a section of the prefix to the syllabus reveal intimate links to the ideology of apartheid. Separate groups, nations and cultural identities are strongly stressed. One example is found under aim 3.3.2 and is titled ‘Group development’:

To give the pupils the knowledge and insight into the origin and establishment of the society, cultural group, nation and church to which he belongs, so as to develop an appreciation of his own identity. This may result in service.<sup>61</sup>

Ironically, the above sentiment about pupils appreciating their own culture, identity and national history really only applied to white learners. The South African section of the TED Standard Grade Standard 8 (Grade 10) History syllabus concerns the ongoing power struggle

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71, as quoted by Black, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Zwane, ‘An Examination of the Position and Role of History’, p. 52, as quoted by Black, p. 33.

<sup>60</sup> Transvaal Education Department: Syllabus for History Standard Grade Standards 8–10. TED Document 736. Undated, as quoted by Black, p. 35.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, as quoted by Black, p. 35.

between the British and Afrikaner groups in South Africa between the time of the Great Trek to the annexation of the ZAR up to and including 1884. The final section of this syllabus has a hopeful title: 'The history of a community south of the Limpopo during the second half of the nineteenth century', but only one of three themes could be studied. These three themes included the contribution of German immigrants to the development of the Transvaal; life on the goldfields of the Eastern Transvaal (social and economic) or the history of education in the Transvaal.<sup>62</sup> Scant attention was paid to the history of black people in South Africa, which may have been more relevant to black learners. History remained a subject perceived to be written by white people for white people, which largely confined itself to a study of their own interests. Van der Berg and Buckland noted that late apartheid-era History syllabuses reflected a white perspective providing the impression that South African history had been created by whites and that the history of other groups was compartmentalised to provide background information. In fact, the idea that before 1652 there was no South African history to speak of was propagated by the ruling elite and generally accepted by most South African whites. History which was Eurocentric and 'white-orientated' came to be taught in schools.<sup>63</sup>

The story of the rivalry between English and Afrikaans speaking whites was simply taken further by the TED Standard Grade Standard 9 (Grade 11) South African History syllabus. The syllabus began with the discovery of gold and its economic and social effects up to 1910. The rivalry between Afrikaner Republicanism and British Imperialism and the incorporation of the independent chiefdoms into the ZAR, up until the Peace of Vereeniging was covered. Finally the period between the South African War and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 was investigated.<sup>64</sup> It is clear that the Standard 9 (Grade 11) Standard Grade TED History syllabus was almost entirely devoted to the exposition of white South African history.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17, as quoted by Black, p. 35–36.

<sup>63</sup> Chernis, p. 335–336, quoting O. van der Berg and P. Buckland, *Beyond the History Syllabus: Constraints and Opportunities* (Pietermaritzburg, 1983), pp. 12–13, 31–33.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19, as quoted by Black, p. 36.

By the end of the apartheid era the History syllabus was criticised by most South African interest groups. Chernis notes that by the end of the 1980s the only South Africans defending the History syllabus were those to the right of the government, who may have represented about a third of the white electorate.<sup>65</sup> Unhappiness with the History syllabus was also expressed by Afrikaner intellectuals such as J. M. du Preez and F. A. van Jaarsveld as well as bodies such as the Transvaal High Schools' History Teachers' Association and individual History educators.<sup>66</sup>

Research which I conducted among black History educators in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga who had taught the subject during the apartheid era, reveals that a negative perception toward the History syllabus among both learners and educators was held at the time. Asked how their fellow learners had perceived the syllabus, respondents reflected that they had studied it reluctantly and had felt negative towards it. Textbooks had reminded learners about painful issues like Land Acts and other discriminatory apartheid legislation.<sup>67</sup> One educator noted that as he attempted to avoid teaching about politically sensitive questions, his learners did not attempt to hide the fact that they 'were aware of the truth and that our teachings were factually incorrect.'<sup>68</sup>

A few educators had dared to venture beyond the limits of the syllabus, but most reported that they would simply stick to teaching the prescribed syllabus content, even if they had personally disagreed with it. One of my 2008 respondents reported that he had taught History from the perspective of Black Consciousness, and had emphasised facets of Black Consciousness such as 'black is beautiful' and the reality of black resistance to white conquest as well as highlighting the history of black figures such as Shaka, Dingane, Cetewayo, Moshoshoe and Sekhukuni.<sup>69</sup> Another respondent noted that he had felt pressured to have to follow textbooks, 'though it was really painful to know the truth – one could do nothing as one had to take care not to say or comment negatively'.<sup>70</sup> One educator related that he would tell learners what he termed 'the truth' and then advise them to consult other sources of information if privately approached by learners but otherwise had

<sup>65</sup> Chernis, pp. 331–332.

<sup>66</sup> Chernis, pp. 332–333.

<sup>67</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, pp. 40–41.

<sup>68</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 7, as quoted by Black, p. 41.

<sup>69</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 41.

to stick strictly to the syllabus as 'Big Brother was keeping a watchful eye on us all the time'.<sup>71</sup>

There were both black and white History educators who spiritualised the History syllabus which they saw as a means of promoting a spiritual message and of inculcating spiritual lessons and values to learners. Conservative black educators, represented by the work of Ebenezer Malie<sup>72</sup> and Eva Motshabi<sup>73</sup> devalued the customs and beliefs of indigenous black people and believed that the Western and 'Christian' values promoted by the History syllabuses of their time (1960s and early 1970s) offered black learners who absorbed their content freedom from what they believed were oppressive indigenous customs and initiation into modern Western religion and norms. For Malie, one of the functions of education in general and History education in particular was to develop high spiritual ideals in learners,<sup>74</sup> to explore the question of the essence of man and his destiny<sup>75</sup> and to create values which would 'make him the man he should be'.<sup>76</sup> History educators should strive to inspire their learners to love beauty, truth and goodness – reflections of the values which should be evident in the lives of educators themselves.<sup>77</sup> History education is the arena in which moral development is taught to learners, unfortunately at the expense of what Malie terms the 'primitive and simple world of the underdeveloped Bantu people', who hold values which 'may be regarded as morally reprehensible in the more progressive world'.<sup>78</sup> Writers such as Malie and Motshabi represent a strong stream of conservative black thinking, popular until at least the Soweto Uprising of 1976, a kind of reaction to apartheid policy well documented by Soudien<sup>79</sup>, who based his findings upon the 1989 dissertation of M. J. Cameron.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>71</sup> 2008 Educator's questionnaire, Response 7, as quoted by Black, p. 41.

<sup>72</sup> E. Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary High Schools'.

<sup>73</sup> E. Motshabi, 'The Use of the Textbook in the Teaching of History in Bantu High Schools' (D.Ed. thesis, Fort Hare University, 1973).

<sup>74</sup> Malie, p. 32.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>79</sup> C. Soudien, 'Teachers' Responses to the Introduction of Apartheid' in P. Kallaway, ed., *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened* (New York, 2002).

<sup>80</sup> M. J. Cameron, 'The Introduction of Bantu Education and the Question of Resistance: Cooperation, Non-Collaboration or Defiance? The Struggle for African Schooling with Special Reference to Cape

The conservative spiritualisation of the History syllabus on the part of white apartheid-era education officials is especially evident after the adoption of the philosophy of CNE in 1967. Chernis, in examining the Study Guide of the TED Study Committee for History titled 'The Cultivation of a Positive Attitude as Aim of the Teaching of History' notes the extensive references to Christian religious values contained within it.<sup>81</sup> History ought to be studied from a Christian conviction and tradition as it is acknowledged that it is God who controls the destiny of nations. A learner's own spiritual heritage should never be abandoned 'because the survival of his own people as a cultural society depends on this'.<sup>82</sup> A good History teacher ought to 'deliberately promulgate fundamental convictions (original emphasis) which are basic to a Christian-National view of life, and the world'.<sup>83</sup> Steadfast faith and obedience to God, as demonstrated by various Afrikaner leaders should be emphasised.<sup>84</sup>

Mpumalanga-based white Afrikaans and English-speaking educators whom I surveyed in 2012 exhibited mixed perceptions when recalling their own experiences of the History syllabuses which they had encountered in secondary school. Responding to a question which asked respondents to describe how they had felt about the History syllabuses which they had studied prior to 1994, seven respondents (10.6 per cent)<sup>85</sup> specifically mentioned that they had enjoyed learning about South African history. Seventeen (25.8 per cent)<sup>86</sup> noted that they had enjoyed learning about European history. A survey of all answered questions indicated that a total of 32 respondents (49.2 per cent)<sup>87</sup> had enjoyed History in general. Of these respondents who had perceived History positively, five were English-speaking (33.3 per cent of the total number of English-speaking pre-1994 secondary school educated surveyed respondents)<sup>88</sup> and 27 were Afrikaans-speaking (54.0 per cent of the total number of Afrikaans-speaking pre-1994 secondary school educated surveyed

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Town, 1945–1960' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989).

<sup>81</sup> Chernis, pp. 285–286, quoting examples from T. E. D. A., TED Study Committee for History. Study Guide No. 14. The Cultivation of a Positive Attitude as Aim of the Teaching of History, undated.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 285–286.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>85</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 47, 54, 56, 66, 81, 86.

<sup>86</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 13, 15, 18, 20, 40, 42, 42–43, 47–48, 50, 54–56, 58, 63, 66.

<sup>87</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 11, 13–16, 18, 20–21, 36, 42–43, 47–48, 50, 52, 54–56, 58–59, 62–63, 66–67, 69–70, 76, 80–82, 86.

<sup>88</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 13, 20, 42, 55, 63.



respondents).<sup>89</sup> Twenty-five (37.9 per cent)<sup>90</sup> of respondents indicated that they had not enjoyed taking History at secondary school, or had no interest in the subject. Of these respondents who had perceived History negatively, nine were English-speaking (60.0 per cent of the total number of English-speaking pre-1994 secondary school educated surveyed respondents)<sup>91</sup> and 16 were Afrikaans-speaking (32.0 per cent of the total number of Afrikaans-speaking pre-1994 secondary school educated surveyed respondents).<sup>92</sup>

Not a single white respondent expressed the belief that the content of the History syllabus in any way disadvantaged them. Unlike my black respondents of 2008, no white respondents expressed the need to teach or learn outside the parameters of a syllabus perceived to be politically biased. Many expressed the feeling that the syllabus had either bored or interested them, but perhaps because white learners of the apartheid era largely lived lives free from the pressures and discrimination of an oppressive system, the perception that the contents of a History syllabus could be a serious matter escaped them.

The 66 respondents to my 2012 educators' questionnaire who had experienced secondary school History education at white schools before 1994 demonstrated that the perceptions of the white community of History education at school – and by implication the History syllabus – were mixed.<sup>93</sup> Responding to the question 'How do you think your community as a whole felt about History education at school?', positive perceptions were expressed by 29 (43.9 per cent) of respondents.<sup>94</sup>

Negative perceptions on the part of the apartheid-era white community toward History education – and by implication the History syllabus – were expressed by eight (12.1 per cent) of my 2012 respondents who had received their secondary school education prior to

<sup>89</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 11, 14–16, 18, 21, 36, 43, 47–48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58–59, 62, 66, 67, 69–70, 76, 80–82, 86.

<sup>90</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 4–5, 8, 13, 16–17, 19–20, 23, 28–29, 33, 37, 39, 44, 52–53, 60–61, 66, 68, 71, 84, 87.

<sup>91</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 5, 13, 20, 37, 44, 53, 61, 68, 84.

<sup>92</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 4, 8, 16–17, 19, 23, 28–29, 33, 39, 52, 60, 66, 71, 87.

<sup>93</sup> The following twenty-one respondents to the 2012 Educators' questionnaire had received their secondary school education after 1994 and were therefore not included in the responses which were considered: 2, 6, 10, 12, 22, 24–26, 30–31, 41, 49, 57, 65, 72–75, 77, 79, 85.

<sup>94</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3–4, 9, 11, 14, 19, 32, 35–37, 44, 47, 51–55, 59, 66–70, 76, 80, 82, 86–87.

1994.<sup>95</sup> Reasons for the negative perceptions included notions that History was boring, impractical and not career-related, too political and that its value was not realised. Interestingly, all eight negative responses were provided by Afrikaans-speaking respondents.

A sizeable number of respondents – 15 (22.7 per cent) – noted that the predominant perception of their community toward History education was one of indifference.<sup>96</sup> The responses I received from the 2012 surveyed educators who received their secondary school education before 1994 are reproduced in full since they speak for themselves – and point far better than I could to a startling level of indifference toward History education and the content of it. Most of the respondents who perceived that their communities felt indifferent toward secondary school History education were Afrikaans-speaking.

Viewed History as a “nice to have” subject, but with no real value.<sup>97</sup>

The community was very disinterested and non-opinionated about History as a subject as the government of the time probably decided what was taught and the syllabus. People didn’t really care and felt that it was “safe” history that wouldn’t ask any questions of people.<sup>98</sup>

That South African history was irrelevant.<sup>99</sup>

Have no idea, it was just a school subject to them.<sup>100</sup>

Probably just viewed it as a subject that had to be taken. I don’t think anyone thought much about it.<sup>101</sup>

Responses which noted both positive and negative perceptions toward secondary school History education on the part of the community were received from two respondents (3.0

<sup>95</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 8, 15, 21, 27, 29, 43, 60, 71.

<sup>96</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 1, 16–18, 23, 28, 34, 40, 42, 45, 48, 58, 61–63.

<sup>97</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 17. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

<sup>98</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>99</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 61. [English; 1972–1976; Scottsburgh High School]

<sup>100</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 63. [English; 1977–1981; CBC Bloemfontein]

<sup>101</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 42. [English; 1978–1982; Witbank Convent]

per cent).<sup>102</sup> One respondent specifically mentioned ‘a mixed community with mixed feelings’.<sup>103</sup> Blank, ‘don’t know’ or ‘unsure’ responses were received from eight respondents (12.1 per cent)<sup>104</sup> while four respondents (6.1 per cent) returned irrelevant responses which did not provide an answer to the given question.<sup>105</sup>

The above responses which demonstrate a less than universal approval by the white and particularly the Afrikaans-speaking community toward History education and its content were clearly not what the architects of CNE, apartheid-era education departments or the government would have wished for. The perception that white South Africans eagerly embraced apartheid-era History syllabuses does not appear to be supported by the research I conducted among Mpumalanga-based secondary school educators who received their secondary school education during this time.

The widely differing perceptions which black and white people held toward the content of History syllabuses throughout the apartheid era is reflected by detailed research conducted under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council in 1991 which tabulated the perceptions of black and white secondary school History educators toward the syllabus.<sup>106</sup> Examples of differences include more black educators wanting ‘The History of Africa’ to be increased in the syllabus than did their white counterparts. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of black secondary school History educators wanted increased syllabus representation for ‘The History of the Black Man in South Africa’, ‘Apartheid’, ‘History of Liberation Movements in South Africa’, ‘Pre-colonial History of South Africa’, ‘Dispossession of Land’, ‘Capitalism and Class Struggles’ and ‘Trade Unions’. This illustrates that by 1991, black secondary school History educators were unconvinced by government attempts to reform History syllabuses and strongly wished to include topics of more relevance to the history of black people in general and of their struggle against apartheid in particular. In contrast, aside from ‘The History of the Black Man in South Africa’ and ‘The History of

<sup>102</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 20, 83.

<sup>103</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 83. [English; 1968–1972; Lowveld High School]

<sup>104</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 5, 13, 29, 46, 64, 78, 81, 84.

<sup>105</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 7, 33, 38, 56.

<sup>106</sup> A. van der Merwe, A. Vermaak and S. Lombard, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA: HSRC Education Research Programme No. 19* (Pretoria, 1991), pp. 24–26, as quoted by Black, p. 37.

Africa', white respondents felt that all the topics listed above should not be given more importance in the History syllabus or indeed should even be excluded from it altogether.

Chernis makes the important point (so evident in the TED Standard Grade 1985–1987 syllabuses) that school History syllabuses do not reflect contemporary political realities.<sup>107</sup> He points out that by the end of the 1980s History syllabuses and textbooks used at schools reflected an image of the past which was at least a decade old, dominated by the white Afrikaner National Party government. The reality was that by the close of the 1980s, even the National Party government had left the conservative officials responsible for drawing up the syllabus far behind. The History syllabuses of this time, concludes Chernis, were 'perpetuating an image of the past not necessarily still accepted by the ruling party ... helping to prop up a political and social dispensation which no longer exists'.<sup>108</sup> By the mid-1980s the conservative perceptions of the syllabus-setting officials whom Chernis refers to were not only not shared by the government but particularly by those in the History-teaching profession and others who embarked upon various programmes of curriculum reform to better enable school History to be a meaningful subject within the school curriculum of a democratic South Africa.

#### 4.3 Post-apartheid-era History syllabuses

The present day GET (Grade 8 and 9) Social Sciences History syllabuses can hardly be accused of being politically biased against the Afrikaner in particular or white people in general – if anything a case could be made for the syllabuses not being centered enough on South African history. The second term of the Grade 8 History syllabus investigates the theme of 'Resisting British Control' and interrogates topics such as the wars between the British and the Zulu and Pedi kingdoms as well as the South African War (1899–1902). The rest of the Grade 8 syllabus investigates topics such as Industrialisation, the French Revolution and the build-up to, as well as certain aspects of the First World War. Apartheid in South Africa is a section of the Grade 9 History syllabus. The theme is dealt with in a superficial fashion and encompasses the history of apartheid from its introduction in the 1940s to its demise in the 1990s. The other topics offered in the Grade 9 History syllabus include 'Nazi Germany and the Holocaust', 'Human Rights' and the 'Cold War and the

<sup>107</sup> Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present', pp. 330–331, 353.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331, as quoted by Black, p. 37.

Nuclear Age’ – it is clear that these syllabuses are not politically biased against the Afrikaner or the Afrikaans role in South African history but are rather intended to provide learners with a broad knowledge of South African and world history.

The CAPS History syllabuses, together with those of other subjects, have been and are presently being phased into secondary schools. The Grade 10 History syllabus became operative in 2012, while the Grade 12 syllabus is due to be implemented in 2014. Both Grade 8 and 9 syllabuses are also due for implementation in 2014. The topics in the new syllabuses, including those from Grade 4 to 7 are presented in Table 4.1 below.<sup>109</sup>

**TABLE 4.1**

<b>HISTORY CONTENT TOPICS GRADES 4 to 12</b>	
<b>TERM</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>
1	Local history
2	Learning from leaders
3	Transport through time
4	Communication through time
	<b>Grade 5</b>
1	Hunter-gatherers and herders in Southern Africa
2	The first farmers in Southern Africa
3	An ancient African society: Egypt
4	A heritage trail through the provinces of South Africa
	<b>Grade 6</b>
1	An African kingdom long ago in Southern Africa: Mapungubwe
2	Explorers from Europe find Southern Africa
3	Democracy and citizenship in South Africa
4	Medicine through time
	<b>Grade 7</b>
1	The kingdom of Mali and the city of Timbuktu in the 14 <sup>th</sup> century
2	The Transatlantic slave trade
3	Colonisation of the Cape in the 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries
4	Co-operation and conflict on the frontiers of the Cape Colony in the early 18 <sup>th</sup> century
	<b>Grade 8</b>
1	The Industrial Revolution in Britain and Southern Africa from 1860
2	The Mineral Revolution in South Africa
3	The scramble for Africa: late 19 <sup>th</sup> century

<sup>109</sup> Department of Basic Education *National Curriculum Statement (NCS) : Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Senior Phase Grades 7–9: Social Sciences*, (Pretoria, Government Printer, 2011), pp. 17–18. The Grade 4–7 syllabus content is included for the sake of completeness and interest.

<b>HISTORY CONTENT TOPICS GRADES 4 to 12</b>	
4	World War I (1914–1918)
<b>Grade 9</b>	
1	World War II – The causes and outbreak (1919–1945)
2	The Nuclear Age and the Cold War (1945–1990)
3	Turning points in South African history 1948 and 1950s
4	Turning points in South African history 1960, 1976 and 1994
<b>Grade 10</b>	
1	The world around 1600
2	Expansion and conquest in the 15 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries
3	The French Revolution
4	Transformations in Southern Africa after 1750
5	Colonial expansion after 1750
6	The South African War and Union
<b>Grade 11</b>	
1	Communism in Russia 1900–1940
2	Capitalism and the USA 1900–1940
3	Ideas of race in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> century
4	Nationalism: South Africa, the Middle East and Africa
5	Apartheid in South Africa: 1940s – 1960s
<b>Grade 12</b>	
1	The Cold War
2	Independent Africa
3	Civil society protests 1950s – 1990s
4	Civil resistance 1970s – 1980s: South Africa
5	The coming of democracy in South Africa and coming to terms with the past
6	The end of the Cold War and a new world order

The Grade 8 and 9 CAPS syllabuses did not change significantly from the NCS syllabuses which preceded them. Both syllabuses offer an even offering of South African and world history. It is difficult to understand the perception that they are in any way biased against any population group in South Africa.

A close inspection of the 2012 Grade 10 FET History syllabus reveals a startling lack of political bias against the Afrikaner role in South African history. In fact, the section in the Grade 10 syllabus which deals with the South African War (1899–1902) appears distinctly biased in favour of the Afrikaner experience of the War, as can be seen by the sub-section titled ‘Scorched Earth Policy’; ‘British Concentration Camps: Experiences of Afrikaners’ and the ‘Role and Experience of Women in the War’. The Afrikaner experience of the Great Trek (1836) appears in the 2012 Grade 10 syllabus as a ‘Boer Response to British Control’ and the

Boer Republics are investigated as a case study. Non South African topics in the 2012 Grade 10 syllabus include 'The World Around 1600' which covers the development of empire and culture in China, West Africa, India and Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; 'European Expansion and Conquest in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries'; 'The French Revolution' and 'Transformations in Southern Africa after 1750', which deals mainly with the emergence of black and white states. It is difficult to discern any anti-Afrikaner political bias in this syllabus. On the contrary, it would appear that a real effort to sympathetically include the Afrikaner contribution to South African history has been made.

The 2012 Grade 11 FET History syllabus covers topics such as 'Communism and Russia 1900–1940' and 'Capitalism and the USA 1900–1940'. These topics are of great interest but clearly have little to do with the Afrikaner contribution to South African history. The section on 'Ideas of Race in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century' chart the development of practices such as eugenics. Case studies include Australia and its treatment of indigenous Australians and Nazi Germany and the holocaust. South African racial practices are given little prominence. The section on 'Nationalism: South Africa, the Middle East and Africa' is presented in the form of case studies, of which the South African experience is presented alongside that of the Middle East and Ghana. 'Apartheid and South Africa 1940s–1960s' reviews the history of apartheid from its introduction to the Rivonia Trial of 1964. Any criticism of the political role of Afrikaners in the commission of apartheid is implied, not overt. As with the Grade 10 syllabus, care has been taken to avoid presenting topics in an offensive or biased manner.

The 2012 Grade 12 History syllabus includes an investigation of the Cold War and offers Vietnam and China as case studies. 'Independent Africa' is investigated, with the Congo, Tanzania and Angola offered as case studies. The South African involvement in the section on 'Civil Society Protests' is scant, the focus being upon the US Civil Rights Movement. Topics four and five specifically deal with recent South African history. Topic four concerns 'Civil Resistance 1970s–1980s: South Africa' and entails an overview of Black Consciousness and the attempts of the South African government to reform apartheid in the 1980s. Topic five investigates 'The Coming of Democracy in South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past', which deals with the apartheid-ending negotiations between the ANC and the National Party

government from the late 1980s to 1994 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings. The final topic of the 2012 Grade 12 History syllabus concerns 'The End of the Cold War and a new world order'.

Mpumalanga-based educators who had taken History or Social Science as subjects between 1994 and 2006 displayed mixed reactions toward the History syllabuses which they encountered. In response to question five of the 2012 educators' questionnaire, which asked educators to describe how they had felt about the History syllabus which they had studied, eight (38.1 per cent)<sup>110</sup> of the 21 surveyed educators<sup>111</sup> noted that they had approved of and enjoyed the syllabus. Comments included:

I enjoyed the syllabus (what I can remember). I felt it important to learn about certain historical events and very interesting.<sup>112</sup>

I always enjoyed History very much.<sup>113</sup>

I enjoyed it, it was before OBE; in fact mine was the last group before OBE kicked in. I only had History until grade 9. Then it was cancelled at school.<sup>114</sup>

The History syllabus was not approved of or enjoyed by nine of the surveyed educators (42.9 per cent).<sup>115</sup> Reasons given varied from not liking the teacher, to the subject being experienced as boring, involving too much rote learning or involving too great a focus upon apartheid:

I felt that the syllabus was a little outdated and concentrated too much on the European history and little on African history.<sup>116</sup>

I didn't like it at all. It was about the French Revolution and I didn't like the teacher. We also studied the Second World War. I feel that the teacher didn't spend enough time with us.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>110</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2, 12, 24, 25, 57, 65, 79, 85.

<sup>111</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2, 6, 10, 12, 22, 24–26, 30–31, 41, 49, 57, 65, 72–75, 77, 79, 85.

<sup>112</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 25. [English; 1999–2001; Pretoria Girls High School]

<sup>113</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 57. [Afrikaans; 1994–1999; Hoërskool Brits]

<sup>114</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 65. [Afrikaans; 2000–2004; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>115</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 6, 26, 30–31, 41, 49, 73–74, 77.

<sup>116</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>117</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 30. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]



Boring – it was not about knowledge, it was all about apartheid in South Africa and this was together with the new subject HSS with the new OBE system.<sup>118</sup>

Interestingly, only two (9.5 per cent)<sup>119</sup> of the surveyed (white) educators noted any political or social reservations about the History syllabus. One of these respondents in fact noted that political implications of History education were unknown to him as a learner,<sup>120</sup> while the other realised that History could be ‘misused as a political tool to indoctrinate people into a certain point of view’.<sup>121</sup> It is however unclear whether this realisation was present when the respondent was a child. One respondent related that he/she could not remember much about the Grade 8 and 9 History syllabus.<sup>122</sup>

The perceptions of the surveyed 2012 educators toward the History education which they had received at secondary school after 1994 reveal that although the syllabus is indeed a powerful contributor toward the creation of positive or negative perceptions toward the subject, the mediation of the syllabus through the teaching efforts of educators is perhaps even more important.

#### 4.4 Apartheid-era History textbooks

The question of the History textbooks which were used in secondary schools during the apartheid era is an important one as the History and the way in which it was related in these textbooks conveyed the perceptions of the educational officials and the political leaders of the day and attempted to convey what were deemed appropriate socio-political views to generations of History learners. It will be seen that the success of this indoctrination attempt was rather limited. Nevertheless, the experience of secondary school History education has largely been mediated by textbooks.

<sup>118</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 41. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Vryheid]

<sup>119</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 24 and 72.

<sup>120</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 24. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>121</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 72. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; Hoërskool CVO Middelburg]

<sup>122</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 10. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

Chernis notes that ‘the syllabus, in expanded form is known to pupils as textbooks’.<sup>123</sup> Du Preez points out that textbooks remained the most important method for effectively transmitting the content of the syllabus. She estimated that 95 per cent of academic time which learners spent at school was devoted to the study of their textbooks.<sup>124</sup>

Mulholland notes that while it is the syllabus which dictates the direction of learning – bias, conscious or unconscious, flows from textbooks.<sup>125</sup> Textbooks enjoy prestige among both educators and learners and are regarded as authoritative.<sup>126</sup> Learners are not usually critical of the information presented in textbooks. History textbooks tend to convey ‘an aura of authenticity and veritide’ which encourages learners’ credibility.<sup>127</sup> Keykana points out that secondary school teaching generally and especially in subjects like History relies upon the use of textbooks. Negatively, such reliance may have the effect of helping the educator to avoid creativity as the textbook may be entirely relied upon as a source of knowledge. Learners may come to believe that only the textbook is true, regarding it as an infallible source of knowledge and even judging an educator by the degree of his use of it.<sup>128</sup> Dean *et al* note the profound significance of the school History textbook:

In many circumstances, they will be the ultimate source of information about the past for the pupil and, sometimes perhaps, even for the teacher. For very many pupils school History will be the only formal instruction they receive about what went before and what led up to today’s world. Beliefs implanted through school History books may therefore persist for a lifetime. History textbooks, probably more than any other kind of school-book, have the capacity to influence the social and political thinking of whole generations, and because of this they deserve scrutiny.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Chernis, p. 42.

<sup>124</sup> J. M. du Preez, *Africana Afrikaner: Meestesimbole in Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolhandboeke* (Alberton, 1983), p. 11, as quoted by Chernis, p. 42.

<sup>125</sup> Mulholland, p. 287.

<sup>126</sup> Chernis, p. 42.

<sup>127</sup> Mulholland, pp. 308–309.

<sup>128</sup> N. S. Keykana, ‘The History Textbook in a Multicultural South Africa’. Paper Presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 115.

<sup>129</sup> E. Dean, P. Hartmann and M. Katzen *History in Black and White: An Analysis of South African School History Textbooks* (Paris, 1983), p. 102, as quoted by Keykana, ‘The History Textbook in a Multicultural South Africa’, conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 115.

By their very nature, school History textbooks are imbued with bias. Chernis points out that the writers of school History textbooks are themselves products of a particular period and social climate. The values which they subscribe to will influence them and find expression in the books they write.<sup>130</sup> Critical theorists, holds Engelbrecht, agree that school textbooks are socio-cultural agents of both the formal and hidden curriculum.<sup>131</sup> It is impossible for any report on the past to represent only a single truth – it is always but a selective narrative of what happened.<sup>132</sup> Engelbrecht quotes Chase, who explains:

Historians aspire to tell the truth, without ever believing that they will do so. They are conscious that the evidential base is fallible and deficient, and that their use of it is necessarily selective. However successful their efforts at empathy and sympathetic reconstruction, historians freely acknowledge that their viewpoint is rooted not in the past but in the present.<sup>133</sup>

Bias in school History textbooks has not been a phenomenon confined to the apartheid era. Mulholland notes that the History textbook revealed the dominant ideals and ideas of any given era, when some groups in society were accorded power and prestige while others were deemed to be of no account are singled out for attack.<sup>134</sup> Examples of this trend in South Africa include the Anglo- and Eurocentric texts of the mid-twentieth century which preceded the Calvinist outlook and bias toward racial separation and purity of the apartheid era.<sup>135</sup> The issue of bias in school History textbooks has not been confined to South Africa alone. Mulholland cites extensive examples of biased History textbooks originating from England and the United States of America.

<sup>130</sup> Chernis, p. 42.

<sup>131</sup> A. Engelbrecht, 'The Impact of Role Reversal in Representational Practices in History Textbooks after Apartheid', *South African Journal of Education*, 28 (4) (2008), pp. 520–521, citing M. W. Apple and L. K. Christian-Smith, eds., *The Politics of the Textbook* (New York, 1991); H. A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (London, 1991) and J. D. Jansen, 'Critical Theory and the School Curriculum', in ed., P. Higgs, *Metahistories in Educational Theory and Practice* (Sandton, 1997).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521, citing E. A. Cole and J. Barselou, 'Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies Emerging from Violent Conflict'. *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report 163, 2006, pp. 1–16; S. Dryden-Petersen and R. Sieborger, 'Teachers as Memory Makers: Testimony in the Making of a New History in South Africa', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26 (2006), pp. 394–403 and L. K. Van der Steinen, 'Three Decades of SA School History Textbooks: Historiographical Influence, Change and Continuity from the 1970s to the 1990s' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Free State, 1997).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521, quoting M. Chase, 'Stories we tell them: Teaching Adults History in a Post-modern World'. Paper presented at the Annual SCUTREA Conference, 2–4 July 1996, Tetly Hall, University of Leeds.

<sup>134</sup> Mulholland, p. 323.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

School History textbooks have the power to interpret history and social reality as the rulers wish to define it.<sup>136</sup> Textbooks then, 'can be expected to contain stereotypes, over-simplified dichotomies, value-loaded terminology and a self-centered selection of the events of history'.<sup>137</sup> An important concept that relates to the desire of the apartheid-era National Party government to inculcate desired social and political perceptions among the general population is that of legitimation which may be defined as the process of securing consent among the members of a society to existing social and political arrangements. In the context of South Africa, legitimation attempted to retain white ascendancy by persuading the (black) subordinate group to accept a subservient status in society. Dean, Hartmann and Katzen make the point that the school subject of History was used by the National Party government as an apology for apartheid policies, with the aim of convincing people that racial separation was a natural state of affairs. This state of affairs ought to be perceived as being God-given. Dean *et al* note that a dominant elite needs to depend upon the enthusiastic support of some of the members of its own group and at least the acquiescence of most of the rest in order to survive.<sup>138</sup> The idea of legitimation is important in the context of this thesis, as it is believed to have been a powerful force in creating the perceptions towards History as a subject and the history of South Africa for several generations of apartheid-era secondary school learners. The critical point is that the perceptions which secondary school learners come to have of the subject History can lead to the development of beliefs which may last for a lifetime – beliefs and perceptions often implanted by school textbooks. Dean *et al* assert that it is history textbooks, more than any other type of school textbook, which have the capacity to influence the political and social thinking (perceptions) of entire generations.<sup>139</sup>

As much as the common depiction of black people in South African apartheid-era school History textbooks as either inferior to whites or as simply appendages to the story of South African history may have been intended to bolster the perception of white learners that they were members of a chosen and even superior social group, this widespread negative depiction served to create negative perceptions toward school History among non-white

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 271–272.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>138</sup> Dean, Hartmann and Katzen, *History in Black and White*, pp. 17–19, as quoted by Black, p. 45.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102, as quoted by Black, p. 45.

learners. Bam, quoting Auerbach's 1966 study of South African History textbooks, found that a heavy emphasis was placed upon the history of Europeans in South Africa, especially Afrikaners, which would have led to white children who had taken History being imbued with the 'erroneous belief' that African people were 'tribal and inherently inferior to Whites'.<sup>140</sup>

A survey of the content of some of the many History textbooks used in apartheid-era secondary school classrooms will serve to demonstrate what perceptions and understandings of History their authors, and more specifically apartheid-era education departments, wished to convey to learners.

Mulholland notes that the History textbooks most often used in South African secondary schools after the introduction of the 1966 syllabus were those written by A. N. Boyce and F. A. van Jaarsveld.<sup>141</sup> Aside from certain reservations which she expresses about the style of writing and historical interpretation evident in Boyce's work<sup>142</sup> Mulholland points to various examples of questionable content. She provides the example of Boyce citing Mentzel who declared that slaves were well treated and happy in their bondage. While the comment made by Mentzel was correctly portrayed, some commentary upon it would have been expected.<sup>143</sup> This is also true of the section on the Trekboers who, it is stated, 'became suspicious of new ways and new people'.<sup>144</sup> This statement which Boyce made about the Trekboers also lacks substantiation and explanation, without which false impressions could easily be conveyed to learners. Other statements about the Trekboers include them being depicted as 'always upright and God-fearing men and women', and that it was 'inevitable that they should develop feelings about race and colour'. Mulholland points out that such statements were mild compared to portions of Lindeque's text, which proclaimed that 'from the very beginning the whites and blacks were sworn enemies'.<sup>145</sup> Mulholland points out Boyce's text, unlike others, did not simply describe the various frontier wars as a meeting of

<sup>140</sup> Bam, p. 21, quoting F. E. Auerbach *The Power of Prejudice in South African Education* (Cape Town, 1966), p. 26.

<sup>141</sup> Mulholland, p. 288, citing A. N. Boyce *Europe and South Africa. A History for South African High Schools* (Juta and Co., 1967) and F. A. van Jaarsveld *A New Illustrated History Vol. I and II* (Vol. I written in conjunction with T. van Wijk) (Johannesburg, 1969).

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288–289, quoting Boyce *Europe and South Africa*, p. 113.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289, quoting Boyce, p. 120.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289, quoting B. G. Lindeque, *Geskiedenis St. VI* (Johannesburg, 1956), p. 140.

civilisation and barbarism and in places appears sympathetic to the way in which black people were treated. Nevertheless, the manner in which figures such as Rhodes are treated, for example the belief that 'Britain had a divine mission to rule the world and spread the benefits of civilization' betrays a strong pro-British bias.<sup>146</sup>

Van Jaarsveld's *New Illustrated History Vol. I and II* is criticised in terms of its content on both South African and general history. The French Revolution is, for Mulholland, presented in such a way that agitators and not circumstances were most responsible for causing it.<sup>147</sup> A discussion of the 'Rights of Man' document lends the impression that it was foolish to follow such ideals which had subsequently been adopted by 'Afro-Asian peoples of today...'<sup>148</sup> Karl Marx, a hugely influential figure of the Twentieth century, is dismissed in one line, in which he is described as the 'leader of modern Communism'.<sup>149</sup> Several examples of a biased treatment of South African history are provided. Mulholland notes that Van Jaarsveld's dealing with the topic of South Africa versus the Afro-Asian bloc is an example of impartiality failing. South Africa is said to be an outcast because of 'distorted newspaper reports and through a false interpretation of the racial situation here.'<sup>150</sup> White people are said to have arrived among 'savage cruel natives'<sup>151</sup> and carried Western civilisation into Southern Africa. A diagram which purports to reveal the racial composition of the Afrikaner is given. A pie chart showing racial origins of Afrikaners to be Dutch 50%, German 27%, French 17% Other 6% - 'other' being Swiss, Danish, Swedish and Scottish is provided.<sup>152</sup> Van Jaarsveld points out that the colonists remained white and maintained their identity even when they had ample chance to mix and interbreed.<sup>153</sup> It is stated that contact made the settlers conscious that they were 'of a different kind'.<sup>154</sup> Learners were told that this consciousness had kept the race pure and that it was 'visiting sailors who had no responsibilities toward the Cape who became a continuing factor in the process of miscegenation'.<sup>155</sup> The policy of separate development was, according to Mulholland,

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289, quoting Boyce, p. 459.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290, quoting F. A. van Jaarsveld and T. van Wijk *A New Illustrated History* p. 27.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290, quoting Van Jaarsveld and Van Wijk, p. 32.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292, quoting Van Jaarsveld Vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292, quoting Van Jaarsveld Vol I, p. 29.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292, quoting Van Jaarsveld Vol I, p. 23.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293, quoting Van Jaarsveld Vol I, p. 48.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293, quoting Van Jaarsveld Vol I, p. 362.

proposed as South Africa's political solution. Referring to the occupation of the Suurveld, it is stated as a 'fact' that if different races lived together disputes would arise, making physical separation between them essential.<sup>156</sup> Mulholland notes that it appeared that the envisioned solutions to the present were written into the story of the past so as to buttress a particular point of view.<sup>157</sup>

It must be noted that the writers of secondary school History textbooks did not enjoy unlimited freedom to express themselves and were subject to the control and approval of the government, as represented by the educational authorities who had the power to approve textbooks before placing them on a recommended list and therefore being available for purchase by schools. Untoward, unwanted speculation would disqualify textbooks, a fact which their writers were well aware of.<sup>158</sup> Some textbook writers however, went beyond the level of ideological conformity expected of them by the authorities. Lindeque posited that Van Riebeeck had committed an 'unforgivable blunder' by permitting white and Hottentot people to marry.<sup>159</sup> Bekker and Potgieter denied that there had been any interracial mixing at all, while not hesitating to pass moralistic judgement upon the practice of racial mixing:

The sin of blood-mixture between a white man and a non-white woman falls in great measure on the children... [who] are unacceptable to self-respecting whites...<sup>160</sup>

C. J. Joubert's *History for Standard 10* (1975) is characterised by Mulholland as an official mouthpiece for government policy.<sup>161</sup> The textbook was an important one – Mulholland notes that it was a popular text in the Transvaal for examination purposes, for both Afrikaans and English-speaking schools. Of interest is that in Joubert's textbook, 50.7 per cent is devoted to general history and 49.8 per cent to South African history. In the South African history section, 11.8 per cent is devoted to the study of political parties while 25.7 per cent is devoted to the study of African peoples.<sup>162</sup> Mulholland notes that the South

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294, quoting Van Jaarsveld Vol. I, p. 321.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272, 287.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293, quoting Lindeque, *Geskiedenis St VI*, p. 81.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293, quoting L. C. Bekker and G. J. Potgieter, *Voorligting vir Std VI* (Johannesburg, 1961), pp. 29–31.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296, citing C. J. Joubert *History for Standard 10* (Johannesburg, 1975).

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

African section clearly reflects the beliefs and political disposition of the government. The twin themes of Afrikaner identity and racial issues are constantly raised. South African nationalism is closely related to National Party policies.<sup>163</sup> Statements are made in the textbook which are difficult to categorise as anything but racial: ‘... the non-white has always been a labourer on the white farm’<sup>164</sup> and the statement that the whites’ nationhood must be protected in that part of the country ‘that has always been theirs’.<sup>165</sup> Bias evident within the general history section is as, if not more, glaring as Mulholland relates the treatment accorded to the section on Hitler and Nazi Germany. Hitler in fact is portrayed as a ‘war hero’, and ‘excellent organiser’, a ‘gifted public speaker’;<sup>166</sup> he is recorded as having an *antagonism* toward the Jews and no mention is made of the intimidation and brute force which assisted the Nazi rise to power.<sup>167</sup> E. H. Lategan and A. J. de Kock’s *History in Perspective, Standard 10* (Perskor, 1978) went even further as Hitler was accredited with being a ‘strong and gifted leader’<sup>168</sup> and Goebbels as ‘ingenious’.<sup>169</sup>

In discussing apartheid-era History textbooks, Keykana notes that the history they present represents the views of the dominant race group. The view of history taken is for Keykana both unsympathetic and insensitive.<sup>170</sup> Robertson posits that the South African history taught in apartheid-era South African secondary schools was closely linked with the philosophy of CNE:

The white South African child is presented in his schoolbooks with certain cardinal assumptions. The history of his country began with the ‘discovery’ of the Cape by whites; the blacks have no history, and are noteworthy only to the extent that their barbarism and belligerence inconvenienced the whites. South Africa is a white man’s country and the Afrikaner in particular has been destined by the Almighty to perform a task there, that task being identical with the ‘Christian national’ policies of the regime. The most important characteristic of a human being is his racial group. Western, Christian

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299, quoting Joubert, p. 233.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300, quoting Joubert, p. 247.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297, quoting Joubert, p. 38.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298, quoting E. H. Lategan and A. J. de Kock’s *History in Perspective, Standard 10* (Johannesburg, 1978), p. 30.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298, quoting Lategan and De Kock, p. 34.

<sup>170</sup> Keykana, in Trümpelmann, p. 115.



civilisation is racially linked to the white man in South Africa. There is, in short, a high degree of congruence between the text books and the tenets of C. N. E.<sup>171</sup>

Examples of apartheid-era History textbooks vilifying black South Africans are commonplace. Van Jaarsveld and Van der Walt (1959), refer to the cultural attainment of indigenous and black African people as follows:

The Bushmen were hunters who occupied the lowest level of primitive civilisation. The Hottentots were pastoralists who occupied a position a notch higher than the Bushmen. The Bantu were agriculturalists who occupied the highest notch of primitive civilisation.<sup>172</sup>

*Hersiene Sosiale Studie: Vorms II en III* (1967) is, according to Zwane an example of biased history writing. The frontier wars which were fought between the Xhosa and whites over land possession are expounded. Zwane notes that the contents reflect 'a litany of organised murders by blacks on whites'.<sup>173</sup> Whites are depicted as having saved the Xhosa people after the national Xhosa suicide of 1857.<sup>174</sup> Bantu education is portrayed as being advantageous to black people and as an aid in assisting them to develop their homelands.<sup>175</sup>

According to Rehman the content of *Legacy of the Past* (1968) is heavily Eurocentric. The content starts with the French Revolution, before moving on to Napoleon Bonaparte, 'The Revolt of the Nations' and 'The National and Liberal Movements in Europe'. Rehman points out that until the section on South African history, 'there is no African person mentioned in the text'.<sup>176</sup> The South African section begins with 'Sir George Grey', who according to this textbook came to South Africa to solve the Xhosa frontier problem in 1854.<sup>177</sup>

<sup>171</sup> I. Robertson, 'Education in South Africa: A Study in the Influence of Ideology on Education Practice' (Ph.D. thesis, Ann Arbor University, 1973), p. 154, as quoted by Mulholland, pp. 301–302.

<sup>172</sup> 'Die Boesmans was jagters wat op die laagste trap van 'n primitiewe beskawing gestaan het. Die Hottentotte was veeboere wat op 'n trappie hoër as die Boesmans gestaan het. Die Bantoes was landbouers. Hulle was op die hoogste trap van 'n primitiewe beskawing'. F. A. van Jaarsveld and J. van der Walt *Geïllustreerde Geskiedenis Std VI* (Johannesburg, 1959), p. 112, as quoted by Keykana, in Trümpelmann, p. 116.

<sup>173</sup> Grove, *et al.*, *Hersiene Sosiale Studie: Vorm II en III* (Cape Town, 1967), p. 228, as referred to by Zwane, p. 54, as quoted by Black, p. 49.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244, as quoted by Zwane, p. 54, as quoted by Black, p. 49.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259, as quoted by Zwane, p. 54, as quoted by Black, p. 49.

<sup>176</sup> A. N. Boyce *Legacy of the Past* (Cape Town, 1968), as quoted by J. Rehman, 'From Bantu Education to Social Sciences: A Minor Field Study of History Teaching in South Africa 1966–2006', (Research Report,

He abandoned the old policy of segregation and tried to open up Native territory by roads; his policy was to civilise the Xhosa by building schools and hospitals. He believed that there were three evils among the Xhosa – ignorance, idleness and superstition ... To remove ignorance he had schools built, e.g. an industrial school at Lovedale where young Xhosa could be taught trades and better methods in agriculture. To discourage idleness and to teach them the dignity of labour the Xhosa were used in the construction of roads and public works. To combat superstition a hospital was built at King William's Town where it was hoped the tribesmen would learn the benefits of the white man's medicine. This would help to destroy the power of the witchdoctor and superstition. Missionary work was also encouraged. To assist in his policy of civilising the Bantu he encouraged immigration into British Kaffraria. He hoped the Xhosa would learn industrious habits from the European settlers.<sup>178</sup>

It is notable that the *bad habits* of the Xhosa people needed to be removed. The Xhosa people, traditions and lifestyle were 'treated like they are dangerous barbarians'. Words such as 'Kaffraria' and 'Bantu' are not only insulting but also simplify the people and create negative stereotypes. A white ethnocentric perspective can be clearly discerned. Rehman makes the further point that the writing is biased. This is but one example of the bias inherent in *Legacy of the Past*, which Rehman describes as 'a textbook written by the white man for the white man ... where the native groups are neglected and treated as problems for the white man's community'.<sup>179</sup> Rehman perceives that the front cover of *Legacy of the Past*, which depicts a large Dutch East India Company sailing ship makes it clear that it is the history of the Afrikaner and the English-speaking people of South Africa which is being addressed.<sup>180</sup>

Muller and De Bruin (1969), when discussing frontier relations between black and white, note that '... The cattle herds of the white livestock farmers were looked at with envious eyes by these uncivilised stock farmers'.<sup>181</sup> Kgoale notes that Joubert and Jooste (1977)

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Department of Didactic Science and Early Childhood Education, Stockholm University, 2008), p. 16, as quoted by Black, p. 49.

<sup>177</sup> Boyce, *Legacy of the Past*, p. 73, as quoted by Rehman, 'From Bantu Education to Social Sciences', p. 16, as quoted by Black, p. 49.

<sup>178</sup> Boyce, p. 75, as quoted by Rehman, pp. 17–18, as quoted by Black, p. 50.

<sup>179</sup> Rehman, pp. 18–20, as quoted by Black, p. 50.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16, as quoted by Black, p. 50.

<sup>181</sup> 'Die veetroppe van die blanke veeboere is met begeerlike oë deur hierdie onbeskaafde veeboere

refer to Cape Governor Grey dealing with the 'black problem' while nowhere in the text is there any reference to a white problem, though it stands to reason that whites must have been at least as much of a problem to blacks as the blacks were to whites.<sup>182</sup> *Hersiene Sosiale Studie: Vorm I*, (1971) depicts the seasonal visits of the Khoikhoi to the Cape as deliberate expeditions to 'steal' the cattle that belonged to the Dutch East India Company.<sup>183</sup>

Many History textbooks printed during the late apartheid era continued the biased trend established by their predecessors. The 1991 HSRC investigation into the teaching of History in South African schools established that the *Active History* series were the most popular History textbooks to be used within the 15 black secondary schools which were surveyed.<sup>184</sup> *Active History: Standard 10* (1980) is a well illustrated and detailed History textbook which is an example of an apology for apartheid policies.<sup>185</sup> One example of the bias inherent in this textbook entails the question of black resistance to apartheid after 1948. The Rivonia trial is referred to in the following way:

The Rivonia trial, during which several Black leaders received life sentences on sabotage charges, more or less ended the phase of Black resistance which had begun in 1950 ... This underlined the government's success against subversion. Mr John Vorster, Minister of Justice, earned himself a place in history for this.<sup>186</sup>

Rehman's analysis of *Timelines 8* (1985), describes a textbook which reveals an uncompromising bias against black people in favour of whites.<sup>187</sup> The cover of this book depicts Napoleon and his troops departing the field of battle at Waterloo. A European heritage is clearly evident. The first section of the book is completely focused on European

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Muller and De Bruin, (1969, p. 216), as quoted by Keykana, in Trümpelmann, p. 116.

<sup>182</sup> M. M. Kgoale, 'Apartheid: The Dilemma of South African Universities' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1986), p. 116, quoting Joubert and Jooste, (1977), p. 135, as quoted by Keykana, in Trümpelmann, p. 117.

<sup>183</sup> B. S. Grove, *et al.*, *Hersiene Sosiale Studie: Vorm I* (Cape Town, 1971), p. 155, as quoted by Zwane, p. 54, as quoted by Black, pp. 48–49.

<sup>184</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al.*, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA*, as quoted by Black, p. 51.

<sup>185</sup> A.P.J. van Rensburg and J. Schoeman, *Active History: Standard 10* (Pretoria, 1980).

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230–231, as quoted by Black, p. 51.

<sup>187</sup> A.C. Vlok, *et al.*, *Timelines: History for Standard 8: 1985 Syllabus*, second edition (Cape Town, 1985), as quoted by Rehman, p. 20, as quoted by Black, p. 51.

history. Rehman declares that ‘What is presented is a historical consciousness of a shared past, excluding the natives and [which] cements the identity [of white people]’.<sup>188</sup> The second part of the textbook concerns ‘The Reshaping of South African Society 1820–1850’ and is focused on the struggle between the Boers and the British. Chapters in the second part of this textbook include ‘The Mfecane’, ‘The Great Trek’, ‘British Reaction to the Great Trek’, ‘Britain and Transorangia’, ‘Britain and the Diamond Fields Dispute’, ‘Carnarvon’s Federation Policy and its Aftermath to 1884’ and ‘Political, Social and Economic Aspects of the History of a Society South of the Limpopo: 1815–1900’.<sup>189</sup> An example of clear bias in the telling of history is clear in the manner in which the Mfecane is dealt with. The authors’ view is that Shaka was solely responsible for the Mfecane:

Chaka’s destructive wars started a terrible chain-reaction of killing. Wherever the remnants of these tribes fled, into the Transvaal Highveld, Lesotho, the Orange Free State and beyond the southern boundary of Natal, they in turn attacked and destroyed all the black tribes in their path so that a buffer-zone was created between themselves and the power and cruelty of Chaka and the Zulu impis.<sup>190</sup>

*Timelines 9* (1989)<sup>191</sup> and *Timelines 10* (1988)<sup>192</sup> continue in the Eurocentric tradition established by *Timelines 8*. The cover design of *Timelines 9* shows a nineteenth-century mining scene set against the backdrop of modern-day Johannesburg. All four of the figures depicted are white people – no black person is shown. In fact, aside from a depiction of Gandhi, no black person is depicted in a text well endowed with photographs and illustrations. This confirms that the textbook is aimed at a white readership. The cover design of *Timelines 10* is a confusing cartoon-like depiction of various armed combatants holding a world globe aloft with a variety of weapons. Predictably, no black person is shown to be among this rather turbulent collection of people.

<sup>188</sup> Rehman, p. 20, as quoted by Black, p. 51.

<sup>189</sup> Vlok, *et al.*, *Timelines: History for Standard 8: 1985 Syllabus*, second edition. Contents, as quoted by Rehman, p. 21, as quoted by Black, pp. 51–52.

<sup>190</sup> Vlok, *et al.*, *Timelines: History for Standard 8: 1985 Syllabus*, second edition, p. 101, as quoted by Rehman, p. 21, as quoted by Black, p. 52.

<sup>191</sup> H. G. J. Lindveld, *et al.*, *Timelines 9: TED Edition: History for Standard 9, 1986 Syllabus* (Cape Town, 1989), as quoted by Black, p. 52.

<sup>192</sup> H. G. J. Lindveld, *et al.*, *Timelines 10: TED Edition: History for Standard 10, 1987 Syllabus* (Cape Town, 1988), as quoted by Black, p. 52.

During the later apartheid era some liberal History textbooks were published. These included Kallaway's *History Alive* (1987) which marked a departure from the school History textbooks which served as apologies for government policies toward a more open-minded approach which tried to incorporate the history of all South Africans.<sup>193</sup> Rehman notes that the cover design of this book, which shows a view of a township, with two big grain silos on the horizon is a statement that the intention of the book is to show not only the history of great men, but the history of everyone.<sup>194</sup> In the textbook's preface, Kallaway states what the book's purpose is:

... it is our aim to try to provide a world history perspective on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We wish to move away from a parochial view of historical events and processes and examine them against a background of social, economic and political change on a global scale ... in the second place the 'new history' relates to the attempt in this text to provide a comprehensive vision and interpretation of South African history. School textbooks have long been dominated by the Afrikaner nationalist interpretation of South African history. Some have drawn on the work of 'liberal' historians, but they have neglected the rich tradition of African and revisionist history that has informed and enriched the understanding of our history in the past two decades.<sup>195</sup>

The National Education Crisis Committee published *What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities* (1987) as an attempt to redress the pro government bias of other current History textbooks, with the intention of being used as a supplement to them replacing them altogether.<sup>196</sup> This textbook clearly redresses the political balance and is lavishly illustrated with a multitude of documents, diagrams and photographs, its content is episodic and it lacks the detailed explanation and analysis which should accompany History textbooks. The book could be better described as an anthology of historical sources. It is difficult to see how it could be used on its own merit as a secondary school textbook. The book never enjoyed a wide circulation among secondary schools. The DET refused to allow it into schools under its control. I made use of some of the illustrations

<sup>193</sup> P. Kallaway, *History Alive* (Pietermaritzburg, 1987), as quoted by Black, p. 52.

<sup>194</sup> Rehman, p. 22, as quoted by Black, pp. 52–53.

<sup>195</sup> Kallaway, *History Alive*, p. 1, as quoted by Rehman, p. 22, as quoted by Black, p. 53.

<sup>196</sup> The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), *What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities* (Johannesburg, 1987), as quoted by Black, p. 53.

in *What is History?* to enliven a Grade 12 June History examination paper which I set in 2006. Reference was made to the publication in the examination paper which was widely used in the Middelburg area of Mpumalanga. Not one of my fellow History educators reported that they had ever heard of the publication. Even the region's Curriculum Implementer had no knowledge of the textbook. Black secondary school History educators whom I surveyed in 2008 and who had taught History during the late apartheid era also did not know of the textbook. Nonetheless, the content of the textbook was certainly an advance on what had gone before. If the textbook had been more successfully circulated, it may have had a positive influence on the perceptions of secondary school educators and learners.<sup>197</sup>

According to Rehman, *Making History 4* (1992) was the first example of a South African school History textbook where 'the apartheid history blinker is gone'.<sup>198</sup> The cover of the textbook illustrates early diamond diggings on the Vaal River. It is a neutral picture of a typical South African landscape.<sup>199</sup> The viewpoint of the book is made clear in the first chapter:

... Some things are the way they are because of what happened long ago. Different groups of white people arrived at the Cape from Europe. These people changed many things in South Africa. The biggest change was about land. Eventually the black people, who had been living here long before the whites arrived, lost most of their land.<sup>200</sup>

Motshabi, whose thesis concerned the textbooks used within black secondary schools in the Eastern Cape, proposed that history writing for Forms I and II (Grades 8 and 9) had little real value for black children. The texts were very far removed from the everyday experience of the learners and therefore of small use. Nothing of local content was mentioned, even though learners often lived close to places of historical significance, little in the texts was mentioned which concerned local content. Therefore History textbooks held little sense of immediacy and relevance for learners. Facts which were remote from everyday experience

<sup>197</sup> Black, p. 53.

<sup>198</sup> Marneweck, *et al.*, *Making History 4*: first edition, as referred to by Rehman, p. 28, as quoted by Black, p. 54.

<sup>199</sup> Rehman, p. 28, as quoted by Black, p. 54.

<sup>200</sup> Marneweck, *et al.*, *Making History 4*, p. 1, as quoted by Rehman, pp. 28–29, as quoted by Black, p. 54.

were studied. Instead national developments and international politics and challenges were focused upon, without any local application. History textbooks, for Motshabi, did not offer what people wanted or needed. Such a scenario, which did not relate to learners' own worlds, did not encourage the development of learners' critical faculties. The past needs to be recaptured on an emotional level rather than in a detached way in order for it to make real sense. Motshabi notes that ironically, while black people have been the central protagonists of South African history, there was a vast lack of knowledge about them in the Social Studies textbooks. Instead the emphasis was upon the history of foreign peoples.<sup>201</sup>

If black people felt a sense of alienation from secondary school History textbooks because they did not focus enough upon their own history, this alienation was compounded by the fact that History textbooks in use at black secondary schools were almost exclusively written by whites. Nuxumalo points out that the authors of these History textbooks were often white inspectors of black education, or examiners in the subject. In 1969, the panel of authors responsible for the Social Studies textbook, *Modern Social Studies Forms I and II*, published by Better Books in that year included a Mr. Keykana, a black person.<sup>202</sup> This was, for Nuxumulo, a departure from the normal situation, if it is noted that the first English set work book ever written by a black person, Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian author, was only approved for black secondary schools in 1973.<sup>203</sup>

The blatant bias and stereotyping present in apartheid-era secondary school History textbooks greatly contributed to the development of a negative perception of the subject among the black community. Although the crass racial stereotyping evident in earlier apartheid-era textbooks became more sophisticated with the passing of time, it was, as has been seen, only in the late 1980s and early 1990s that school History textbooks emerged which attempted to fairly represent the history of all South Africans. Zwane notes that against the background of the widespread unrest in black secondary schools during the mid 1980s, biased textbooks led to deep-seated resentment and rejection of government policies.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>201</sup> Motshabi, 'Use of the Textbook', pp. 57–58, as quoted by Black, pp. 45–46.

<sup>202</sup> Nuxumalo, 'Sociological Significance of the Teaching of History', p. 103, as quoted by Black, p. 46.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10, as quoted by Black, p. 46.

<sup>204</sup> Zwane, p. 17, as quoted by Black, p. 55.

Black secondary school History educators whom I surveyed in 2008 and who had taught History during the apartheid era, confirmed the assertions of the above secondary sources about the perceptions which learners and educators held of the History textbooks which were used. These educators were asked how they felt about the textbooks in use during the apartheid era. Questions included ‘Were they easily available?’ and ‘Were they politically biased?’ Responses revealed that History textbooks were in fact easily available, at least in Nkangala. Several respondents held the perception that the easy availability of textbooks was due to the fact that they propagated and justified the political policies of the government. All of the educators surveyed felt that the textbooks were biased, but nevertheless, every educator who had taught History during the apartheid era had made extensive use of them. The reasons given for this included the need to prepare learners to write examinations successfully, a feat which required regurgitation of textbooks, despite how biased they were perceived to be. Respondents noted that there was no alternative material available with which to replace them as well as the fact that educators were afraid of the consequences of not teaching the material presented in the textbooks.<sup>205</sup>

The uninspiring nature of many of the school History textbooks in circulation during the apartheid era suited History educators who lacked either imagination, motivation or the educational qualifications to present challenging History lessons. Uninspired textbooks resulted as a result of all textbooks having first to be assessed and declared suitable by the Departmental authority as well as having to be written strictly for the syllabus. The tendency of the writers was to provide only the bare content required by the syllabus. No lists of recommended books or suggested further reading was provided, which Nuxumalo (perhaps cynically) believes was because their authors did not wish in any way to promote rival textbooks. Most textbooks were presented in the form of lessons which largely did the educator’s work for them, for example the provision of notes, revision topics and test questions.<sup>206</sup> Malie points out that black History educators depended greatly upon textbooks as a result of their low education levels.<sup>207</sup> Given the poor qualifications of black History educators during the apartheid era, this may have been a worthwhile practice. Perhaps it was an adjustment to the real situation at black secondary schools of the time.

<sup>205</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 2, 3, 4 and 7, as quoted by Black, p. 56.

<sup>206</sup> Nuxumalo, pp. 103–104, as quoted by Black, pp. 46–47.

<sup>207</sup> Malie, p. 171, as quoted by Black, p. 47.



Nuxumalo points out that uninspired textbooks were mainly geared to helping learners pass their examinations, and to this end emphasise rote learning and ‘a painful memorisation of loose unrelated facts.’<sup>208</sup> Ndlovu notes that most of the History textbooks produced under the auspices of the DET were descriptive rather than analytical and ignored recent historical findings and research.<sup>209</sup>

The Human Sciences Research Council 1991 investigation into History teaching in South Africa, which included responses from at least 15 schools run by the DET, revealed that a diverse spread of History textbooks were utilised by black secondary schools. This survey revealed that among the surveyed schools *Active History* was the most popular in Standards 6 to 8 and well represented in Standard 10. Kallaway’s *History Alive* was hardly used at all, except at Grade 8 level at one school. The *Timelines* series was not reported to have been used at the surveyed schools. The NECC publication, *What is History?*, was not even on the list of possible options of textbook choices. While the HSRC survey did not include a large number of black secondary schools it does nevertheless point to the fact that the more ‘liberal’ History textbooks of the time were not as well used as may have been expected within black secondary schools. The survey also highlighted the confused state of black secondary school education when it pointed out that among the surveyed educators, 43.75 per cent had the freedom to choose the textbook which they used in class, while 56.25 per cent reported that they had no freedom of choice.<sup>210</sup> This may to some extent explain the economical use of liberal textbooks. The survey also revealed that black secondary school educators made much more use of the textbooks in their teaching of History than did educators in white, coloured and Asian schools.

Question six of my 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, which was directed at white Afrikaans and English-speaking Mpumalanga-based educators, probed the perceptions of these educators toward the History textbooks which they had used at secondary school. The question asked them to ‘Describe how you felt about the History textbooks you used ... if you can’t remember, please say so’. The responses from the 66 respondents who had received their secondary school History education during the apartheid era (to 1994) were

<sup>208</sup> Nuxumalo, p. 109, as quoted by Black, p. 47.

<sup>209</sup> Ndlovu, ‘Perceptions of History’, p. 20, as quoted by Black, p. 47.

<sup>210</sup> Van Der Merwe, *et al.*, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History*, pp. 32–36, as quoted by Black, p. 55.

analysed.<sup>211</sup> A mixed response toward the History textbooks which they had used was received. The most popular response was that respondents could not remember what the textbooks were like. Twenty respondents (30.3 per cent) left the question blank or noted that they could not recall the textbooks.<sup>212</sup> This indicates that the History textbooks which they had made use of as learners had made little impression upon them. An enjoyment of the textbook was reported by 17 respondents (25.8 per cent).<sup>213</sup> Among these responses was the idea that the content of the textbooks was comprehensive and that it was interesting and informative (5 respondents, 7.6 per cent).<sup>214</sup> One respondent felt as though the textbooks had transported him/her 'into another world in a different era'.<sup>215</sup> Another respondent felt that the language which had been employed in her History textbooks had been pleasingly age-appropriate.<sup>216</sup> A dislike of the History textbooks which had been experienced at school was noted by 16 respondents (24.2 per cent).<sup>217</sup> Finding the books dull or boring was noted as the experience of six respondents (9.1 per cent).<sup>218</sup> A perception that texts had been biased was noted by six respondents (9.1 per cent):<sup>219</sup>

... Content was biased. English people weren't respected. Very Afrikaner orientated.<sup>220</sup>

All textbooks have selective information about people that I felt didn't contribute in any development of young minds.<sup>221</sup>

... They were certainly geared towards 'white' history.<sup>222</sup>

... [South African history] was of course seen from the viewpoint of a white person only, no 'black' history was given.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>211</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 4–5, 7–9, 11, 13–21, 23, 27–29, 32–33, 35–40, 42, 43–48, 50–56, 58–64, 66–71, 76, 78, 80–84, 86–87.

<sup>212</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 4, 8, 9, 14, 17, 19, 27, 32–33, 37, 43, 48, 50, 59, 62, 71, 78, 80–81, 83.

<sup>213</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 15–16, 38–40, 42, 47, 51–52, 55, 66–67, 70, 76, 86–87.

<sup>214</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 40, 42, 51, 57, 70.

<sup>215</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 70. [English/Afrikaans; 1962–1966; Clapham High School]

<sup>216</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 52. [Afrikaans; 1988–1992; Gimnasium Hoërskool Potchefstroom]

<sup>217</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 5, 13, 18, 20–21, 28, 40, 42, 44, 53, 56, 58, 60–61, 63, 68.

<sup>218</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 13, 20, 44, 56, 58, 68.

<sup>219</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 11, 20, 29, 35, 51.

<sup>220</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3. [Afrikaans; 1978–1982; Hoërskool Piet Potgieter]

<sup>221</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 29. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>222</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 35. [Afrikaans; 1980–1985; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

Some respondents (5, 7.6 per cent) noted that they had never made use of History textbooks while at secondary school.<sup>224</sup> Seven respondents (10.6 per cent) provided responses to the question which were not relevant and which could not be categorised into any of the above kinds of responses.<sup>225</sup>

Aside from the six respondents who had noted that they had perceived bias to be evident in their History textbooks, no other respondents made any comment on the books which included political issues or observations. Overall, if secondary school History textbooks were designed/written as a political/propaganda tool, then they must be dismissed as a woefully ineffective political apology, certainly if judging from the 66 respondents I surveyed.

Mpumalanga-based educators and Education Department officials whom I interviewed had mixed recollections of the History textbooks which they had encountered at secondary school during the apartheid era. Arouna Rajakumar, educator at the Middelburg Muslim School recalled that during her years at secondary school (1978–1982) History textbooks had not made a great impression upon her and that she had ‘accepted that what was in the text was what I needed to know’.<sup>226</sup> Imraan Pilodia, Social Sciences and History educator at the same school noted that when it came to syllabus and textbook content which did not reflect the history of all South Africans that most of his fellow learners ‘... didn’t care, they just accepted this lack’.<sup>227</sup> Martin Fourie, principal of Hoërskool Kanonkop in Middelburg, noted that History textbooks had made no impression upon him.<sup>228</sup> Gys Romijn, principal of Steelcrest High School in Middelburg, recollected that the only thing he recalled about the History textbooks he had studied at secondary school was that they were biased.<sup>229</sup> Naomi Uys, History educator at Hoërskool Ermelo remembered her History textbooks as ‘good’.<sup>230</sup> Ian Steenkamp, presently Deputy Chief Education Specialist for Social Sciences in

<sup>223</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 51. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Mafeking]

<sup>224</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 1, 23, 71, 54, 84.

<sup>225</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 7, 36, 45, 46, 64, 69, 82.

<sup>226</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms A. Rajakumar, educator, Middelburg Muslim School, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>227</sup> Interview, Mr I. Pilodia, History educator, Middelburg Muslim School, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

<sup>228</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Fourie, Principal, Hoërskool Kanonkop, Middelburg, 26 January 2011.

<sup>229</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr G. Romijn, Principal, Steelcrest High School, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>230</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, History educator, Hoërskool Ermelo, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

Mpumalanga who completed secondary school at Calvinia in 1969 believed that the textbook had played an important role in his secondary school History education. He regarded his History educator as ‘brilliant because he could recite the History textbook verbatim, never having to look at the book. There was no chance to formulate one’s own opinion or think about questions. One had to remember as many facts as possible’.<sup>231</sup>

#### 4.5 Post-apartheid-era History textbooks

Post-apartheid-era secondary school History textbooks are for the most part impressive publications which attempt to represent the syllabuses which they are tasked to do with as little bias as possible. An impressive array of writers have produced textbooks which boast lavish illustrations and which are eminently readable. While it is always possible to find fault with any publication, post-apartheid History textbooks cannot be charged with the creation of negative perceptions toward the subject in the same way as could their apartheid-era predecessors. I have selected and examined six post-apartheid-era History textbooks.<sup>232</sup>

*Looking into the Past* (1999) is a series of textbooks which are promoted as providing learners and educators with a complete resource for studying History in Grades 10, 11 and 12. The Grade 12 book lists a stellar group of contributors, including academics Peter Delius and Christopher Saunders. The book is based upon the 1995 interim syllabus and adopts an outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching by building selected outcomes into the content covered by each chapter. It attempts to allow learners to participate in and explore history by being ‘packed’ with a wide variety of ‘sources, profiles, photographs, maps and cartoons’.<sup>233</sup> The methodology of the textbook is ‘competency-based and learner-centered’.<sup>234</sup> The skills developed in the book correspond closely with the specific outcomes and range statements that form part of the HSS learning area – in other words continuity

<sup>231</sup> Interview, Mr I. Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012.

<sup>232</sup> In order of date of publication, these books include: Y. Selati, P. Delius, C. Dyer, L. Naidoo, J. Nisbet and C. Saunders, *Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 12* (Cape Town, 1999); Authors unnamed, *Human and Social Sciences: Grade 8 Learner’s Book* (Clubview, Pretoria, 2000); M. Mulaudzi, J. Bottaro and P. Visser, *In Search of History: Grade 12* (Cape Town, 2003); J. Earle, G. Keats, A. Clacherty, B. Maclagan, B. Roberts and P. Thraves, *Social Sciences Today: Grade 8 Learner’s Book* (Cape Town, 2005); E. Brink, A. Ehlers, K. Gibbs, A. Grundlingh, K. Mbenga, J. Phelago, J. Verner and E. Varga, *History for All: Grade 12 Learner’s Book* (Northlands, Johannesburg, 2007) and J. Bottaro, P. Visser and N. Worden, *Op Soek na Geskiedenis: Graad 11 Leedersboek* (Cape Town, 2008).

<sup>233</sup> Y. Selati, *et al*, *Looking into the Past*, back cover material.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, Foreword.

between the GET and FET phase is attempted. The historical skills emphasised in the textbook are chronology, evidence and sources, critical thinking and communication. In line with outcomes-based education practice, various stated outcomes precede each chapter – ‘knowledge outcomes’, ‘concepts and skills outcomes’ and ‘value outcomes’.<sup>235</sup> The work attempts to systematically build important historical skills such as essay writing, analytical thought and the ability to detect bias. Activities include various kinds of assessments, debates and projects. New word definitions, a reading list and research activities are included. The textbook is packed with solid historical content, but in line with the OBE philosophy of the time content is designed to meet the various outcomes described above. The English language used in the textbook is of a high standard – learners who speak English as a second or third language (such as most of the learners I teach) might struggle at times. The layout of the content is not user-friendly. In this regard it resembles many apartheid-era History textbooks which set a far higher premium upon content rather than layout and presentation and were most concerned to impart as much information as possible. The educator’s task is made easier by the inclusion of a variety of activities on almost every second page, including many source-based exercises.

This textbook makes a noble attempt to present varied perspectives on South African history. Sections of the text which deal with apartheid-era historical events are followed by a unit which presents the story of resistance. The history of the National Party government and its opponents is presented. An example of this is that the section entitled ‘Apartheid in its early Phase (1948–1959)’ is immediately followed by a section termed ‘Resistance in the 1950s (1949–1959)’.

The attractive cover design of the textbook consists of only two photographs. One depicts a pair of liberated 1920s ‘flappers’<sup>236</sup> sitting astride motorcycles and the second depicts Thabo Mbeki, Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk standing happily together at Mandela’s 1994 inauguration ceremony. This illustrates the fact that the book covers both world and South African history. The 1994 South African photograph vividly demonstrates that the book heralds a new era in the country’s history. One cannot escape the conclusion that this

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, Foreword.

<sup>236</sup> ‘Flapper’ is a term which refers to young ‘liberated’ American women of the 1920s.

depiction makes the point that the textbook attempts to provide a fair coverage of South African history.

*In Search of History: Grade 12* (2003) was written for the NSC National History Examination and attempts to provide extensive coverage of the requirements of the new syllabus. It claims to use a wide variety of historical sources and case studies, to provide ten CASS (continuous assessment) activities using primary source material and to provide opportunities for debate and the development of investigative skills.<sup>237</sup> Unique features of the textbook include a concise summary and explanation of the chapter to follow and a selection of essay topics at the end of each chapter. The book also promotes the development of the usual array of historical skills associated with post-apartheid secondary school History study such as 'detecting bias, questioning reliability, comparing different sources, looking for contradictions in arguments, being alert to propaganda and persuasive techniques [and] using empathetic awareness...'<sup>238</sup>

This textbook has moved beyond *Looking Into the Past* (1999) in that the South African section is more critical of apartheid and tells the story of resistance to it in great detail. At the heart of the South African section of the textbook, Unit 7 is titled 'Apartheid and Resistance'. This 40 page section is entirely critical of the apartheid system while 27 of 28 illustrations in the unit depict the unfairness of the apartheid system and almost every illustration depicts suffering or protesting people. To argue that the point of view of the National Party government and its supporters deserves some mention is certainly not to argue that they were right or that the work itself supports an undeniably inhumane political system.

The cover design of the book mainly depicts scenes from world history – the fall of the Berlin Wall; a picture of Mussolini; a photograph of a Burundian family on a motorcycle fleeing that country's civil war; an anti-Nazi British war poster – and includes a photograph of a multiracial group of women involved in the South African Women's March of 1956. The purpose of the illustrations appears to be to advertise the contents of the syllabus which the book covers. The racial composition of the people depicted on the cover does however

<sup>237</sup> M. Mulaudzi, *et al*, *In Search of History*, back cover material.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction.

indicate that this textbook attempts to depict a history of every cultural group, important in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

*History for All: Grade 12 Learner's Book* (2007) is an outcomes-based History textbook which featured an attractive layout, designed to make learning easier. The beginning of each chapter features a simple spread which includes an overview of the chapter's content, expected outcomes and key questions about the content. Heritage issues and indigenous knowledge systems are represented throughout the book. New words are defined and chapters are summarised as they conclude. Positively, the beautiful layout of the book which includes a lavish selection of photographs, illustrations and helpful definitions makes the book learner-friendly. It creates interest in History. Negatively, the book does not provide adequate coverage of the syllabus. Steve Biko (Black Consciousness) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) do not receive the coverage they deserve and both topics are dealt with in a matter of a page or two. I found the book a useful teaching aid – the section on *ujaama* and Tanzania (always examined) proved helpful to my own History learners – but found that this textbook had to be used in conjunction with others in order to present learners with a complete picture of the syllabus.

The cover design of the textbook depicts a series of flags fluttering outside the United Nations headquarters in New York. Attractive as the photograph is, it is surprising that no African or South African scenes are portrayed. The credits provided in the book reveal that a design company was responsible for the book's cover and that by implication no history writers were responsible. A more relevant cover design would have enhanced the book.

*Op soek na Geskiedenis [In Search of History]: Graad 11 Leedersboek* (2008) is Oxford University Press's NSC Grade 11 Afrikaans-medium offering. The textbook claims to offer learners and educators high quality learning material and to provide learners with source-based activities. It claims to cover all Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs) as well as covering the syllabus.<sup>239</sup> The South African history section of the syllabus is dealt with in only 56 of 288 pages. This comprises chapter seven, titled 'How Unique was Apartheid in South Africa'. The chapter is divided into seven units, namely:

<sup>239</sup> J. Bottaro, et al, *Op Soek na Geskiedenis*, back cover material.

- How did segregation form the foundation for apartheid?
- How did the idea of apartheid distort perceptions about race?
- In what way was apartheid a form of neo-colonialism?
- What was the nature of opposition against apartheid in the 1950s?
- Apartheid compared: What was the experience of black people during the 1950s?
- Apartheid compared: How did the government enforce apartheid?

The textbook is lavishly illustrated. In chapter seven there are 54 illustrations. Two are maps. Fifty of the illustrations depict the horrors of the apartheid system. Almost all of these highlight the suffering of black people. The conception of the cover design of the book is bold indeed. The main photograph depicts Nelson Mandela delivering his 1990 release speech in Cape Town. A photograph of a Herero woman overlays a section of the Mandela depiction. The cover illustrations are completed by a small depiction of an African stone sculpture and another of three men – one a European and two native Americans who are related to the practice of Social Darwinism. Of the twelve people depicted on the cover, only one insignificant figure is white. Given the well-known reluctance of white Afrikaans-speakers to study History after 1994, it is surprising that little attempt has been made to make an Afrikaans-medium textbook more appealing to Afrikaner educators and learners.

The *Human and Social Sciences: Grade 8 Learner's Book* (2000) is designed to facilitate teaching the HSS Grade 8 syllabus. It reflects the principles of outcomes-based education. The first three of eight chapters are concerned with 'History' while the remaining chapters concern themselves with geographical issues. The first chapter, 'Sources of History', provides an excellent backdrop to the study of History. Simple, clear illustrations support numerous worksheets which are provided to enable learners to write down their responses to the material. Chapter two deals with 'Social Development' and makes use of a wide variety of historical examples to explain how society changes and develops. These include ancient Egypt, slavery, African farmers and colonialists, feudalism, socialism, communism and capitalism. Chapter three entails a study of 'Democracy', designed to enable a learner to know how government (especially in South Africa) functions. Learners are introduced to the basic workings of the South African constitution.



The textbook is informative and suitably geared to Grade 8 learners. It also serves as a workbook, not surprising as the outcomes-based emphasis of HSS demanded a high level of personal response from learners. The emphasis in the book is however very clearly on HSS and not History. A perusal of this textbook will assist an enquirer to understand the common criticism made of HSS that it watered down History (and Geography) as a subject and instead focused upon general social issues using these disciplines as vehicles to do so.<sup>240</sup>

*Social Sciences Today: Grade 8 Learner's Book* (2008) is designed to cover the Social Sciences (SS) syllabus, which replaced the much maligned HSS. Chapters six to ten cover the History section of the course, while chapters one to five deal with geographical topics. Perhaps to assist potentially confused educators to deal with the transition from HSS to SS, as well as to assist with lesson planning and documentation, the book sets out the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards in detail for both Geography and History as well as presenting them in summary form for each component of every chapter. Each chapter is preceded by a helpful summary of content. New words are regularly explained and chapters are lavishly provided with learner activities and clear illustrations and maps. The textbook takes care not to display bias – in fact the section on the South African War deals with the conflict in a manner sympathetic to the Afrikaner experience during the war. The scorched earth policy and concentration camp suffering are given prominence. In addition, the experience of black people during the war is highlighted.<sup>241</sup>

Surveyed Mpumalanga-based educators who had received their secondary schooling between 1994 and 2006 displayed mixed perceptions toward the History textbooks which they had studied. Responding to question six which asked educators to describe how they had felt about the History textbooks which they had used at secondary school, only three (14.3 per cent)<sup>242</sup> of 21 respondents<sup>243</sup> noted having felt positive about their History textbooks. All three respondents qualified their approval of the textbooks. One noted that ‘

<sup>240</sup> It must be noted that the Grade 7–9 GET system does not only combine two subjects into a single learning area as is the case with History and Geography becoming HSS or SS, but also amalgamates Accounting and Business Studies into Economic Management Sciences (EMS) and Physical Science and Life Sciences into Natural Sciences (NS). Educators in these subjects also complain that their disciplines would be better suited to single subject presentations.

<sup>241</sup> J. Earle, *et al*, pp. 130–142.

<sup>242</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 26, 65, 85.

<sup>243</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2, 6, 10, 12, 22, 24–26, 30 – 31, 41, 49, 72–75, 77, 79, 85.

... They tried to make the textbooks as interesting as possible', <sup>244</sup> another pointed out that '... The textbooks were fine, although they did leave room for a lot of self-study', <sup>245</sup> while the third noted that the textbooks had appeared politically biased to her. <sup>246</sup> Negative perceptions toward school History textbooks were expressed by eight respondents (38.1 per cent). <sup>247</sup> Various reasons for these negative perceptions were provided, ranging from negatively perceived content to the layout of the books:

Textbooks were hard to understand, they used difficult words, concepts and phrases. <sup>248</sup>

The textbooks were very boring and mostly dated. There were also too many dates that you had to remember. <sup>249</sup>

The textbooks that we used, I cannot recall the titles, were a bit on the boring side. Then again there are not a lot of things about a high school textbook that can be exciting to a learner. <sup>250</sup>

The textbooks that we used seldom had any pictures. Sometimes a map would be included where applicable. Mostly the textbook's content was just pages and pages of information that in any case had to be summarised to make learning the work easier. In some cases the book just kept on rambling about a topic without saying something of any value to the topic. <sup>251</sup>

Seven respondents (33.3 per cent) noted that they had not made use of History textbooks at secondary school. <sup>252</sup> The footnotes below reveal that these learners attended a wide range of secondary schools. This was either because they had not been issued with textbooks or had seldom consulted them if they had been issued. Most had been issued with notes by their educators:

We didn't use any textbooks, just handouts given by the teacher. <sup>253</sup>

We did not have textbooks. We had notes. <sup>254</sup>

<sup>244</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 26. [Afrikaans; 1999–2003; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>245</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 65. [Afrikaans; 2000–2004; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>246</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 85. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>247</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2, 6, 30, 41, 49, 72, 73, 77.

<sup>248</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2. [Afrikaans; 1996–2000; Hoërskool Sannieshof]

<sup>249</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 49. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Secunda]

<sup>250</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 72. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; CVO Middelburg]

<sup>251</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 77. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Harrismith High School]

<sup>252</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 6, 12, 22, 31, 57, 72, 74.

<sup>253</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

I only had notes, summarised essay questions. I studied them and was very sure that I would obtain a distinction at the end of my final exam.<sup>255</sup>

Don't think we used any textbooks, copied work from the board or were given handouts.<sup>256</sup>

Three respondents (14.3 per cent) noted that they were unable to remember their secondary school History textbooks.<sup>257</sup> Only one respondent noted that the political content of the textbooks might have been open to question.<sup>258</sup> The lack of social and political awareness among white respondents may point to a general lack of interest in and awareness of these matters among privileged young people or to the fact that post-apartheid History textbooks are not as clearly politically biased as their apartheid-era predecessors. Of course the learners who did not make use of History textbooks would have been unable to form an opinion.

Post-apartheid History textbooks must be regarded as being a substantial improvement upon their apartheid-era counterparts. Improved layout and a more abundant selection of illustrations and source-based activities assist in making learning about History more interesting and enjoyable. History textbooks inevitably display bias, unintended or not. The bias evident in post-apartheid-era textbooks is bias which may be inferred from the syllabus content, rather than the blatant propaganda which was so obvious in many apartheid-era History textbooks. Since South African History is, and will for some time remain a contested terrain, it is clear that no single account of the past is likely to win the approval of every diverse community or interest group.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

It is clear that both History syllabuses and textbooks have a powerful influence in creating the perceptions of those who receive secondary school History education. These perceptions include perceptions toward social, political and other issues of the day as well as the perceptions which learners adopt toward the subject itself. Many black secondary

<sup>254</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 12. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>255</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 22. [Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>256</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 31. [Afrikaans; 1996–2000; Middelburg Technical High School]

<sup>257</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 10, 24, 25.

<sup>258</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 85. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

school learners and educators recognised and rejected both the apartheid-era History syllabuses and textbooks which they were obliged to use as biased representations of history. White learners were less concerned about the political implications of their History courses or textbooks. It is clear that the perceptions of History educators and learners were largely governed by issues of race – and whether or not the recipients of secondary school History were favoured by their position within the social system of apartheid.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# LEARNER AND EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY EDUCATION, 1960–1994

### 5.1 Introduction

The perceptions of black and white South African learners and educators toward secondary school History education during the apartheid era, although sharing some common features were significantly different. The markedly different political, social and economic conditions which black and white people experienced during the apartheid era led to very different experiences of secondary school History. History struggled to become a relevant and popular secondary school subject among learners of every diverse cultural group in South Africa for various reasons.

The perceptions of black learners and educators toward History during the apartheid era echo each other. Some black History educators and learners adopted an attitude of passive or active resistance to the biased pro-government History syllabuses prescribed to them while others chose simply to get on with teaching the subject or studied History simply to pass their examinations and to qualify themselves for tertiary studies. During the 1970s black learners and their educators became more politically aware and active and therefore became increasingly less accepting of the secondary school History they had to teach and learn.

The traditional view of the white experience of History education is that propounded by Mulholland (1981), namely that Afrikaans educators eagerly taught the subject as a form of pro-government propaganda while the English community resisted the clearly biased History syllabuses they were expected to teach and learn. My research and personal experience indicates that this perception needs to be questioned. Although the reality of sharp cultural differences between white English and Afrikaans speakers cannot be denied, perceptions of History education by English and Afrikaans learners and educators were not

greatly different. Mazabow quotes Mulholland's view that 'the attitude to teaching History in the public schools remained divergent, the Afrikaner teaching body urging that History be taught 'from the point of view of the Afrikaner nation', whilst the English teaching body was insistent that the purpose of History teaching was not the inculcation of attitudes but the discovery of truth'.<sup>1</sup> Kallaway relates his own experience of teaching History at the height of the apartheid era during the 1960s:

The majority of kids in that broadly 'liberal' middle class, urban English language context were sufficiently aware of the world to understand very quickly that the text books were highly suspect in their interpretations of the past ... and I was confident enough ... to make it my daily business to demythologise the history curriculum ... in the handbook of those times ... As a consequence, it paved the way for critical thinking!<sup>2</sup>

It must be noted that this experience of English-speaking History learners relates to a small number of learners and may not have been normative for most learners who attended English-medium government secondary schools. Kallaway's teaching philosophy may not have been typical of other History educators, especially those found in government secondary schools. The dichotomy which scholars such as Mulholland and Mazabow draw between the perceptions of Afrikaners and English speakers toward History education is simply not true or is at best a very broad generalisation. There was in fact less of an attitude divide between the views of English and Afrikaans speaking white South Africans during the apartheid era than is generally presumed.

Chernis observed the response of English teachers' unions toward the CNE policy, especially toward History teaching in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>3</sup> As he notes, the response of these unions, the Transvaal Teachers Association and the South African Teachers Association against CNE was vigorous indeed. Closer inspection, however, reveals that their protests masked a

<sup>1</sup> G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools' (D.Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2003), p. 96, quoting R. B. Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol. I and II. (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981), p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness' p. 97, quoting P. Kallaway, 'History Education in a Democratic South Africa', *Teaching History*, 78 (1995), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> R. E. Chernis, 'The Past in the Service of the Present: A Study of South African School History Syllabuses and Textbooks, 1839–1990' (Ph.D thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990), pp. 297–299.

philosophy not entirely different to that of the Afrikaner nationalists they were attacking. Chernis posited that concerning history 'the T. T. A. (Transvaal Teachers' Association) took the proponents of the C. N. E. to task for what it regarded as the emphasis on national history "to such an extent that it is obvious that the history of minority groups in South Africa would be disregarded"'.<sup>4</sup> The S. A. T. A. (South African Teachers' Association) mouthpiece claimed that "a principle of separation" was 'being applied between the Boerenasie and the "English"; in S. A. T. A.'s view there could only be one South African nation'.<sup>5</sup> In 1950, the S. A. T. A. challenged the Cape Education Department for promoting the aspirations of Afrikaans speakers which could denigrate the achievements and aspirations of the English (the 'other') section of the population.<sup>6</sup> Chernis notes that English speakers, in reacting against the CNE policy and the biased History syllabuses and teaching it proposed, were concerned with the issue of occupying 'a back place in history'.<sup>7</sup> There does not appear to be a great difference evident between the aspirations of white English and Afrikaans speaking South Africans aside from disagreeing who the beneficiaries of privilege would be and how the spoils of oppression should be shared.

It is generally agreed that by the 1960s white Afrikaans and English-speaking South Africans were drawing ever closer politically – and certainly in terms of their perceptions toward life in South Africa. Professor C. J. Muller describes the changing relationship between English and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans in the 1960s:

There has been more opportunity for cooperation in the political sphere between English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, and the traditional division between the two groups has also become blurred. Attitudes towards the colour question and towards Communism have become crucial factors in deciding affiliations. Despite a sharp division between many university students there are clear indications that a new white nation is being born. In March, 1968, Prof. F. G. Butler sensed that 'English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans are reaching out towards each other with unusual, if fumbling frankness. This is more than fear-inspired mutual back-

<sup>4</sup> Chernis, 'The Past in the Service of the Present', p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298, quoting *Education*, May 1949, p. 87

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 298–299, quoting *Education*, February 1950, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

slapping in our little white laager; it is a recognition of common ground and shared sentiments'<sup>8</sup>

P. W. Coetzer, writing in the *Illustrated History of South Africa* notes that Verwoerd's republican cause was not won by the Afrikaner vote alone but that many English-speaking people had joined the ranks of the republicans.<sup>9</sup> Verwoerd himself, in an attempt to woo English-speaking support, acknowledged that the republican mandate was to preserve the future of the white man and of the white government of South Africa. Magubane points out that this ploy succeeded, as in the 1961 general election, the National Party obtained 63.7 per cent of the vote, which could only mean that English-speakers has supported the government.<sup>10</sup> Magubane further notes that during the 1960s, the promise of prosperity and the fear of communism served to lure English-speakers into the Nationalist fold.<sup>11</sup> Writing in the same publication, M. Legassick and C. Saunders observe that English church denominations adopted a conservative, passive attitude toward apartheid and that 'white congregations accepted de facto segregation as a way of life'.<sup>12</sup> Saunders notes that the English-speaking support for the Nationalist Party cause increased during the apartheid years. The increased English-speaking support which the economic boom of the 1960s brought<sup>13</sup> was further increased after the introduction of the tri-cameral system of government was introduced by the Nationalist Party in 1983 as 'the decreased emphasis on ideological apartheid endeared Botha's policies to many English-speaking whites, who had never been comfortable with either the strident rhetoric of Afrikaner nationalism or the

<sup>8</sup> C. J. Muller, *500 Years: A History of South Africa. Second Edition* (Pretoria and Cape Town, 1975), p. 464, quoting F. G. Butler, 'The Future of English-speaking South Africa', *New Nation*, March 1968.

<sup>9</sup> P. W. Coetzer, 'The Era of Apartheid, 1948–1961', in T. Cameron and S. B. Spies, *Illustrated History of South Africa* (Johannesburg/Cape Town, 1988), p. 288.

<sup>10</sup> B. Magubane, quoting D. O' Meara, *Forty Lost years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party 1948–1994* (Ravan Press, 1999), p. 110 in Chapter 1, 'Introduction: The Political Context', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol. I (1960–1970)* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 36–37; See also H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, H. Giliomee, Chapter 4, 'From an Afrikaner State to an African State (1945–2005)', in *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town, 2007), p. 344.

<sup>11</sup> B. Magubane, Chapter 1, 'Aboveground activity in the 1960's', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol. I (1960–1970)* (Cape Town, 2004), p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> M. Legassick and C. Saunders, quoting J. Scott, 'The Black Sash: A Case Study of Liberalism in South Africa' (Ph.D thesis, Oxford University, 1991), p. 78 in Chapter 16, 'Aboveground activity in the 1960s', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol. I (1960–1970)* (Cape Town, 2004), p. 677.

<sup>13</sup> C. Saunders, ed., *Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story. Second Edition* (Cape Town, 1988), p. 422.



daunting prospect of one-man-one-vote'.<sup>14</sup> By the time of the first democratic election in 1994, the 'New' National Party had captured the vast majority of the English-speaking vote.

Given the above evidence, it is hard to believe that the perceptions of English and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans toward most things, including the History education they received at secondary school was significantly different. Louis Smith (Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Mpumalanga Education Department) and Gys Romijn both recall that during the apartheid era there seemed to be little difference between the perceptions of English and Afrikaans-speaking learners toward History education. Smith noted that 'during the late 1980s I taught History to Afrikaans and English learners (in the same class) and there was no significant difference between them ... both Afrikaans and English learners had the same attitude toward History. I was not aware of any difference in their attitude'.<sup>15</sup> Romijn notes that while teaching at Carleton Jones High School between 1974 and 1984 there were differences between Afrikaans and English educators but no differences between Afrikaans and English learners.<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to believe that the perceptions of English-speaking learners during the apartheid era – or the few English-speaking educators who taught History during that time – were significantly more liberal than those of their Afrikaans counterparts.

## 5.2 Learners' perceptions

The influence of educators is vital in the learners' positive perceptions, or otherwise, of a school subject. Bage, writing about trends within History education in British schools points out that '... Most of us could name ... or blame ... an individual responsible for inspiring us with our love of History'.<sup>17</sup> Welton's comment on the influence of a History educator remains valid to the present day:

'It is evident that this teacher must be enthusiastic both as a student and as a teacher of History, for whilst no subject is more inspiring and valuable when well taught, none is more deadening when badly taught.'<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>15</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr G. Romijn, Middelburg, 15 November 2010.

<sup>17</sup> G. Bage, 'Primary Sources', *History Today*, 48 (12) (1988), p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> J. Welton, *Principles and Methods of Teaching* (London, 1909), p. 243, as quoted by J. J. Nel, 'Gesiedenis

Writing in 1965, J. J. van Tonder noted that History educators, particularly those in Afrikaans-medium schools, needed to be better prepared with regard to 'goal setting and in the content and evaluation of History' (my own translation) so that the subject obtained greater legitimacy and appreciation.<sup>19</sup> Several of the Mpumalanga educational administrators or educators I interviewed and who had received their History education during the apartheid era mentioned that their love of History had been inspired by positive History educators. Louis Smith, who had attended Jagersfontein Sekondêre Skool (Jagersfontein Secondary School) from 1970–1974 recalled that even though he could not remember very much about the textbooks or History syllabuses, he did remember that the educator's attitude was very positive.<sup>20</sup> Werner Coetzer, Curriculum Implementer for the Ehlanzeni (Nelspruit) region of Mpumalanga and for many years Chief Examiner of Grade 12 History, recalled that his History educator in Grade 12 had made the subject come alive for him and that he had thoroughly enjoyed his lessons.<sup>21</sup> Gys Romijn stated that his love for History was inspired by '... The influence of my 'ego' teacher':

Mr van Rooy had a big ego. Nevertheless he enjoyed being an important person. He really enjoyed his lessons. He knew his subject very well ... the way he explained the Great Trek and the trek leaders impressed me.<sup>22</sup>

Mossie Ourique, Deputy Principal of Hoërskool Evander also remembered his History educator fondly:

I attended Sundra High School when I was a learner. Sundra has now closed and the learners now attend Hoërskool Delmas. History was very popular there. I loved our History teacher. She influenced the learners very positively. Learners adored the History teacher, even aside from history classes.<sup>23</sup>

Twenty-five of the 66 surveyed Mpumalanga educators (37.9 per cent) I surveyed who had received their secondary school educations before 1994 commented on their perceptions

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in die Middelbare Skool onder die O V S Departement van Onderwys (1933 –1947)' (Dissertation in part fulfilment of M. A., University College of the Orange Free State/University of South Africa, 1949), p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> J. J. Van Tonder, 'Gesiedenis: Knelpunte en Gevaartekens', *Historia*, 10 (4) (1965), p. 263.

<sup>20</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr W. Coetzer, Middelburg, 8 November, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr G. Romijn, Middelburg, 15 November, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Interview, Mr M. Ourique, Middelburg, 28 March 2011.

of the History educators who had taught them.<sup>24</sup> Positive comments about the History teaching they had received were made by 16 respondents (24.2 per cent).<sup>25</sup> The positive influence of their History educators clearly played a significant role in their appreciation of the subject:

We had an awesome teacher who made the history of Hitler come alive in the classroom. She was a youth in Germany at the time and could describe every written word with absolute clarity and feeling. We learnt about the Cold War through the real experience of someone who lived, breathed and experienced it.<sup>26</sup>

Adored European history. Viewed history as a journey into the unknown. Brilliant History teacher! Lost myself in History.<sup>27</sup>

The negative influence of uninspired History educators is also clear in the responses of the nine respondents (13.6 per cent of pre-1994 secondary school educated respondents) who attributed their dislike of the subject to the destructive efforts of their History teachers:<sup>28</sup>

Teacher presented it – BORING. I got the most hidings with the ruler over my knuckles as I was a hyperactive child and my concentration was low as well.<sup>29</sup>

Enjoyed world (general) history in matric, however the South African history, which focused on the policy of segregation was taught in a very dull, pedantic fashion. The teacher was negative and uninvolved.<sup>30</sup>

We did other homework in those [History] periods. Teacher was most of the time busy with something else.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 13–14, 18–20, 19, 23, 33–36, 42, 47, 52, 55, 58–59, 63–64, 69–70, 82–83.

<sup>25</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 18, 34, 36, 42, 47, 52, 55, 58, 64, 59, 63, 69–70, 82–83.

<sup>26</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 42. [English; 1978–1982; Witbank Convent]

<sup>27</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 55. [English; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Langenhoven]

<sup>28</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 13, 19–20, 23, 33, 35, 63.

<sup>29</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 19. [Afrikaans; 1959–1963; Technical Hoërskool, Bloemfontein]

<sup>30</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 20. [English; 1982–1986; Jeppe Girls' High School]

<sup>31</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1. [Afrikaans; 1978–1982; Hoërskool F. H. Odendaal]

Not all reasons respondents provided for liking History because of the influence of the educator could be regarded as pedagogically sound:

When an attractive young male teacher came to our school to teach History, many girls showed interest but dropped it when he left. It was not a popular subject; most learners thought it was a difficult subject with a lot to study off by heart and not important for one's future.<sup>32</sup>

The perception that History was a boring subject is closely related to its poor teaching. Fourteen (21.2 per cent)<sup>33</sup> of the 66 surveyed educators who had taken History as a secondary school subject before 1994 related that they had found the subject to be boring. The cause of this was undoubtedly uninspired teaching. Learners had experienced the syllabus as repetitive – ‘the syllabus just got boring with the same information’<sup>34</sup> and ‘... the same basics with more detail each year – the Great Trek etc., indeterminably [sic]’.<sup>35</sup> One respondent noted that the only thing he/she could remember about taking History was that it was boring.<sup>36</sup> Two respondents noted that most of the learners at their schools had found History boring.<sup>37</sup> The antidote to boring History was correctly perceived by a respondent who noted that he/she had ‘... had excellent teachers, but in those days no History syllabus was boring at all!’<sup>38</sup>

The perception that History involved too much rote learning – simply learning facts, names and dates was a major reason why respondents found the subject to be boring. Writing in the 1960s both J. J. van Tonder and A. G. Coetzee complained about History education at white secondary schools being too examination oriented and involving too much learning and memorisation work. Van Tonder noted that many learners were unwilling to take History and found the subject difficult because of a fear of History examinations, which were seen as goals in their own right at the expense of ‘story’ which learners might have enjoyed.<sup>39</sup> Coetzee echoed this point, noting that there was no doubt that the large amount

<sup>32</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 58. [Afrikaans; 1977–1981; Hoërskool Evander]

<sup>33</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 11, 18, 19–20, 23, 33, 37, 39, 44, 50, 71, 83–84.

<sup>34</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>35</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 44. [English; 1968–1972; Hoërskool Ermelo]

<sup>36</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 39. [Afrikaans; 1980–1985; Hoërskool Centurion]

<sup>37</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 11, 18.

<sup>38</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 82. [Afrikaans; 1967–1971; Afrikaans Hoër Meisieskool]

<sup>39</sup> J. J. van Tonder, 'Gesiedenis: Knelpunte en Gevaartekens', p. 261.

of learning which was required for the History examination contributed greatly to learners including other subjects in their curriculums.<sup>40</sup> Coetzee went on to complain that historical facts were being presented to learners to memorise for examination purposes without their causes or contexts being explained. This, for Coetzee, was making History an unpopular subject.<sup>41</sup>

Prominent figures presently involved in History education in Mpumalanga shared their perception that whilst at secondary school during the apartheid era their own History lessons had been based upon rote learning and memorisation. Louis Smith recalled that learners at his school did not want to take History as a subject because of the high volume of learning work. In addition, learners were scared of essay questions which involved a memorisation and repetition of a multitude of facts.<sup>42</sup> Werner Coetzer, '... Regarded History learning as memorising of facts and dates which to them was not interesting at all'.<sup>43</sup> Gys Romijn remembered that the general attitude of his fellow learners at Vanderbylpark Hoërskool (1968) toward History education was 'who wants to learn about dates and dead people'.<sup>44</sup> Naomi Uys, foremost History educator in Mpumalanga recalled that History at secondary school (1970s) was considered to be 'parrot work' by other learners.<sup>45</sup>

An abundance of rote learning is testimony to unimaginative teaching. Eleven respondents (16.7 per cent of the 66 educators who had received secondary school education before 1994)<sup>46</sup> noted their dissatisfaction that their History education had consisted of rote learning. Respondents noted that there was '... Too much emphasis on dates. Rote learning wasn't stimulating'<sup>47</sup> and that '... The memorising of dates and events did not make sense as I could not understand what value it would have later on in life'.<sup>48</sup> The pain of a

<sup>40</sup> A. G. Coetzee, 'Kruispaaie in ons Geskiedenisonderrig', *Historia*, Vol. 8 Issue 4 December 1963, p. 236. The original quoted text reads:

'Dit ly geen twyfel nie dat die groot hoeveelheid leerwerk wat vir die geskiedenis-eksamen vereis word, baie daartoe bydra dat leerlinge verkies om ander vakke in hul leerplanne in te sluit'.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>42</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr W. Coetzer, Middelburg, 8 November 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr G. Romijn, Middelburg, 15 November, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 8, 15–16, 17, 27–28, 33, 59–60, 67.

<sup>47</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3. [English; 1978–1982; Hoërskool Piet Potgieter]

<sup>48</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 17. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

respondent who noted that ‘ ... It was terrible ... just bare, unnecessary facts’ is evident.<sup>49</sup>

Two respondents recalled how they had experienced History lessons in Standard seven:

I only had History as a subject up until Grade 9 (Standard 7). The problem might have been with me but the subject was just a conglomeration of person’s names, dates and countries that had to be memorised and then reproduced for marks in tests and exams, e.g. Garibaldi and friends in the unification of Italy.<sup>50</sup>

I recall having to memorise lists of dates, key figures and places during the different wars. The syllabus was boring – nothing was brought to life. Teaching was results driven – we were drilled to reproduce facts in tests. I couldn’t wait to leave History at the end of standard 7.<sup>51</sup>

Research conducted by Mulholland among English-speaking school leavers during the 1970s at the campus of the Johannesburg College of Education confirms the fact that secondary school History education was an exercise in rote learning which did little to promote the critical faculties of those who took the subject. Mulholland’s test consisted of providing a set of biased or historically unsound quotations from school History textbooks to respondents who had to qualify their response to them. The respondents were middle-class English-speakers, 22 per cent of whom had attended private schools, the rest having attended government schools. A total of 265 students were surveyed, of whom 172 were in their first year of study and had not been exposed to the more critical study of History which a tertiary education would have provided.<sup>52</sup>

The questionnaire results revealed that History was not studied critically at English-medium high schools. The History education which these learners had received and more specifically the textbooks which they had used had seemingly had little effect on changing their attitudes. Sixty-eight per cent (68%) of the students stated that at school the highest rewards were for those who learned the text and could reproduce it as faithfully as

<sup>49</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 60. [Afrikaans; 1960–1965; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>50</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 28. [Afrikaans; 1974–1978; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>51</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 33. [Afrikaans; 1972–1976; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>52</sup> R. B. Mulholland, ‘The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol.I and II’ (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981), p. 309.

possible.<sup>53</sup> Mulholland in fact concluded that whether or not pupils took History to matriculation level did not seem to radically alter their outlook. She observed that of statements which required criticism, thirteen of the questions answered by those who had not studied History in the last three years in high school, were approached in a more critical fashion than by those students who had matriculated in History, which suggested that taking History at school tended to *blunt* the critical faculty.<sup>54</sup> Mulholland noted that the students appeared to have internalised, to a significant degree, the attitudes portrayed in the textbooks. Her conclusion was that schools had succeeded in stabilising the myths which were part of the History textbooks and which were also part of 'common folklore'.<sup>55</sup>

The perception that Mathematics, scientific and practical subjects are of greater importance than History or for that matter other humanities oriented subjects has long been held by secondary school learners, educators and school administrators. Nel, writing in the late 1940s noted that Afrikaans-speaking learners were more interested in practical subjects which could assist them with their future careers. He complained that in Afrikaans-medium schools subjects like Latin, Greek and History had declined in importance.<sup>56</sup> JJ van Tonder noted that in the 1960s the popularity of Mathematics, Science and Commerce were responsible for thousands of learners not presenting History as a Grade 12 examination subject. He was worried that the life philosophy which he observed – simply focusing on life advancement – could do serious harm to the spiritual values and power of the *Volk*.<sup>57</sup> Coetzee (1963) protested that within Afrikaans-medium secondary schools historical knowledge was perceived as being of less value than knowledge of natural sciences. He complained that parents were encouraging their children to take scientific subjects at school rather than social science subjects like History.<sup>58</sup> Learners' negative perceptions of History must have been bolstered by the practice which Coetzee referred to of schools streaming the most intelligent learners away

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>56</sup> Nel, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> Van Tonder, p. 260.

<sup>58</sup> Coetzee, 'Kruispaaie in ons Geskiedenisonderrig', p. 233.

from History study noting that the higher the IQ of the learner the more certain is the scientific subject choice and the more useless History appears to be as a school subject.<sup>59</sup>

The inferior position of History at apartheid-era Afrikaans and English-medium secondary schools was confirmed by 11 (16.7 per cent) of the surveyed Mpumalanga educator respondents who had experienced history education prior to 1994:

It was a large school so there were many learners who chose it. Also the school did not offer practical subjects such as Business Studies or Typing at that time – this may have affected learners who could not take Science or Accounting in their choice.<sup>60</sup>

Not many learners went to Grade 12 with History. Home Economics and History were for the weaker learners. They were so wrong!<sup>61</sup>

History was not one of the popular subjects at school and a lot of learners felt that it was no use for university acceptance and wouldn't help them in their fields of study.<sup>62</sup>

It is noteworthy that these respondents represent a variety of English and Afrikaans-medium schools from diverse areas of South Africa which were attended by respondents from the 1960s through to the 1980s. Learner perceptions of History being of minor importance relative to other school subjects were widespread. Believing that History or other humanities related subjects are inferior to other secondary school subjects may be related to the philosophy of pragmatic materialism which has always been a feature of the South African way of life. One respondent stated that people in the Afrikaans community at the time when he was at school 'did not realise the value of History as a subject ... [they] did not see the link between History and the working environment (job opportunities) that the learners would enter after their schooling career'.<sup>63</sup> History was viewed by the

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

The original quote reads:

'Hoe hoër die intelligensie kwasiënt van die leerling, hoe vaster staan die wetenskaplike vakkeuse en hoe nuttelos word die geskiedenis as skoolvak geag.'

<sup>60</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 20. [English; 1982–1986; Jeppe Girls' High School]

<sup>61</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 21. [Afrikaans; 1966–1970; Hoërskool Westonaria]

<sup>62</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>63</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 27. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Jagersfontein Sekondêre/Secondary School]



community ' ... as a nice to have subject, but with no real value'<sup>64</sup> and a 'waste of time, not job related'.<sup>65</sup>

Question seven<sup>66</sup> asked respondents to describe how other white, apartheid-era secondary school learners attending their schools had felt about the History education which they had received. The responses I received are further evidence that there was not a gulf between the perceptions of white Afrikaans and English-speaking learners' perceptions of History education. Seventeen (25.8 per cent)<sup>67</sup> of the 66 surveyed educators who had received their secondary school History education before 1994 indicated that fellow learners were favourably disposed to History lessons. Of these 17 respondents, four were English-speaking (23.5 per cent)<sup>68</sup> while 13 were Afrikaans-speaking (76.5 per cent).<sup>69</sup> History was reported to have been unfavourably received by the fellow learners of 36 respondents (54.5 per cent)<sup>70</sup> of the 66 surveyed educators who had received their secondary school History education before 1994. Seven of these 36 respondents were English-speaking<sup>71</sup> while 29 were Afrikaans-speaking.<sup>72</sup> Relative to the total number of English and Afrikaans-speakers who were surveyed (49 Afrikaans and 16 English-speakers) these figures indicate that among the fellow learners of the respondents I surveyed, there was no significant difference between the positive or negative perceptions of English and Afrikaans-speaking learners during the apartheid era toward the History education which they received.

The overwhelming perception which black secondary school learners held toward History education during the apartheid era was that they felt alienated from the history which was taught to them. Bam argued that the History syllabuses (in this case the syllabuses of 1985) did not include the traditions and experiences of every sector of South African

<sup>64</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 17. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

<sup>65</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8. [Afrikaans; 1977–1981; Hoërskool Amajuba]

<sup>66</sup> Questions which probed respondents' perceptions of the History syllabuses and textbooks which they had experienced have been explored in Chapter 4.

<sup>67</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3–4, 7, 14, 20, 36, 42–43, 47, 50, 54–55, 64, 69, 79–80, 86.

<sup>68</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 7, 20, 42, 55.

<sup>69</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3–4, 14, 36, 43, 47, 50, 54, 64, 69, 79, 80, 86.

<sup>70</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1–2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 15–19, 21, 23, 27, 29, 32, 37, 39, 48, 51, 53, 58–63, 66–68, 70–71, 76, 78, 81–82, 84, 87.

<sup>71</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 5, 37, 53, 61, 63, 68, 84.

<sup>72</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 8, 11, 13, 15–19, 21, 23, 27, 29, 32, 39, 48, 51, 58–60, 62, 66–67, 70–71, 76, 78, 81–82, 87.

society. Black learners felt a sense of alienation as their traditions and experience were not represented in the history taught to them at school.<sup>73</sup> The history of the politically dominant group gained ascendancy and came to be presented as the past. Thus, argues Bam, history became irrelevant to all those who could not identify with the dominant version of the past.<sup>74</sup> The unfortunate results of this include learners being denied the opportunity of understanding history as something which includes everyone as well as the chance to fully understand the world in which they live. In short, such educationally deprived learners are denied a place in history.<sup>75</sup> Bam refers to Van den Berg and Buckland who in their 1981 study revealed that despite some content change, South African History syllabuses were still promoting 'white' and "eiesoortige" bias in content and still reflected a white perspective in general and an Afrikaner perspective in particular. Black people were still incorporated in the syllabus as a kind of 'background information', dealt with in separate syllabus compartments.<sup>76</sup>

Trümpelmann noted that black perceptions of History education during the apartheid era included the feeling that 'we have no heroes of our own' and that 'we need heroes who will transcend national boundaries'. Quoting Manganyi, Trümpelmann notes that while white English people have their Cecil John Rhodes'; Afrikaners their Piet Retiefs and black South Africans their Shakas and Langalibaleles, there are no national heroes who transcend ethnic, racial and cultural boundaries.<sup>77</sup> Chisholm noted the unfortunate result of denying all a stake in history:

The history that is as a result, taught to the African, Indian or Coloured denies his existence as it is the heroic tale of the rise of the Afrikaner; the heroism of black resistance to their conquest is hardly charted. The implications of this are twofold. On the one hand, by

<sup>73</sup> J. Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum for the Secondary School Level in South Africa: Considerations Related to the Possible Inclusion of Themes Drawn from Unity Movement History' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Bam, 'The Development of New History Curriculum', p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22, quoting O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, 'History as a Subject in South African Schools', *Teaching History*, 34 (1982), pp. 22–25.

<sup>77</sup> M. H. Trümpelmann, "n Alternatiewe Geskiedenis- en Kultuurkurrikulum vir 'n Multikulturele RSA'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, quoting N. C. Manganyi *Looking through the Keyhole. Dissenting Essays on the Black Experience*. First edition (Johannesburg, 1981), p. 94, in M. H. Trümpelmann *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society* (Johannesburg, 1990), p. 96.

denying the blacks a history, it is intended to prevent the growth of a national class consciousness and to reduce as much as possible any desire for a radical alternative. On the other hand, the kind of history which has as its purpose the glorification of the status quo and the denigration of reformist and revolutionary movements and their protagonists must of necessity invite reflection on its objectivity.<sup>78</sup>

Gebhard, in noting that History was used 'to explain, justify and transmit the behaviour patterns that characterised South African society during the apartheid era, believed that black people came to reject the status quo along with the subject that had been perceived to legitimate the present, oppressive history which they were experiencing.<sup>79</sup> In noting that History had played a strong role in legitimising apartheid, Rösen pointed out that in ordinary life one had only to look around to see monuments and other symbols of legitimation. The dominance of the white section of the population had been affirmed by a specific concept of history, namely the ideology that proclaimed that civilisation had been brought by Europeans to the uncivilised people of Africa. Being deprived of history the black population, according to Rösen lived in a 'negative historical culture'. The 'historical memory' evident within schools and universities was not their own and resulted in alienation. Rösen presents this as 'a deep gap between the official collective memory and the specific historical memory the blacks in South Africa develop in order to get a positive historical identity'.<sup>80</sup> The consequences of this deep gap in official and specific historical memory could, according to Z. K. Matthews, be dire:

History is worn by a people like part of its national dress and where two people have shared in a series of events, their respective versions are startlingly different in cut, colour, and pattern. As African students in a land dominated by Europeans we were in a peculiarly uncomfortable position. Our history, as we had absorbed it from the tales and talk of our elders, bore no resemblance to South African history as it had been written by European scholars, or as it is taught in South African schools, and as it was taught to us at Fort

<sup>78</sup> Trümpelmann, 'n Alternatiewe Geskiedenis-kurrikulum', quoting L. Chisholm, 'Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa' *Perspectives in Education* 5, 3 (1981), p. 137, in Trümpelmann, p. 95.

<sup>79</sup> W. R. L. Gebhard, 'Does History Teaching Ask and Answer Relevant Questions in a Multicultural Society – Some Suggestions for Enlarging the Vision of History'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, in Trümpelmann, p. 123.

<sup>80</sup> J. Rösen, 'Historical Education in a Multicultural Society'. Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, in Trümpelmann, p. 5.

Hare. The European insisted that we accept his version of the past, and what is more, if we wanted to get ahead educationally, even to pass examinations in the subject as he presents it. It was one thing to accept willingly and even eagerly the white man's world of literature and science. It was quite another to accept his picture of how we all came to occupy the places in life now assigned to us ... If it was difficult for us to accept the white man's account of his own past doings, it was utterly impossible to accept his judgements on the actions and behaviour of Africans, of our own grandfathers in our own lands. Yet we had to give back in our examination papers the answers the white man expected. So we approached history as one does an unavoidable ordeal, all steeled up and determined to get through it somehow.<sup>81</sup>

Gebhard observes that History was therefore perceived by learners as merely a subject to pass and simply to provide an academic credit.<sup>82</sup> Most learners were able to perceive that the content of the history they were exposed to was biased. Ndlovu recorded a black ex-history learner stating that:

What I can say about the secondary school History syllabus is that it is full of distortions ... [the authorities] want us to see history from their own perceptions ... I had to follow their policies just to pass matric. I had to sacrifice...<sup>83</sup>

Not only did black secondary school learners perceive the History instruction which they received to be biased, but the informal History education they received contradicted the formal instruction they received in the subject. This contributed to the negative perceptions which they had developed about History.<sup>84</sup> Steve Biko – and the philosophy of black consciousness which he promoted – strongly influenced secondary school learners' perceptions of the place of black people in society and of the role of history from the early 1970s. Biko believed that the forces of colonialism intended to disfigure and destroy the

<sup>81</sup> Z. K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People. The Autobiography of Z. K. Matthews: Southern Africa 1901–1968* First South African edition (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1983), pp. 58–59, as quoted by Gebhard, 'Does History Teaching Ask and Answer Relevant Questions in a Multicultural Society', in Trümpelmann, p. 124.

<sup>82</sup> Gebhard, in Trümpelmann, p. 124.

<sup>83</sup> S. Ndlovu, 'Conceptions, Perceptions of History and Experiences of Learning among African Students in the Department of Historical Studies [DHS], in the Early 1990s – University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom, January 1996.

<sup>84</sup> Ndlovu, 'Perceptions of History'.

past of the black man. This was why, according to Biko, the history of black people in South Africa was so disappointing to read. Biko noted that ‘... We would have to be naïve to expect our conqueror to write unbiased histories but we have to destroy the myth that our history starts in 1652’.<sup>85</sup> Job Mathunyane, History educator at Sozama Secondary School situated in the township of Mhluzi, Middelburg, during the 1970s, noted the influence of the Black Consciousness Movement among the students of his school during this time. He related how Biko’s ideas had a profound and far-reaching influence upon the youth.<sup>86</sup>

Like most black people, Biko desired to ‘restore the status of their history so that they could reflect on it with pride, instead of humiliation and denigration...’.<sup>87</sup> Biko himself was aware of the profound significance of History education. Biko commented that ‘a people without a positive history is like a vehicle without an engine’.<sup>88</sup> Biko believed that history had a logical direction to it, namely that of taking black people to liberation.<sup>89</sup>

Mr. Muthunyane, one of the Mpumalanga History educators whom I interviewed believed that black learners in apartheid-era secondary schools suffered from a poor self-image. This unfortunate perception was to some extent addressed by the impact of the Black Consciousness Movement:

The situation of blacks before 1976 was hopeless. They were subjected to two forces in the country. They were first of all oppressed by an external world through institutionalised machinery and through laws that restricted them from doing certain things; through heavy work conditions; through poor pay; through difficult living conditions; through poor education. These [things] were external to blacks ...

Secondly black people in themselves had developed a certain state of alienation. They reject themselves precisely because they attack the meaning of all that is good in their own development from

<sup>85</sup> B. S. Biko, ‘Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity’, originally published in B. Moore (ed), *Black Theology: The South African Voice* (New York, 1973), subsequently published in A. Stubbs (ed), *Steve Biko – I Write What I Like. A Selection of His Writings*, first edition (New York, 1978), p. 95, as quoted by Gebhard, in Trümpelmann, p. 125.

<sup>86</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008.

<sup>87</sup> W. R. L. Gebhard, ‘Black Perceptions of South African History’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1988), p. 13.

<sup>88</sup> A. Stubbs, ed., *Steve Biko: I Write What I Like*, p. 29.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

childhood, looking at all the resources that white people have against the lack of resources by black people. This brought about feelings of bitterness and anger. It was the BCM (Black Consciousness Movement) that instilled a sense of pride to the black child so that we started to question the spending by the government to the white child as against the black child. We started questioning the inequalities and began to realise the inferior education we were receiving...<sup>90</sup>

These were the ideas which Mathunyane noted to be influencing learners at Sozama Secondary School. Muthunyane related how he and other History-taking learners at Sozama, while having a deep love for the subject, recognised that the History presented to them was biased and incomplete. Most of the black Mpumalanga History educators whom I surveyed who had taken History as a secondary school subject during the apartheid era felt that the subject had empowered them to be critical of South African political and social life but recognised that it was unsatisfactory as presented to them. For some respondents exposure to school History appears to have created angry feelings about the inferior position of black people in South African society:

As a learner of History during the apartheid era, I was truly given a zeal to be somebody with more interest in passing [on] what I had learnt to others. The part of History which exposed me to the heroes of the past gave me courage to take up the subject as my specialist one. The only discouraging fact was the reflection of history which appeared to be one-sided, talking too much about the achievements made by Europeans in most parts of the world including in Africa with less emphasis on important achievements made by Africans. Most of my fellow learners especially those who belonged to my study group showed similar interest in the subject as myself. I accepted History with reservations because of, in my view, its biasness. I would make my educators happy with my performance because I never relied on one source, but I always felt that the South African history did not reflect the true history of all South Africans...<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009), p. 100.

<sup>91</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1, as quoted by Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', p. 99.

Another respondent also appeared to enjoy History at school but was also able to discern the biased nature of the subject:

I enjoyed studying History. We had an open minded educator at secondary. [He] went an extra mile to explain the aspects wherein the writer of a book would be portraying Africans as thieves or as bad elements. He could put into perspective the behaviours and reaction of Africans with regards to the treatment they received from their white counterparts. As learners we viewed Apartheid History syllabuses as a way of continuously making Africans to believe that whites are superior and cleverer than the blacks. We reacted with contempt to the syllabus. South African history felt like an insult to us. The main question was to say how come the government was formed by whites only whereas blacks are the indigenous people of Africa...<sup>92</sup>

The perception that the History to which they were exposed was biased led to an uncritical view of History education being adopted by black secondary school learners. This perception was encouraged by poorly motivated black secondary school History educators who relied upon a simple transmission of textbook contents as a method of teaching or by History educators who were afraid to deviate from the given History syllabus. Keykana noted that educators may dodge creativity in teaching by relying totally upon the textbook as a source of knowledge. He maintained that learners came to hold the belief that what was not found within the pages of a school textbook could not be true, 'so indoctrinated have pupils become in the infallibility of the textbook, that they measure the efficiency of the teacher by his reliance on it'.<sup>93</sup> Ndlovu observed that learners were unable to articulate in detail fundamental and important issues about how historical knowledge is constructed, produced or acquired in society. His conclusion was that school History backgrounds 'seem to have underdeveloped the critical faculties of learners'.<sup>94</sup>

Learners' perceptions of History were not favourably influenced by the teaching methods employed by their educators. The narrative method appears to have been most widely used in black secondary schools.

<sup>92</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, pp. 99–100.

<sup>93</sup> N. S. Keykana, 'The History Textbook in a Multicultural South Africa'. Paper presented at the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990, in Trümpelmann, p. 115.

<sup>94</sup> S. Ndlovu, 'Conceptions, Perceptions of History'.

Ndlovu relates how black secondary school learners experienced their lessons:

... students commonly describe a typical matric history classroom as one in which they have to listen attentively to the teacher describing historical events. The teacher does this by using the poorly written, prescribed textbooks which are regarded as a facsimile of the past, containing the 'gospel truth'. Students are required to memorise what the teacher tells them and write two page assignments or exercises ... Students are not required to do projects with their peers, use original documents, write term essays, or discuss the significance of what they are studying. Thus they regard matric history education as placing too much emphasis on factual recall rather than on the students' ability to think critically. Because of this many students' (particularly those from DET/DEC schools) construction of the meaning of History as a discipline is very limited when they enter university.<sup>95</sup>

Ndlovu relates how the written work which learners were required to complete was also limited in terms of the sources which learners were exposed to. As with History lessons, additional information was perceived by educators as a hindrance:

... At school we were spoon fed and most of the questions were straight-forward ... there was no need to give our view, we just had to narrate what we had learned, we were not analytic as our knowledge was not needed ... we wrote about one or two pages, not more than two pages ... the teacher was expecting similar answers ... here in the university you are given about five to ten books as references, you then go to the library to get the information on your own. I have never even used the library before ... time management is crucial, unlike in high school where you just read the book today and submit your two page essay tomorrow.<sup>96</sup>

The transmission method of History teaching may have suited those black secondary school learners who chose to avoid engagement with political issues and studied the subject simply as a means of completing their schooling. One apartheid-era Mpumalanga History learner related how most learners in his History class had been highly motivated to learn and that he had studied the subject so as to be able to study law:

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*



Personally myself I enjoyed the teaching of History and taking History turned out to be a blessing as in fact I wanted to study law as a career. I had quite enjoyed it and appreciated it more with the arrival of Mrs. Clarence – a lady who had an Honours degree in History. She was so excellent that I in fact imbibed History, I lived and ate History... even though we had in our class one boy who was troublesome. But we did not copy his behaviour ... Our school had learners who had been highly motivated to learn...<sup>97</sup>

Another respondent indicated that he had separated his History studies from any political issues:

I did not take the subject for any political reasons. I took it because I knew that a nation without history has no past. I did it for the love of the subject. It allowed me to become a thinker and to be able to debate issues...<sup>98</sup>

An often unrecognised factor which negatively influenced the perceptions of black secondary school learners towards History education and indeed toward other subjects was the liberal application of corporal punishment which was enthusiastically inflicted at many black secondary schools during the apartheid era. Mxolisi Mgxashe related his own secondary school education in the Eastern Cape during the 1950s and noted that both school principals whom he had experienced were quick to wield the rod. 'Both believed in the axiom "spare the rod and spoil the child."' Even though we felt at the time that beating us on our buttocks with sticks and strong leather belts was painful and humiliating, especially when you had to take off your pants, the treatment put us straight'.<sup>99</sup> Writing in 1969 Duminy noted that 'Corporal punishment appears to play a very important role in the classroom activities of [black] secondary schools'.<sup>100</sup> Tunmer, also writing in 1969, noted that a large group of learners in the survey which he conducted about black learners' attitudes toward education complained about enduring 'severe punishments' of a physical nature.<sup>101</sup> Hartshorne notes that during the 1976 Soweto Uprising corporal punishment was

<sup>97</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 4, as quoted by Black, p. 100.

<sup>98</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8, as quoted by Black, p. 101.

<sup>99</sup> Mgxashe, *Are You With Us? The Story of a PAC Activist* (Cape Town, 2006), p. 34, as quoted by Black, p. 101.

<sup>100</sup> P. A. Duminy, 'How Black High School Pupils See their Teachers'. Paper presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education (Johannesburg, 1969), p. 10, as quoted by Black, p. 101.

<sup>101</sup> R. Tunmer, 'African Attitudes Towards Education'. Paper presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education (Johannesburg, 1969), p. 8, as quoted by Black, p. 101.

a major component of a broad learner dissatisfaction with the conduct of their educators. Further problems which learners perceived concerning their educators included general inability, being unhelpful, lacking in commitment, failing to explain work, drinking too much and absenteeism from school.<sup>102</sup> One respondent from the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga recalled that History study was forced upon learners with the threat of corporal punishment – with, it would appear, some success:

The principal and teachers were not yet debarred to apply corporal punishment to any learner who resisted apartheid history. It was only after 1976 that schools and the government could not deal with such resistance...<sup>103</sup>

It goes without saying that education enforced with the threat or reality of physical punishment will seldom result in the formation of positive perceptions of the subject which is being taught. The extensive use of corporal punishment in black secondary schools during the apartheid era must be regarded as a potent, if difficult to quantify factor which created negative perceptions of History (or indeed any other subject) among learners.

The creation of an uncritical approach toward History education among black learners may have been the result of their and their educators' reaction to a biased History syllabus but among white learners an uncritical approach toward History teaching was either the result of a biased History syllabus being embraced by conservative, politically motivated educators or, more commonly, a simple lack of interest in teaching or learning the subject.

The 1991 HSRC investigation into the teaching of History in South Africa revealed that a large majority of the surveyed learners felt that an important element of the value of History education was that it improved their ability to remember facts accurately. This was attested to by 78.42 per cent of black Standard 7 (Grade 9) respondents; 70.85 per cent of white respondents; 78.15 per cent of coloured respondents and 72.88 per cent of Indian respondents. The same recall skill was also highly valued by Standard 9 (Grade 11) respondents, with 80.95 per cent of black respondents; 79.12 per cent of white respondents; 80.92 per cent of coloured respondents and 71.97 per cent of Indian

<sup>102</sup> K. B. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910–1990* (Cape Town, 1992), p. 79, as quoted by Black, p. 101.

<sup>103</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6, as quoted by Black, p. 101.

respondents affirming that remembering facts accurately was an important merit of studying History.<sup>104</sup> These findings illustrate that although a wide selection of other perceived advantages of studying History were listed and selected by surveyed learners in the 1991 HSRC survey, History was perceived by most learners to entail the memorisation and reproduction of facts. These findings support the perceptions of many of the Mpumalanga educators I surveyed who had taken History during the apartheid era as well as the findings of Ndlovu, who surveyed black students who had received apartheid-era History education, that the subject had largely involved rote learning. It is obvious that this widespread negative perception can hardly be separated from the uninspiring, narrative teaching methods which were used to convey historical material to learners.

### 5.3 Educators' perceptions

During the apartheid era, concern was expressed by Afrikaans-speaking educationalists that the ability levels of white Afrikaans-speaking History educators were not what they ought to have been. This was seen as one factor responsible for the perceived decline in History's popularity at secondary schools and certainly would have impacted negatively upon the perceptions which these educators would have held toward their subject.

Van Tonder (1965) placed the blame for the unpopularity of secondary school History on the tertiary institutions where History educators were trained. He believed that it was imperative that History education at Teachers' Training Colleges received urgent attention. Van Tonder believed that methodology was emphasised at the expense of instruction in the content of the subject which ought to receive the lion's share of instructional time. In this way – in other words if the teaching of History was better because of an improved content knowledge on the part of educators – greater legitimacy for History would be obtained and the past would be better appreciated and enjoyed by both educators and young people. History study should be emphasised at universities as, for Van Tonder, the future leaders of the country and History educators alike ought to receive a university education in the subject.<sup>105</sup> Swart noted the opposite – that at undergraduate level at university, matters

<sup>104</sup> A. van der Merwe, A. Vermaak and S. Lombard, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA: HSRC Education Research Programme No. 19* (Pretoria, 1991), pp. 187–188; 214–215.

<sup>105</sup> Van Tonder, pp. 262–263.

such as historiography and critical evaluation of sources were not taught and so deprived students of a complete historical education. Swart also believed that the extensive use of English-medium textbooks at Afrikaans university History departments was unsatisfactory.<sup>106</sup>

Writing at the end of the apartheid era, Barnard believed that the negative attitude of History educators was the main factor which was responsible for the subject's decline within white secondary schools. Barnard noted that the quality of professional behaviour displayed by History educators was the factor which had the greatest influence in creating negative or positive perceptions of History education among secondary school learners. Recognising that History was becoming an increasingly unpopular subject at white secondary schools, Barnard held History educators responsible for the unsatisfactory position of the subject. Barnard challenged History educators about their involvement with and dedication to the profession of History teaching:

The one factor over which a history teacher can make his own decision about the future of his subject concerns his attitude toward it. The results of his answers to the following questions should give the history teacher a good idea of his own attitude toward the subject: Do you often read history books? How many historical societies do you belong to? Have you ever had an article published in a history periodical? How many historical publications do you subscribe to? How many historical congresses have you attended? Are you still one of those History teachers who subscribe to the factual methods of teaching or do you wholeheartedly subscribe to the skills-based approach? How innovative are your ideas toward your subject? How many history tours have you undertaken with your history learners during the past few years? This list could be lengthened page after page but the message for the History teacher ought to be clear: is the current standing of the subject, especially in our Afrikaans high schools, not a result of the negative, uninspiring attitudes and lack of subject knowledge of so many History teachers? The History teacher must answer this charge for himself.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> M. J. Swart, 'Leemtes in ons Studie van die Geskiedenis', *Historia*, 3, (4) (1958), p. 276.

<sup>107</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het Geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms? Enkele Perspektiewe', *The Free State Teacher*, April/May 1995, pp. 16–17. The original quote is as follows:  
Die een enkele faktor waaroor elke geskiedenisonderwyser self kan besluit as dit die toekoms van sy vak aangaan, is sy/haar eie houding daarteenoor. Uit die beantwoording van die volgende vrae behoort die geskiedenisonderwyser 'n goeie idee van sy eie gesindheid

Some of these charges seem to be rather unfair. It may not be realistic to expect this level of professional commitment from secondary school History educators who may be already burdened with the manifold duties which accompany the teaching profession. Barnard's point however – that the attitude and perceptions of History educators toward their subject greatly influences the success obtained in teaching it can hardly be challenged. This was confirmed by the twenty-five of 66 surveyed Mpumalanga educators (37.9 per cent) I surveyed who had received their secondary school educations before 1994 and who commented on their perceptions of the History teachers who had taught them.<sup>108</sup> Positive comments about the History teaching they had received were made by 16 respondents (24.2 per cent).<sup>109</sup> While the positive influence of their History teachers clearly played a significant role in their appreciation of the subject, the negative influence of uninspired History teachers is clear in the responses of the nine respondents (13.6 per cent of pre-1994 secondary school educated respondents) who attributed their dislike of the subject to the destructive efforts of their History teachers. Unmotivated and apathetic History educators left a lasting impression on 16 (24.2 per cent) of the surveyed Mpumalanga educators who had received their education before 1994, many of whom related unpleasant memories of their History educators:

Teachers in Standard 6 and 7 were also not dedicated to the subject or made it interesting and a lot of learners gave up the subject.<sup>110</sup>

The seniors spoke with great respect about their teacher who taught with enthusiasm and instilled a love for History in his learners. Our

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jeens die vak te kry: Lees u gereeld geskiedenisboeke?, van hoeveel geskiedenisverenigings is u lid?, het u al ooit enige artikel in 'n geskiedenis tydskrif gepubliseer?, op hoeveel geskiedenis tydskrifte teken u in?, hoeveel kongresse met 'n historiese strekking het u al bygewoon?, is u nog een van die onderwysers wat glo in die benadering van feite-op-die-punte-van-die-vingers of pas u al die vaardigheidsgebaseerde benadering met oortuiging toe?, hoe innoverend is u denke ten opsigte van u vak?, hoeveel toere met u geskiedenisleerlinge het u in die afgelope aantal jare aangepak? Hierdie lysie kan vir bladsy na bladsy verleng word, maar die boodskap behoort reeds aan die geskiedenis onderwyser duidelik te wees: Is die huidige stand van sake in die vak, veral wat ons Afrikaanse hoërskole betref, nie noodwendig terug te voer na so baie van die geskiedenis onderwysers se negatiewe, ongeinspireerde optrede en dikwels gebrekkige kennis van die vak nie? Die geskiedenis onderwyser sal hierdie aanklag vir hieself moet uitmaak.

<sup>108</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 13–14, 18–20, 19, 23, 33–36, 42, 47, 52, 55, 58–59, 63–64, 69–70, 82–83.

<sup>109</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 18, 34, 36, 42, 47, 52, 55, 58, 64, 59, 63, 69–70, 82–83.

<sup>110</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

teacher ... made History a burden to struggle through for two years.<sup>111</sup>

It was terrible. It bore no relation to what I wanted to study. Just bare, unnecessary facts.<sup>112</sup>

It is clear that the majority of apartheid-era white History educators were not of a liberal political persuasion. Mazabow noted that it was a 'small group of learners' who were presented with what he termed 'a more adequate version of the past'.<sup>113</sup> He quotes the History/Archaeology Panel paying tribute to 'the small band of innovative and determined teachers of History, black and white, who fought against the apartheid History syllabuses for many years'.<sup>114</sup> Evans (1990) observed that the paradigm of the South African history taught in English-medium schools was in fact little different to the interpretation of the Nationalist Party elite.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to not being liberal, there were those white History educators who perceived secondary school History education as a political tool to be utilised as propaganda for government policies. As early as 1949 Nel complained that using History as a medium of propaganda for government policies could bring the subject into disrepute. He noted that it had become 'fashionable among many people to describe History as the subject which is used to achieve political objectives'.<sup>116</sup> There are striking examples of Afrikaans political leaders enlisting the assistance of school instruction in general and History instruction in particular, to support their political ideals. Mulholland quotes a Mr Zuwick, a member of the Provincial Council of the Transvaal (1953) stating that 'I will say that it is only a Nationalist educator who can really educate a child'.<sup>117</sup> J. de Klerk, then Minister of Education, who had been a History educator, is recorded as stating that if the Afrikaner child knew of the "Kaffir Wars", the cattle raids of the tribes, the Great Trek and the two wars of independence in the

<sup>111</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 33. [Afrikaans; 1972–1976; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>112</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 60. [Afrikaans; 1960–1965; Hoërskool D. F. Malan]

<sup>113</sup> Mazabow, p. 97.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97, quoting the *Report of the History/Archaeology Panel* (Pretoria, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97, quoting G. Evans, 'Textbooks and the Reproduction of Knowledge' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990), p. 137.

<sup>116</sup> Nel, p. 110, quoting articles in *Die Volksblad*, 24/10/47 and 9/11/48.

<sup>117</sup> Mulholland, p. 247, quoting Mr Zuwick, Provincial Council of the Transvaal, 11<sup>th</sup> Council, 1953, 15<sup>th</sup> Session, 9 June 1953, p. 103.

'Ek wil sê dat dit alleen 'n Nasionale onderwyser is wat 'n kind werklik kan opvoed'.

Transvaal, 'he is a little Afrikaner.'<sup>118</sup> Dr. Connie Mulder gained a reputation for relating school History instruction to the creation of what the National Party government would regard as positive political perceptions within learners. Also an ex-History educator, Dr Mulder made pronouncements in 1958 and 1967 about the effectiveness of his own History teaching before beginning his political career:

... there were very few who came from United Party families who still belonged to the United Party once they finished their schooling...<sup>119</sup>

I was a teacher of History in an Afrikaans-medium mother-tongue school ... After a child had been taught History in my classes, there was very little left for the United Party, precious little...<sup>120</sup>

The perceptions which black History educators held toward their subject and the teaching of it were very different to those held by their English and Afrikaans-speaking colleagues. Whereas dedicated white History educators during the apartheid era like Connie Mulder may have felt that their History teaching activities were important to the authorities as an apology for apartheid<sup>121</sup> black History educators during this time felt closely watched by the Security Police to ensure that they did not speak out against the policies of apartheid. Black History educators whom I interviewed believed that educators who taught History attracted more interest from the security authorities than did other black educators of the time because of the potentially subversive nature of the content of their subject.<sup>122</sup>

It is not possible to generalise about the perceptions and responses of black educators to school education in general and secondary school History education in particular during the apartheid era. The various reactions outlined by Cameron,<sup>123</sup> and subsequently by Soudien,<sup>124</sup> of educators to the introduction of Bantu Education represent patterns of

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266, quoting Mr J. de Klerk, *Senate Debates*, No. 10, 5<sup>th</sup> Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> Senate, 5–9 May 1969, col. 2382.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 265–266, quoting Dr Connie Mulder, *House of Assembly Debates*, Vol. 97, col. 2267, 1958.

<sup>120</sup> Giliomee, p. 545, quoting Dr Connie Mulder, *House of Assembly Debates*, 23 February, 1967, col. 1827.

<sup>121</sup> Connie Mulder as quoted in *House of Assembly Debates*, 23 February, 1967, col. 1827 and Vol 97, 1958, col. 2267, H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 545 and R. B. Mulholland, pp. 265–266.

<sup>122</sup> Interviews, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008 and Mr I. Nkhlemo, Middelburg, 2 May 2008.

<sup>123</sup> M. J. Cameron, 'The Introduction of Bantu Education and the Question of Resistance: Cooperation. Non-Collaboration or Defiance? The Struggle for African Schooling with Special Reference to Cape Town, 1945–1960' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989).

<sup>124</sup> C. Soudien, 'Teachers' Responses to the Introduction of Apartheid', in Kallaway, ed., *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened* (New York,

response which were subsequently adopted by black educators to secondary school History education during the apartheid era.<sup>125</sup> Cameron's 1989 M.Ed dissertation investigated black educator reactions to the introduction of Bantu Education between 1945 and 1960 while Soudien, basing his research on Cameron's work, based his findings on six years of oral research conducted between 1993 and 1999, during which time he conducted over 80 interviews. Soudien listed four kinds of responses which educators adopted toward Bantu Education. Resistance entailed a reaction which was openly hostile toward Bantu Education. Strategic resistance involved the use of a cooperative strategy, as educators chose to work inside the system and subvert it from the inside. Compliance implied that educators opted to work within the system without accepting it while acceptance involved educators who happily embraced the educational changes introduced by the government.

A great deal of unhappiness accompanied the introduction of Bantu Education and many black educators and their unions strongly opposed its introduction. The resulting social disturbances and the climate of suspicion and uncertainty which prevailed encouraged many black educators to leave the teaching profession. Some actively resisted the authorities while others resisted in less obvious ways. Some critically critiqued the system in their classrooms so promoting the faculty of critical thinking in their learners, while other educators choose to be compliant to the social and educational changes happening around them. Soudien notes that the cultural habit, encouraged by ecclesiastical norms of 'behave and obey', of submitting to authority promoted this attitude of obedience. Such compliant educators faced the limitations of family responsibilities and dependants, the fear of losing their jobs and of school principals and inspectors, making their compliance understandable.

Tabata was less tolerant than Soudien or Cameron on the nature of black educator responses to Bantu Education.<sup>126</sup> Referring (rather emotionally) to a new breed of black educator ushered in with the advent of Bantu Education – an educator who had not opted

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2002), pp. 214–221.

<sup>125</sup> Reactions of black educators to Bantu Education and their perceptions toward secondary school History education are examined in Black, pp. 62–90.

<sup>126</sup> J. B. Tabata, *Education for Barbarism* (Durban, 1959), as quoted by Black, p. 64.



to resist its imposition – Tabata noted that ‘Obviously a special creature, a Bantu-ised teacher is necessary for Bantu Education...’<sup>127</sup>

Tabata perceived Bantu Education as both demeaning and humiliating to black educators who had chosen to remain within the system, or had entered it:

The debasement of the teacher is something to outrage those who are accustomed to thinking of teaching as an honourable profession. He is not only robbed of status but of security of tenure and the proper practice of his calling. Under normal circumstances, any professional or civil servant, once employed, has certain rights which ensure the security of his employment. But under Bantu Education the position of a teacher with respect to his immediate employer is reduced to that of master-and-servant. The long list of regulations governing his employment would be more appropriate to the control of a criminal than a teacher...<sup>128</sup>

Tabata went on to point out that a ‘reign of terror’ had been let loose on black teachers. He cites cases of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) swooping on schools, interrogating and searching educators in front of learners. Examples are provided of educators who had long and distinguished records being dismissed simply on the grounds of being ‘unsuitable’ for Bantu Education.<sup>129</sup>

Lekgoathi, writing about the development of educator militancy in the present-day Limpopo area of Zebediela, also asserted that until the period of the mid-1980s school crisis, black educators had generally been unwilling to oppose the educational authorities. He noted that since the 1950s educators’ unions were led by a ‘cautious leadership’ which supported the idea of remaining politically neutral and working with the educational authorities. Lekgoathi stated that unions were often perceived to be taking the side of the authorities, rather than the educators they claimed to represent.<sup>130</sup>

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that most black educators in the 1950s and 1960s opted to cooperate with apartheid authorities in general and the Bantu

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31, as quoted by Black, pp. 64–65.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32, as quoted by Black, p. 65.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33, as quoted by Black, p. 65.

<sup>130</sup> S. P. Lekgoathi, ‘Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994’, *South African Historical Journal*, 58 (2007), pp. 230–231, as quoted by Black, p. 65.

Education Department in particular. During this period, it is clear that most black History educators also chose the path of least resistance. Many were to exhibit a surprising enthusiasm for apartheid ideology.

Primary research which I conducted in 2008 among History educators in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga, suggested that the majority of black History educators in the 1950s and 1960s adopted a very conservative approach to History teaching. Some of the respondents who completed detailed questionnaires were able to remember their own History lessons as educators and learners. The universal response to a question concerning how History was taught as a subject in black secondary schools before 1976 was that nothing contentious or contrary to apartheid policy was propagated:

Before 1976, History was taught to be in line with the political prescription of the Nationalist Party government of the time. Apartheid was justified politically and religiously...<sup>131</sup>

In this case educators were to use the variety of teaching methods such as the textbook method, discussion method, narrative method – but in the absence of politics as it was separated from education – and an educator was not allowed to talk politics...<sup>132</sup>

Many black educators in general, and many black History educators in particular chose not to resist the prescriptions of Bantu Education. This would clearly have had an impact on how they perceived not only their vocations as educators but also as to how they perceived History as a school subject. It would influence their perceptions of the value of the subject itself and values attached to the teaching of History at secondary school level. It would also influence the strategies they used to teach the subject.

This deep sense of conservatism may be clearly seen in the perceptions of Eva Motshabi<sup>133</sup> and Ebenezer Malie<sup>134</sup> who wrote about History teaching in the black community during the 1960s and early 1970s.

<sup>131</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 66.

<sup>132</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 66.

<sup>133</sup> E. Motshabi, 'The Use of the Textbook in the Teaching of History in Bantu High Schools' (D.Ed. thesis, Fort Hare University, 1973).

<sup>134</sup> E. Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary Schools of the Southern Transvaal Region' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1967).

A spirit of subservient reconciliation is evident in the writing of Malie whose 1967 dissertation investigated History teaching in the black secondary schools of the southern Transvaal (presently southern Gauteng) region of South Africa. A self-deprecating attitude was taken toward the aspirations and culture of his own people. For Malie, black culture was perceived as loaded with superstition which had led to disastrous consequences. Western civilisation was seen as being able to infuse black people with a sense of security and spiritual peace. Malie noted that black people should, for example, study the Great Trek without animosity or bias. South African history should, for Malie, cease being a story of hatred and racial conflict. Black people should stop seeing themselves as the 'wronged party' - instead mutual respect and love ought to be produced. A spirit of patriotism and nationalism would best be engendered through focusing on the study of their own nations.<sup>135</sup> The function of the History syllabus, for Malie, was to emphasise what was wrong with traditional black beliefs in the supernatural and to teach black learners what was good and beautiful by educating them about Western democratic responsibilities and principles. Contemporary readers would be shocked to read Malie's assertion that the 'Bantu' 'would have to dig deep into the pages of their national history to look for the useful heritage bequeathed upon them by the past'.<sup>136</sup>

It is easy to be critical of such an 'Uncle Tom' attitude to the apartheid authorities of the day until it is remembered what intense pressure black educators were under to conform to the Bantu Education policies of the time. Many of Malie's views echo those of the National Party government. Black learners should study the conflict between capitalism and communism in order to be able to choose in an unbiased way which system would be best for them. The answer is then prescribed as Malie states that 'Bantu people by tradition are not communistically inclined and the dangers of communism should be emphasised'.<sup>137</sup> Malie regarded African Nationalism as a topic which needed to be studied to show that it portrayed a 'narrow nationalism which would be in conflict with internationalism and real patriotism'.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary Schools' pp. 124–125, as quoted by Black, p. 75.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120–123, as quoted by Black, p. 75.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127, as quoted by Black, p. 74.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127, as quoted by Black, p. 75.

The depths of conservatism to which Malie and many other black History educators of the time were prepared to go are well demonstrated by two further quotes taken from his dissertation, concerning the issues of visiting places of historical interest like the Voortrekker Monument.

Besides occasional expeditions to places of historical significance, like museums, art galleries, battle-fields, and churches, pupils should go to places like the Voortrekker Monument. These symbols of the past should be visited with a positive attitude. The aim should not be to see it as a glorification of the conqueror over the conquered but as a triumph of the ultimate good over forces of antagonism...<sup>139</sup>

This understanding of South African history, unusual as it would appear to be to twenty-first century South Africans is interesting in itself, yet it is Malie's subservient approach to white political power, so typical of many black educators of the early apartheid era which is of interest to this study.

Eva Motshabi's 1973 thesis researched various aspects of black secondary school History education in the Eastern Cape area and provides further evidence of the conservative values of black historians of the time.<sup>140</sup> Three 'stages' in the development of 'Bantu historiography' are referred to by Motshabi. She refers to an 'embryonic' stage, where emphasis was placed upon legends, myths, allegories and sagas which were an account of the heroic deeds of African ancestors. These were related in oral form, with little regard for facts. Motshabi regarded them as mainly moral in nature and unreliable as real sources of historical information.

The second stage of African historiography is termed by Motshabi as 'adolescent'. This was a stage of protest against white, or Western accounts of history. History was written primarily to awaken a political consciousness in urban and educated non-Europeans. Centered on black people, this history writing was designed to further the cause of their liberation and to correct past falsifications and distortions evident in the white recording of history. Motshabi noted that according to this approach, 'the few African chiefs and heroes are elevated beyond reasonable proportions'. This she terms 'undue lionization'. She also notes that

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185–186, as quoted by Black, p. 76.

<sup>140</sup> Motshabi, 'Use of the Textbook', as quoted by Black, pp. 76–77.

some black historians reacted bitterly to the unfair treatment which blacks were accorded in the pages of the textbooks which were current in her day.<sup>141</sup>

It is the third, final and what Motshabi refers to as the 'mature' stage of Bantu historiography which is of great interest to this study. Motshabi points out that:

The adult stage of Bantu historiography is that which dispenses with the 'melting pot' idea of the racial groups in South Africa and accepts *the principle of separate development* [own emphasis] of the national groups in the Republic, if this principle is carried to its logical conclusion...<sup>142</sup>

Motshabi is suspicious of what she terms a new political and national consciousness which she blamed upon an upsurge of nationalism in Africa. She saw this as a disturbing new trend which could negatively influence learners.<sup>143</sup> Following Malie's philosophy, she further added that the African was under the obligation to interact positively with other South African racial groups.<sup>144</sup>

As with Malie's work, Motshabi exhibited the tendency to devalue black culture. In the early apartheid years history education was clearly not valued by most black educators for its potential to encourage political or social liberation. Some black History educators, rather than taking the route of compliance to the authorities chose to remain silent or adopted a robotic approach to communicating the information provided in the textbooks. Maree spent some time during April 1975 observing Social Studies and History lessons in various black Soweto schools. She made a special effort to observe the relationships between educators and learners to the content of their learning. Reporting on the teaching of a wide variety of secondary school educators, ranging from missionary trained educators to new graduates and young unqualified educators, Maree noted that some sections of the History syllabus were simply left out. Although the grounds given for this was that the syllabus was too long to teach everything, Maree concluded that there were two causes for this – that what was written in the textbook was disliked, and an unwillingness to teach it to learners who would ridicule it. She observed an older educator reading from the textbook, allowing no opportunity for learners to ask questions, so avoiding the possibility of difficult issues

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45, as quoted by Black, p. 76.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46, as quoted by Black, p. 77.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3, as quoted by Black, p. 77.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46, as quoted by Black, p. 77.

arising.<sup>145</sup> Referring to the period 1961–1964, Zwane declares that most educators who taught South African history during this period were perceived to be lukewarm about the issues of textbook contents, despite a growing sense of political disquiet around them in the wider community. Zwane reported that his respondents pointed out that their History educators during this period never encouraged open discussion in class, possibly because it was not unusual at this time to have police informers planted in classrooms for the express purpose of informing the authorities about the activities of their peers and educators.<sup>146</sup>

While conducting research for my 2009 dissertation I found evidence of this attitude. Mr Lukhele, a History educator for 28 years, who taught at a number of black secondary schools in Mpumalanga, noted that ‘espionage in classes by some learners was common’,<sup>147</sup> but his response was similar to that of the female educator described by Maree in 1975<sup>148</sup> – that is, he simply did not teach or comment beyond the syllabus and instead relied on learners to memorise facts. He found it too dangerous to do otherwise. He commented:

One would have to follow the textbooks – though it was really painful to know the truth – one could do nothing as one had to take care not to say or comment negatively.<sup>149</sup>

Lukhele perceived History teaching as ‘separated from education’.<sup>150</sup> The perceptions of such educators within black secondary schools must surely have been bleak. It is doubtful whether History teaching could have been pursued with any enthusiasm. In this atmosphere of mistrust and guardedness it seems unlikely that learners could have found the subject inspiring.

Not all black secondary school educators during the apartheid era adopted a conservative stance toward the teaching of their subject. Some History educators opted for what Soudien termed ‘strategic resistance’.<sup>151</sup> Writing of the teaching situation in Mpumalanga

<sup>145</sup> J. Maree, ‘The Hearts and Minds of the People’, in P. Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg, 1984), pp. 152, 155, as quoted by Black, p. 74.

<sup>146</sup> I. E. Zwane, ‘An Examination of the Position and Role of History in Black Secondary Schools, with Particular Reference to the Period since the Introduction of Bantu Education’ (Research Report in partial fulfilment of M.Ed., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), pp. 44, 63, as quoted by Black, pp. 73–74.

<sup>147</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 82.

<sup>148</sup> Maree, ‘The Hearts and Minds of the People’, p. 152, as quoted by Black, p. 82.

<sup>149</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 82.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 82.

<sup>151</sup> Soudien, ‘Teachers’ Responses to the Introduction of Apartheid’, p. 214.

in the 1960s and 1970s, Holden and Mathabatha noted that some schools were staffed by educators who had strong political views.<sup>152</sup> Some schools became sites of political education. Mathabatha relates an interview which he conducted with Patrick Motau, who remembered how his History educator would often interrupt the prescribed syllabus to present the 'real' history of South Africa:

I enrolled for my Form I at Elukhanizweni Secondary in 1956. We were taught by teachers from all over South Africa but my own teachers mainly came from Pretoria. Erik Nkondo, Walter Sibone and Sehlogo were all from townships near Pretoria. I must say, our teachers were very political, especially those who taught us History. At times they would stop in the middle of the lesson and start talking about the unfairness of the apartheid system in South Africa and anti-colonial struggles in Africa for example Kenya and Ghana. We would usually have contentious political debates on such issues.<sup>153</sup>

Some political activists in Mpumalanga were given their introduction to political thought by History educators. An example is given of activist Sam Mkhabela, who was given his first taste of politics by a Mr Mababaso, his History educator. Holden and Mathabatha point to a link between learners who had a strong interest in History and engagement in political activity.<sup>154</sup>

Sozama Secondary School, located in Mhluzi township outside Middelburg, Mpumalanga, was a focal point of resistance to apartheid generally and apartheid educational practices in particular, from the 1950s through to the turbulent resistance of the 1980s. Much of this resistance was due to the activities and influence of History educators who were not of the typically conservative persuasion which seemed to have been the norm.

Mr Job Mathunyane, a learner who completed his Junior Certificate at Sozama in 1964, before moving to the Botshabelo Mission Station outside Middelburg to complete his Senior Certificate in 1966, later became a History educator at Sozama Secondary School from the early 1970s. He related how the atmosphere at black schools in the 1950s was a military one, because of the influence of the two world wars. Resistance to apartheid education assumed a military form:

<sup>152</sup> P. Holden and S. Mathabatha, 'The Politics of Resistance', in P. Delius, ed., *Mpumalanga History and Heritage* (Scottsville, 2007), as quoted by Black, p. 73.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 405, as quoted by Black, p. 73.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 408, 415, as quoted by Black, p. 73.

We had to do 'Scouts' [cadets] and corporal punishment was done. Blacks feared and hated Afrikaners. We did resist in certain ways. In Scouts we sang songs – political songs – in the vernacular. One song was sung to the tune of 'John Brown's Body', which we knew because of the war. The words went 'The world is topsy turvy 'cause Malan is going to rule...' We also sang Pedi songs of resistance...<sup>155</sup>

Mathunyane relates how by the 1960s resistance to apartheid within Sozama became more intense. The attainment of independence by African countries was expounded on by his History educators:

These countries became role models for African resistance. History teachers encouraged their learners to emulate Ghana and become more vocal in the classroom. The learners I was with, including myself, read international magazines on politics – anything we could find. We took books from our poor school libraries and shared them among ourselves. We read *Drum*, *The Plain Truth*. There was no difference between politics and history. In fact, History teachers did not have to teach politics, the learners were reading for themselves. Children were politicised. We read newspapers like the *Sunday Times* and *The Rand Daily Mail* every week. At Sozama my History teachers encouraged this reading...<sup>156</sup>

Mathunyane proceeded to tertiary education at the University of the North at Turfloop during the late 1960s and early 1970s, where he studied History and Political Science. While there, like many other students, he came into contact with the teachings of the Black Consciousness Movement, particularly as propounded by Steve Biko.

Mathunyane and other educators took these ideas back to Sozama, as ex-Sozama students maintained their links with the school. Mathunyane noted that the influence of Biko's ideas upon the youth were profound and far-reaching.<sup>157</sup> As a member of the South African Student's Organisation (SASO), Mathunyane returned to Sozama during the early 1970s to teach English and History. By this time, the Security Police were closely watching him and so he did not find himself able to openly speak about politics in his History lessons. Instead he used the medium of English poetry to teach politics, especially using the protest poetry of Oswald Mtshali.

<sup>155</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008.

<sup>156</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008, as quoted by Black, p. 78.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 79.



Not all Sozama educators were open to the idea of politically conscientising learners. Mathunyane reported that in the 1970s, 'Our headmaster at Sozama was very religious. There were two streams of teachers at the school – the politically aware, and those who believed that you could go to Jesus for everything. We thought that this approach was just too simplistic. All in all it was a tricky atmosphere to teach History in...'<sup>158</sup>

The Inspectorate of the Department of Education was predictably not in sympathy with the liberal, political ideals of politically aware and active educators:

Inspector Steenkamp was our Departmental Inspector in those days. He pressurised us to teach History by the textbook. He hated us to deviate from it. We had to teach nonsense like Van Riebeeck landing in the Cape when blacks were still supposed to be in Central Africa. Or that the Great Trek travelled into an empty land. We taught learners about Black Consciousness; that black is beautiful, and so on. The kids just had to write exams and answer according to the textbook. I was SASO inspired, not textbook bound. There were lots of other teachers who were textbook bound...<sup>159</sup>

Mathunyane departed Sozama for another teaching post in 1975. Mr Moses Nklemo, who took over History teaching at Sozama in 1975, continued the tradition of passive resistance established by his predecessor:

As Big Brother was keeping a watchful eye on us all the time we had to stick to what was in the syllabus. However, when approached privately by a learner I was able to tell the truth and refer learners to other sources...<sup>160</sup>

Nklemo relates how History educators of the time were perpetual targets of the Security Police and how difficult it was to teach History in the treacherous and suspicious world of a black secondary school of the day:

The most frustrating thing was to be able to respond to some of the questions put to you by learners for fear of your safety. The fear factor took all the fun out of the subject...<sup>161</sup>

The teaching of History always made us targets for the government. Several members of the community came to report to me that they had seen my name in the pocket notebook of a Special Branch

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 80.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 80.

<sup>160</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 7, as quoted by Black, p. 81.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 81.

policeman. However, I was never picked up for what I said and taught in class...<sup>162</sup>

Nklemo observed that being constantly watched by spies put heavy pressure on History educators. In the case of Sozama, Nklemo recalled that the police openly proclaimed that 'History educators were responsible for fanning the flames of revolution...'<sup>163</sup>

Like their white counterparts, the poor qualifications of black History educators did not assist in the creation of positive perceptions of history education. It is clear that after the introduction of Bantu Education the standard of education of black educators experienced a sharp decline. Macquarrie notes that as many white educators chose to leave 'African work' because of deliberate government policy and in some cases distaste for the new system, the 'Africanisation' of Bantu Education resulted in an influx of poorly qualified black educators. Macquarrie noted that only three per cent of black educators had comparable qualifications to educators in white schools, and that about a fifth had no recognisable qualifications at all.<sup>164</sup>

Tabata, writing of young black educators entering the profession, puts the case very strongly:

A Nazi-like regimentation governs these young trainees, as it does the schooling from top to bottom. They are carefully screened, selected and indoctrinated before they are let loose on the children. To begin with, their educational qualifications are scandalously low. They require no more than a Standard 6 pass to enter a course of training for one, two or three years to become primary school teachers. Those who are to teach in the higher primary classes take a Junior Certificate (J.C.) and a couple of years of teacher training. Their wages are those of an unskilled labourer.<sup>165</sup>

Horrell added that '... It is perturbing to note that the number of employed teachers with no professional qualifications and an academic background ranging merely from Standard VI to matriculation has been increasing – from 1 979 in 1961 to 4 826 in 1966'.<sup>166</sup> Those

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 81.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, as quoted by Black, p. 81.

<sup>164</sup> J. W. Macquarrie, 'The Main Needs for the Future in Bantu Education', paper presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education (Johannesburg, 1969), p. 11, as quoted by Black, p. 67.

<sup>165</sup> Tabata, p. 33, as quoted by Black, p. 68.

<sup>166</sup> M. Horrell, 'Bantu School Education, 1955 to 1968: A Review and Assessment', paper presented at the

educators who had university degrees also dropped, from 36.3 per cent of the total number in secondary high schools in 1961 to only 25.5 per cent in 1965.<sup>167</sup>

Malie, describing the situation in the Southern Transvaal region in 1967, noted that most educators did not possess the needed qualifications to be effective History educators. More than 95 per cent of the History educators in the schools which he surveyed did not major in History or were undergraduates whose area of study and interests were in completely different fields. Quoting from the Statistical Annual Report of Bantu Education: Annual report for the Calendar Year, 1963, Malie illustrates that out of 30 119 black educators in South Africa, only 667 held degrees and professional qualifications, which means that only two per cent were fully qualified. In Malie's particular geographical area of study, the Southern Transvaal region, 78 educators taught History but only four had majored in the subject.<sup>168</sup>

Holden and Mathabatha, writing about the politics of resistance in the former Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga), describe a boom in the number of schools in the province. Sadly though, the provision of schools was not complemented by the provision of quality educators. Many educators were untrained and unqualified – indeed, some had only recently matriculated.<sup>169</sup>

The teaching of History in black secondary schools may have been influenced by the difficulties History educators had in doing 'extra' work which may have served to enliven the subject. Educators often did not have the funds to buy extra books, which were seen as an unwarranted expense, and even as a factor contributing to 'his starvation'. The lack of libraries also demotivated and deprived History educators of additional reading. An attitude of general indifference towards books developed. Nuxumalo posits that it is only when the History educator himself perceives the value of history, that he can possibly be an asset to his learners concerning the teaching of it.<sup>170</sup>

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1969 Conference on Bantu Education (Johannesburg, 1969), p. 19, as quoted by Black, p. 68.

<sup>167</sup> Macquarrie, 'The Main Needs for the Future in Bantu Education', pp. 11–12, as quoted by Black, p. 68.

<sup>168</sup> Malie, pp. 75–76, as quoted by Black, p. 68.

<sup>169</sup> P. Holden and S. Mathabatha, 'The Politics of Resistance', p. 411, as quoted by Black, pp. 68–69.

<sup>170</sup> O. E. H. M. Nuxumalo, 'The Sociological Significance of the Teaching of History as a Variable in the Socialisation of African Secondary School Pupils (in Kwa-Zulu)' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1980), pp. 177, 179, as quoted by Black, p. 69.

By the 1980s most learners were aware that the education which they were receiving was of a very poor quality. Lekgoathi states that new educators coming into the system in this period either had no training at all or had received their training at poorly resourced 'Bantustan' colleges or universities. Most were ill-equipped as educators. Failure rates rose dramatically, and in some areas 80 per cent of learners failed to matriculate.<sup>171</sup> Van den Berg and Buckland, writing in 1982, noted that there was a need for the corps of History educators to become more familiar with the nature of History as a discipline and with the debate about the interpretation of history in South Africa, and to become better at methods of teaching aside from a simple transmission model. Van den Berg and Buckland also point to the fact that even at this time, 65 per cent of educators in 'coloured' and 'black' schools had no academic background beyond matriculation with which to support their teaching of History.<sup>172</sup>

Lekgoathi regards poor quality of teaching to have been one of the factors which precipitated the widespread class boycotts of 1985–1986.<sup>173</sup> He points out that educators were 'walking a tightrope', caught between the demands of the educational authorities and students.

They dragged themselves to school with little hope of achieving anything. They feared that the authorities would misconstrue remaining at home as tacit support for the students and victimise them. At the same time, they knew that the students were watching their movements. These pressures led to a high rate of drunkenness, absenteeism, resignation and apathy among teachers...<sup>174</sup>

Many of the 'compromised' educators who had been co-opted by the state were able, according to Lekgoathi, to 'hastily' join liberation movements after February 1990, when a freer political environment had opened up.<sup>175</sup> Lekgoathi is heavily critical of unionised black educators in the early 1990s whom he maintains used the unions as a shield to hide their own incompetence and lack of commitment to their students. He describes their actions as a dereliction of duty, which 'signified something not particularly radical or revolutionary,

<sup>171</sup> Lekgoathi, 'Teacher Militancy', pp. 238–239, as quoted by Black, p. 69.

<sup>172</sup> O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, 'History as a Subject in South African Schools', *Teaching History*, 34 (1982), p. 25, as quoted by Black, pp. 69–70.

<sup>173</sup> Lekgoathi, 'Teacher Militancy', p. 239, as quoted by Black, p. 70.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241, as quoted by Black, p. 70.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245, as quoted by Black, p. 70.

which was indefensible even by the standards of a radical reinterpretation of professionalism.<sup>176</sup>

Smith reflected that by the early 1990s History educators were demoralised. He noted that at secondary schools, learners were subjected to an authoritarian 'top-down' tradition of teaching, imposed by educators who themselves were poorly educated. The emphasis of education in black schools was on learning how to pass examinations, rather than on education.<sup>177</sup>

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 1991 survey of the state of History education in South African secondary schools indicates that during the early 1990s black History educators were still considerably less academically qualified than their coloured or Indian or white counterparts. Fifty per cent of the surveyed black group had a History III qualification, compared to 95.23 per cent of white secondary school History educators, 88.24 per cent of coloured and 90.32 per cent of Indian History educators. Of the HSRC sample group, 31.25 per cent of black secondary school History educators had no formal qualifications in the subject. No post-graduate qualification in History was possessed by 93.75 per cent, a figure considerably higher than their counterparts of other racial groups. Alarming, 62.5 per cent of black secondary school educators felt that their training in History was adequate. Ironically, few of the better qualified educators felt their History training to be adequate. The HSRC study further reveals that 62.5 per cent of black secondary school History educators had not attended any form of in-service training course compared to 23.81 per cent of their white counterparts.<sup>178</sup>

Various factors contributed to the general poor quality of black educators during the apartheid era. The government did not encourage a high level of education among black educators, who had little incentive to improve their qualifications. The political situation in which these educators had to work made it difficult for them to adopt a professional attitude toward their vocation. Black History educators had to teach their subject along government-approved lines and trod a difficult path between placating educational

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252, as quoted by Black, p. 70.

<sup>177</sup> I. R. Smith, 'New Lessons in South Africa's History', *History Today*, 43, 7 (1993), p. 6, as quoted by Black, p. 70.

<sup>178</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al.*, pp. 10–14, as quoted by Black, p. 71.

authorities and measuring up to the increasingly revolutionary aspirations of their learners. The fact that the majority of black secondary school History educators adopted an apathetic perception toward their subject or even cooperated with the educational authorities of the time, is not hard to understand.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

It is clear that there were substantial differences between the perceptions of black and white learners and educators toward secondary school History education during the apartheid era. Many white, Afrikaans-speaking History educators were criticised by academics of their time for displaying a decided lack of enthusiasm toward their subject. Both English and Afrikaans-speaking respondents to my 2012 educators' survey relate experiencing poor, lukewarm History teaching – when they received any teaching at all in the subject. Black apartheid-era History educators, like other black educators of the time displayed various reactions toward the apartheid-era educational system in general and toward History education in particular. Black secondary school learners similarly displayed varied perceptions toward the History education presented to them, ranging from an outright rejection of it to seeing it as a necessary means toward obtaining a school-leaving qualification. On the other hand, white apartheid-era secondary school History learners, while harbouring negative or positive perceptions of the subject – largely as a result of the quality of the teaching they received – do not seem to have been aware of the social or political implications of the subject.

## CHAPTER SIX

# EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF HISTORY EDUCATION IN MPUMALANGA, 1994–2012

### 6.1 Introduction

Primary and secondary sources were utilised in the compiling of this chapter. Primary sources included the questionnaires and interviews I conducted with black and white secondary school History educators in 2008 and 2012. In 2012, 87 white, ex-model C secondary school educators completed questionnaires which investigated their perceptions of the History education which they received at school and their current perceptions relating to the teaching of History at secondary school. Interviews with school principals and senior officials from the Mpumalanga Department of Education were conducted. Secondary sources included Dryden's investigation into the perceptions of Cape Town History educators about their subject as well as Barnard's 1995 research into the state of History teaching. My own experience as a secondary school History educator in Mpumalanga also informed the findings of this chapter. Statistics concerning the perceptions of secondary school educators (or indeed learners) toward school History education which pertain to South Africa's democratic era are difficult to find. This lack of data and research in this area was confirmed by the helpful assistance of Rob Siebörger of the University of Cape Town. When asked about recent research into the perceptions of secondary school educators or learners, he replied: 'There's very little that I know of ... Have you looked at the links on my webpage, specifically Sarah Dryden's work, though a bit old now?'<sup>1</sup>

It must be noted that white and black educators lived separated existences under the formal legal prescriptions of the apartheid educational system and the informal social realities of the apartheid system. In general, nearly 20 years after the ending of apartheid, at least within the government school system in Mpumalanga, white and black educators still largely work and function separately. Two school systems operate within the province's government school system. The ex-model C schools, although accommodating increasing

<sup>1</sup> R. Siebörger, e-mail correspondence, 25 August 2008.

numbers of black learners, are still known to the general community as ‘white’ schools. These schools enjoy the benefits of adequate to plush facilities. Almost all ex-model C schools in Mpumalanga are well equipped with the latest electronic teaching equipment as well as generous extra-mural facilities. These schools charge fees which are decided upon by the school’s Governing Body. While not excessive by the standards of private schools, such fees are certainly beyond the reach of most of the province’s black population.

On the other side of the educational spectrum in Mpumalanga are the traditionally black secondary schools. These schools have changed little since the introduction of the democratic dispensation in 1994. The vast majority of rural and township schools remain desperately poor. The standard school fee for a year of schooling in a township school is R300 as against the R9000–R12000 one might expect to pay for a year’s education in an ex-model C school. Educational and extra-mural facilities are hardly existent to poor in many of the traditionally black secondary schools. Educators often labour in classes of up to and over 50 learners. Ironically, it is my observation that there are far fewer unqualified educators within black secondary schools as against more privileged ex-model C schools, simply because these schools cannot afford to employ additional staff members to complement those on the government payroll. Nevertheless, the drab, uninspiring physical and deprived educational conditions under which these educators have to work cannot be compared to the more comfortable conditions which confront educators at more privileged schools.

The point of this discussion is to emphasise that because the conditions under which they have to work are so very different, the perceptions which white and black educators generally and History educators in particular hold toward History and the teaching of it are sometimes different.

## **6.2 Negative educator perceptions**

Mostly, the perceptions of History educators in secondary schools toward their subject during the democratic era in South Africa have been negative. There are many reasons which account for this.



Negative perceptions of History education on the part of educators are evident in the poor presentation of the subject within secondary school classrooms. Educators who responded to my 2012 educators' survey noted the importance of presenting History well if the subject were to become a popular one at secondary school. One noted that 'I think it's sad that History has become unpopular – we need it! And it all depends on the presentation in the class...'<sup>2</sup> Respondents to my 2012 educators' survey believed that poor teaching was responsible for the unpopularity of History in the past and in the present. Experience of receiving poor History teaching as learners, both within and beyond the apartheid era was noted by 12 respondents (13.8 per cent).<sup>3</sup> Nineteen respondents (21.8 per cent) believed that the poor presentation of History was responsible for the present-day unpopularity of the subject.<sup>4</sup> Some related examples of experiencing demotivated History educators who appeared to have little interest in the subject:

It should be brought back and taught by teachers who can actually make it interesting and [who] are passionate about it ... people who never had history as a subject are being appointed as History teachers. They are only there to fill a vacancy.<sup>5</sup>

Teach History with enthusiasm and make it much more interesting.<sup>6</sup>

... make it interesting – History is vital for everybody!<sup>7</sup>

Teachers don't try to involve learners.<sup>8</sup>

Little has been done by teachers to make the subject relevant, interesting and exciting for the class. Children have the perception that History is boring.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately Social Science is taught in most cases by teachers who have other subjects as well and it is passed off as either a free subject, i.e. learners do homework or the work is rushed through and

<sup>2</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 12. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>3</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21, 25, 29, 33.

<sup>4</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 12, 14, 19, 22, 30, 31, 33, 35, 42, 49, 56, 58, 64, 68, 75, 77, 82, 83, 85.

<sup>5</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 82. [Afrikaans; 1967–1971; Afrikaans Hoër Meisieskool]

<sup>6</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 68. [English; 1976–1980; Girl's High Potchefstroom]

<sup>7</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 56. [Afrikaans; 1969–1973; Hoërskool DF Malan]

<sup>8</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 64. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Middelburg/Volksrust]

<sup>9</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 58. [Afrikaans; 1977–1981; Hoërskool Evander]

a worksheet is given to keep them busy for the period – often the case when History is not offered at the school in Grade 10–12.<sup>10</sup>

While conducting my research into the state of History teaching in present-day Mpumalanga I encountered few History or Social Sciences educators in traditional ex-model C secondary schools who enjoyed teaching History. Most Social Sciences educators regard History as less important than Geography which is in any event offered as a FET subject at almost all secondary schools in Mpumalanga. Other ex-model C Social Sciences educators do not enjoy teaching History because they do not enjoy teaching. This may be because they cannot help but be aware that educators of lesser ability or beginner teachers are used to teach Social Sciences at most secondary schools since the subject is not regarded as an important one. Educators who find themselves in this position are not likely to develop positive perceptions of History or even positive perceptions of their own value as an educator. In addition, beginner educators often struggle to maintain classroom discipline. I have never observed any secondary school in Mpumalanga offering a mentorship scheme to assist new educators adjust to teaching. The beginner, or weaker educators who are assigned to teach Social Sciences, concerned with surviving the frightening realities of teaching are unlikely to develop positive perceptions of the subjects they have been charged to teach.

It is clear that many History and Social Sciences educators do not fully understand the requirements of the ‘new’ secondary school educational system in South Africa. This negatively influences their perceptions of History together with other subjects offered at secondary school level. Nkangala educators who taught at black secondary schools whom I surveyed in 2008 appeared confused and at times bewildered by the frequency of change in the school educational system over recent years.<sup>11</sup> My own experience of teaching at ex-model C schools during the post-apartheid period as well as the 2012 surveys and interviews I conducted indicate that educators who teach at these schools have also failed to understand the manifold changes to the education system which have transpired since the advent of the democratic era in South Africa.

<sup>10</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 42. [English; 1978–1982; Convent, Witbank]

<sup>11</sup> D. A. Black, ‘Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008’ (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009), p. 142.

These educational changes apply not only to History but to all FET subjects and the latest round of educational change, the introduction of the CAPS syllabus which is only due to be implemented in Grade 12 in 2014. The changed syllabuses have been implemented haphazardly and erratically by the Mpumalanga Education Department, with local Curriculum Implementers and local Circuit Offices introducing the new curriculums and syllabuses with varied degrees of enthusiasm and success. This has negatively affected the perceptions which History educators hold toward their subject. Calvin Buthelezi, Mpumalanga's Chief Education Specialist for FET History education who is in charge of Grades 10–12 History education in the province confirmed that most secondary school History educators in Mpumalanga struggle with the NCS approach to history teaching. 'Most History teachers are struggling to cope with the new NCS system because of the skills based approach i.e. they find it difficult to teach learners on how to work with sources'.<sup>12</sup>

An interesting (and disturbing) point which arose during my 2008 survey was that years after its implementation, few History educators appeared to know whether there was any difference between the GET Social Sciences (SS) and the Human and Social Sciences (HSS) which it replaced. The differences between the two are profound. For example, the three history Learning Outcomes in SS replaced the previous nine which had applied to HSS. The various Assessment Standards which apply to each of the three SS Learning Outcomes are also new. Surveyed Mpumalanga educators responded in a disconcerting way to a question which asked them whether they regarded SS as an improvement on HSS. Over half of the respondents were unable to answer the question at all. The remainder of the responses were vague and offered no real answer to the question.<sup>13</sup> This may indicate that many educators had given up trying to follow rapidly changing syllabus developments. The inability of educators to answer the question also raises the issue of their course and lesson preparation, which should surely involve a daily use, in one form or another, of the SS Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

It is not surprising that most of the surveyed Nkangala secondary school History educators felt that the GET and FET approach to History had had a negative effect upon learner and

<sup>12</sup> C. Buthelezi, e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Educators' questionnaire returns.

educator perceptions of the subject. My own observation of white secondary school educators is that their response to evolving education methods is simply to ignore them and continue teaching in the same way they have always done.

History education is perceived by many white Mpumalanga educators as being ANC propaganda. Surprisingly my 2008 research revealed that black Mpumalanga History educators also regarded the GET and FET syllabuses as politically biased in favour of the government. Speaking about the decline of History education in post-apartheid ex-model C schools, Kenielwe Mosala, History Curriculum Implementer for the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga noted that the content of History syllabuses was 'very sensitive' in Afrikaans-medium secondary schools. She pointed out that in her experience, Afrikaans-speaking educators felt very uncomfortable when dealing with topics such as Steve Biko, the period between 1948 and 1994, Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. 'There is a negative attitude to studying apartheid history. These attitudes are deep-seated and will take a very long time to change'.<sup>14</sup> Werner Coetzer believes that History has become unpopular in Afrikaans-medium secondary schools because 'History teaching is viewed in the Afrikaner community as black-centered, geared towards furthering the aims of the ANC government'.<sup>15</sup> Ian Steenkamp believes that most people perceive the new Social Sciences and History syllabuses as being too political. He especially voiced his concerns about Social Sciences study in contemporary Mpumalanga Afrikaans-medium secondary schools noting that '... Learners and educators believe that the subject is political and criticises the Afrikaner's past. Afrikaans people have never had to introspect, criticise or look objectively at themselves and many simply can't do that today. They still need to get a balanced perception of issues such as apartheid'.<sup>16</sup>

According to Louis Smith, the perceptions of Afrikaners toward History education has become more negative since the inception of democracy in South Africa:

<sup>14</sup> Interview, Ms K. Mosala, Middelburg, 15 July 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr W. Coetzer, Middelburg, 8 November 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, Mr I. Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012. As Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Ian Steenkamp is in charge of Social Sciences education in Mpumalanga.

The ANC government has not recognised the history, contribution and effort of the Afrikaner and has broken down the heroes and statues of the Afrikaans people. Also, the ANC government has used History to push their own agenda and have definitely used it to create propaganda ... because of the above-mentioned they are not interested in History as a school subject but Afrikaners are very interested in their Afrikaans history and their achievements. Look at the song De la Rey ... As things stand now Afrikaners will take no interest in History as a school subject and will not allow their children to take the subject ... The ANC government has misrepresented and suppressed Afrikaans history ... The ANC misuses History and twists it into a false history which it presents to learners to learn and denies the positive role which the Afrikaner and other Europeans have played in South Africa.<sup>17</sup>

The Principals and Deputy Principals of Afrikaans-medium secondary schools in Middelburg (Mpumalanga) echoed the sentiments expressed above. Martin Fourie noted that the white community from which learners at his school were drawn held the perception that the 'new' history was biased.<sup>18</sup> Johan Stronkhorst, felt that 'political issues are an important reason why History is not studied':

All the myths, the history which we studied has been completely turned on its head. Afrikaans-speaking people react against this. History was biased in apartheid times but is just as biased now. Most Afrikaners have become apolitical. They are just not interested anymore. Any subject that involves politics is something they stay away from.<sup>19</sup>

A senior educator at Hoërskool Middelburg proffered the point of view that the school would never offer History as a FET subject since it was 'seen as an ANC thing' and was therefore not to be trusted. As he noted that whites at the school hated blacks, a deeply conservative attitude to the changed political and social condition of South Africa was revealed:

We play rugby with them and sit in class with them, but when we go home we go to our own lives which have nothing to do with them ... Afrikaners hate blacks. No matter what people say. You would be surprised that every Afrikaner I know has a store of guns and ammo like you wouldn't believe. Afrikaners are very divided though, but if

<sup>17</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Fourie, Middelburg, 26 January 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Interview, Mr J. Stronkhorst, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

they were attacked and murdered, they will rise again, come together and then maybe something new will start again.<sup>20</sup>

Gys Romijn felt that the general attitude toward History education among the present-day Afrikaans community was 'negative and one-sided'. The prevailing perception was that nothing had changed and that the authorities in power decided what history was going to be taught. The remedy for this negative disposition would be to teach 'a balanced History syllabus and acknowledge the contribution of all South Africans'. According to Mr Romijn, this would be a milestone and a huge achievement in the history of our country'.<sup>21</sup>

Many Mpumalanga-based white educators who completed the 2012 educators' questionnaire (58, 66.7 per cent) perceived the current History syllabuses as biased toward the ANC government and most blamed the unpopularity of History as a secondary school subject within white secondary schools on this or at the least stated that perceived political bias toward the ANC and apartheid history was an important factor in the subject's unpopularity.<sup>22</sup>

What are the learners going to do with History after school? History is not linked to job opportunities and is also not needed for further studies. Political interference by the ANC government in the new syllabus. The white community believes this. They believe that the ANC government disregards, ignores and undervalues the Afrikaner and white contribution to SA history. History is now a propaganda instrument in the hands of the ANC government. It is only their view.<sup>23</sup>

The Afrikaans community still feels non-opinionated about the subject, especially with the history of apartheid and the struggle of the ANC being part of the syllabus. They just don't care about the subject and would rather just ignore it than try to understand it.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> The confidentiality of this interviewee has been respected. These views certainly do not reflect the official viewpoint of the school.

<sup>21</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr G. Romijn, Middelburg, 29 November 2010.

<sup>22</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2–11, 13–18, 20, 23–25, 27–30, 34–35, 38–41, 43, 45, 52, 54–60, 62, 64–70, 72–73, 75, 78–79, 83–87.

<sup>23</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 27. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Jagersfontein Sekondêre Skool]

<sup>24</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

Nine respondents (10.3 per cent) believed that History should not be used as a political tool to promote their own agendas.<sup>25</sup>

History should not be used as a political tool. The past must inspire us, not demoralise us. It should inspire us to become better citizens.<sup>26</sup>

Our history, as with every other country in the world, is stained with events to feel embarrassed about. Our current political landscape is not stable – I don't know if it is ever meant to be. Our history is used as a political tool to stir emotions. History is not seen as a subject studying past events and making assumptions to prevent similar incidences.<sup>27</sup>

History is a very important subject but should not be used by political parties to advance their own agendas.<sup>28</sup>

Eight respondents (9.2 per cent) felt that Afrikaner history had been ignored in the post-apartheid History syllabuses:<sup>29</sup>

Afrikaans people feel that History has no use for them in their further studies. They probably feel the current government has changed the syllabus to suit their history although they probably don't even know what's in the syllabus.<sup>30</sup>

It has done away with sections which detail where white South Africans have come from. It is actually racist because Blood River is viewed as wrong and it is very important for white Afrikanerdom. Modern history doesn't arouse their interest and is also not interesting for them.<sup>31</sup>

They believe that the ANC government disregards, ignores and undervalues the Afrikaner and white contribution to SA history. History is now a propaganda instrument in the hands of the ANC government. It is only their view.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3–4, 9, 11, 18, 24, 40, 35.

<sup>26</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 18. [Afrikaans; 1971–1975; Hoërskool Vanderbylpark]

<sup>27</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 24. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>28</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 9. [Afrikaans; 1982–1987; Hoërskool Hentie Cilliers]

<sup>29</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 23, 27, 38, 40, 59, 62, 64, 66.

<sup>30</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>31</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 40. [Afrikaans; 1990–1994; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>32</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 27. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Jagersfontein Sekondêre Skool]

Referring to post-apartheid History syllabuses, one respondent felt that ‘whites are cast in a bad light’<sup>33</sup> while another stated that ‘Afrikaners feel sidelined ... Our ancestors are made to feel like criminals’.<sup>34</sup> A thoughtful respondent stated that even though black members of the community were relieved ‘to finally have a place in the pages of time I also believe that the white members of the community aren’t all that happy as most of them believe that whites are made out to be the bad guys and none of the ‘white’ history is included like the settlers, Van Riebeeck and Van der Stel’.<sup>35</sup>

Surprisingly, black educators whom I surveyed in 2008 seemed to share similar perceptions about the biased nature of present-day History education to many of the surveyed 2012 white educators. Some complained about syllabus content which was perceived as biased. Some sections of the syllabus were seen as promoting hatred: ‘... They are an embarrassment’.<sup>36</sup> Two respondents also felt that the FET syllabus was politically biased and did not provide a balanced and complete picture of history:

It excludes the Great Trek, Mfecane, discovery of minerals, the South African War (Anglo-Boer War). It is more biased towards civil rights protest...<sup>37</sup>

It is too politicised – SA history, African history. European history – refers to most of the bad things that have been done...<sup>38</sup>

It is clear that there are History educators in present-day black secondary schools who perceive the FET syllabus as being too biased in favour of the new regime. According to them, it lacks balance and many important sections of South African history are left out. I was surprised to discover that even Job Mathunyane, a veteran history educator responsible for promoting protest against apartheid education in the 1970s and 1980s and founder member of SASO in Mpumalanga, related that present-day History education at secondary schools is one-sided and that valuable topics are omitted because they do not accord with

<sup>33</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 29. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>34</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 59. [Afrikaans; 1977–1981; Hoërskool Utrecht]

<sup>35</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 85. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>36</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 5.

<sup>37</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 6.

<sup>38</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 8.



the democratic government's conception of political correctness.<sup>39</sup> Mathunyane made the point that:

The whole history must be told – Luthuli, Smuts, Verwoerd, even the Great Trek – from all sides. Today we're still being selective about history, leaving out 'white' stuff therefore kids aren't getting the whole picture ... Let the white guy say he brought 'civilisation' but let the black guy say that the government took his land – give it back...<sup>40</sup>

Another educator related that the over-politicising of the subject had the effect of lessening its value.<sup>41</sup>

A more 'balanced' History syllabus was called for by 24 respondents (27.6 per cent) to the 2012 educators' survey in which the points of view of apartheid-era (white) history and post-apartheid era (black) history would be accepted.<sup>42</sup> Many responses are provided below because they so clearly illustrate the perceptions of white secondary school educators toward the history presently being presented in secondary schools:

History should be factually correct and should also be able to stand the test of time. It should point out negatives/positives of all individuals, groups, nations, events, etc.<sup>43</sup>

The history of South Africa is being portrayed not from a balanced, objective point of view. History should be taught in such a manner that learners know about the whole world in an interesting way. The focus was one-sided in the past – we left out the history of all the indigenous people of the country. Today it is still one-sided – the focus is now only about the indigenous people. Just get the balance right and make it interesting – history is vital for everybody ... They are irritated because the focus is unbalanced. There is a lot more focus on the unfair past of South Africa.<sup>44</sup>

The past from both a white and black perspective – also the 'white' history which is mostly ignored. White children are upset because

<sup>39</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalaheni, 28 April 2008.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8.

<sup>42</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2, 4, 6, 10, 15–18, 29, 35, 38–39, 53–57, 62, 64, 66, 69, 75, 78, 85.

<sup>43</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 17. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

<sup>44</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 56. [Afrikaans; 1969–1973; Hoërskool DF Malan]

South African history focuses on apartheid and black history. They feel left out.<sup>45</sup>

Still the same although I think even more so because they think that they concentrate on 'black' history and ignore the role whites played in the history of this country.<sup>46</sup>

The only thing of importance is the change of South Africa and the role of the blacks.<sup>47</sup>

The idea that secondary school History education ought to be apolitical was expressed by 15 respondents (17.2 per cent) to the 2012 educators' questionnaire.<sup>48</sup> A new history, unburdened by politics was called for.<sup>49</sup> Politics was seen to introduce emotion which created 'tunnel vision insight'.<sup>50</sup> Racial issues need to be avoided as these issues provoke negative reactions. Apartheid history – and even the word apartheid – makes people angry.<sup>51</sup> Respondents called for the study of topics which would not engender angry reactions, such as ancient history, the industrial revolution, the history of inventions,<sup>52</sup> in fact anything not related to modern politics.<sup>53</sup> One respondent felt that politicising History took the enjoyment away from studying the subject.<sup>54</sup> These perceptions support Anton Ehlers' assertion that modern (post-apartheid) Afrikaners have adopted a tendency toward being apolitical as a method of coping with the manifold changes which accompanied the advent of the democratic era in South Africa. Ehlers notes that many Afrikaners have distanced themselves from politics and have turned toward 'an inward looking spirituality focusing on their families and intimate cell and care groups' while a large number 'of middle class economically successful Afrikaners also withdrew from politics to concentrate on their economic prosperity'. These Afrikaners, for Ehlers, are more worried about material success than fighting 'what appear to be outdated cultural battles'.<sup>55</sup> This

<sup>45</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 64. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>46</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>47</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 53. [English; 1969–1973; St. Paulus Convent]

<sup>48</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15–16, 24, 30, 52, 72–73, 84, 87.

<sup>49</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 16. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

<sup>50</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5. [English; 1987–1992; Greendale High School]

<sup>51</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 87. [Afrikaans; 1982–1986; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>52</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 87. [Afrikaans; 1982–1986; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>53</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 72. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; Hoërskool CVO Middelburg]

<sup>54</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3. [English; 1978–1982; Hoërskool Piet Potgieter]

<sup>55</sup> A. Ehlers, 'Apartheid Mythology and Symbolism. Desegregated and Reinvented in the Service of Nation Building in South Africa: The Covenant and the Battle of Blood River/Ncome', *Revue Alizes* 24 (2003), p. 29.

tendency to avoid involvement with a post-apartheid political world in which they have little opportunity of influence or personal success may in fact equally apply to white, English-speaking South Africans as to Afrikaners.

The criticisms levelled against the post-apartheid History syllabuses by the surveyed 2012 Mpumalanga educators reveal that few have any idea what these syllabuses actually contain. The widespread negative perceptions of these syllabuses, especially those concerning their supposed anti-Afrikaner, anti-white bias have little relation to their actual content. Three respondents questioned the factual basis upon which the critical perceptions of their fellow white educators were founded.<sup>56</sup> One mentioned that ‘... People are sceptical about the contents of the subject – mostly because they are uninformed’,<sup>57</sup> while another observed that ‘Afrikaans people ... probably feel the current government has changed the syllabus to suit their history although they probably don’t even know what’s in the syllabus’.<sup>58</sup> It is difficult to understand the vehement criticism directed against South African secondary school History syllabuses by Afrikaners who feel that they are politically biased against Afrikaners and their contribution to local history. Pointing to the difference between reality and perception, Werner Coetzer pointed out that people ‘don’t understand that the textbooks and syllabuses are not biased. People’s perceptions of things are not related to the reality of the matter’.<sup>59</sup>

History is perceived by some educators to have little relevance to the world of work. Four respondents (4.6 per cent) to the 2012 educators’ survey felt that the practical value of History to the workplace was limited while they were at school.<sup>60</sup> One respondent, writing of the attitude which his own community had adopted toward History study recalled that ‘as far the community was concerned they couldn’t have cared less about History education – because – let’s be honest, it was never one of “the” important subjects that would enable you to become a doctor or a lawyer or a pilot, as mathematics, biology or chemistry might

<sup>56</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 23, 31, 69.

<sup>57</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 69. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>58</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 23. [Afrikaans; 1981–1986; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>59</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr W. Coetzer, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>60</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 8, 17, 43, 85.

have been or still is'.<sup>61</sup> Other respondents noted how while they were at school people tended to think of History as an impractical subject,<sup>62</sup> 'as a "nice to have" subject, but with no real value'.<sup>63</sup>

Far more respondents to the 2012 educators' survey (35, 40.2 per cent) felt that History was of limited practical value to the present-day world of work and was therefore not as important as other secondary school subjects.<sup>64</sup> The perception that the utilitarian value of History is limited was mentioned by a respondent who noted that '... History is horribly misunderstood/mistreated – it isn't given due respect because it's not seen as a money spinning career subject...'.<sup>65</sup> History study was viewed by another surveyed educator as 'out of date in a world with too many multi-media, design and entrepreneur opportunities'.<sup>66</sup> Other subjects are perceived as more important than History:

It is not a requirement for university entrance. It is therefore not viewed as a necessary subject. Attention and resources must be given to more 'deserving' subjects e.g. Maths and Science.<sup>67</sup>

For the reasons stated above as well as the fact that society has become career orientated and they feel that you should take 'important' subjects such as Maths and Science to ensure yourself or your child a career.<sup>68</sup>

For reasons mentioned above. (Too political / No career prospects). Sadly, many schools treat the Social Sciences (including History) as 'last resort' subjects for learners who can't do Science or Accounting, this dismal attitude has rubbed off on learners and parents (the community).<sup>69</sup>

My 2009 study revealed that at black secondary schools in Mpumalanga, Mathematics and Science are given preference at secondary school. This practice was noted by all Nkangala

<sup>61</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 85. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>62</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 43. [Afrikaans; 1980–1984; Ladysmith High School]

<sup>63</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 17. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Hoërskool Alberton]

<sup>64</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 4–6, 8, 10–13, 20–21, 23–24, 27–29, 33–34, 37, 45, 47–51, 58, 61–63, 66, 68–70, 81, 85, 87.

<sup>65</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 13. [English; 1978–1982; Witbank High School ]

<sup>66</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 47. [Afrikaans; 1990–1994; Hoërskool Secunda ]

<sup>67</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 48. [Afrikaans; 1973–1977; Hoërskool Belfast]

<sup>68</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop ]

<sup>69</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 13. [English; 1978–1982; Witbank High School]

respondents. History may be a choice subject in the FET curriculum but in reality, 'learners who fail to qualify for Science and economic subjects are pushed into the general stream which offers History and Geography'.<sup>70</sup> Most History learners, unable to cope with commercial subjects or Science, 'are forced out from the two streams by educators'.<sup>71</sup> Sozama Secondary School, with its proud record of History teaching (as related in Chapter 3) now relegates unsuccessful Mathematics and Science learners to the History class.<sup>72</sup>

Related to the above perception is the additional perception that History education does not attract bursaries for further study. Parents of learners at secondary schools do not appear to value the subject greatly as it holds out little opportunity of attaining educational bursaries for learners after they have finished school.<sup>73</sup> It also does not appear to offer much in the way of financial reward after school. Most parents appear to discourage their children from taking History at school. These factors further cannot have a positive effect on the perceptions which History educators hold toward their subject. The inability of History to attract post-matric bursaries was also noted by a respondent to the 2012 educators' survey, who noted that 'History is horribly misunderstood/mistreated – it isn't given due respect because it's not seen as a money spinning career subject; it's not a subject that gets big bursaries for further study'.<sup>74</sup> Another 2012 respondent noted the effect of the 'current socio-economic climate', which 'put large sections of the community in survival mode which would lessen the importance of History as a subject'.<sup>75</sup>

The perception that History is regarded as not helpful to obtaining a Grade 12 university entrance pass surprised me. Explaining why schools do not view History favourably, Louis Smith noted that 'History is also not needed for university entrance purposes',<sup>76</sup> while Martin Fourie (secondary school Principal) pointed out that 'History as a subject limits one's options when applying at tertiary institutions'.<sup>77</sup> The fact is that a Grade 12 pass in History

<sup>70</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3.

<sup>71</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5.

<sup>72</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 7.

<sup>73</sup> Parents' attitudes toward History education at black secondary schools was examined in Chapter 7 of my 2009 dissertation.

<sup>74</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 13. [English; 1978–1982; Witbank High School]

<sup>75</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 11. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Hendrik Verwoerd]

<sup>76</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Fourie, Middelburg, 26 January 2011.

neither helps nor hinders a university application any more or less than a pass in any other elective subject would do.

Despite several years having passed since Outcomes Based Education shifted the emphasis in History teaching from a content-based to a source-based enquiry, the perception that the subject mainly involves rote-learning still persists among secondary school educators in general, History educators in particular and the general public. Werner Coetzee noted that ‘People still have the wrong idea of what History is. They still see it as the rote-learning of dates’.<sup>78</sup> Ian Steenkamp pointed out that ‘... many [History] teachers are still “old school” and fact obsessed’.<sup>79</sup> Twelve respondents (13.8 per cent) to my 2012 educators’ survey perceived that their own History education at secondary school had been based upon rote-learning.<sup>80</sup> A further 12 respondents to the 2012 educators’ survey perceived that History education at secondary school was still based upon rote learning.<sup>81</sup> Responses included the idea that because schools were not ‘blessed with brilliant teachers ... they ensure that learners copy down notes, learn the points, without understanding the content’.<sup>82</sup> Another noted that in present-day secondary schools, History ‘is a subject where you have to memorise facts’.<sup>83</sup> In response to the question which sought to understand why History had become an unpopular subject at present-day secondary schools one respondent simply noted ‘because of the dates’.<sup>84</sup> ‘Less emphasis on exact dates’ was called for by another respondent<sup>85</sup> while the main academic skill imparted by studying History was related as ‘to develop certain skills in learners which they will use in the future, e.g. the skill of memorising facts...’<sup>86</sup>

The perception that History entails little more than rote learning is related to the perception that the value of History lies mainly in helping learners to pass examinations. Iain Smith has provided a picture of the state of History education in black secondary schools at the time of South Africa’s transition to democracy. The perceptions of educators and learners alike

<sup>78</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr W. Coetzee, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>79</sup> Interview, Mr I. Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012.

<sup>80</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 3, 8, 17, 28, 31, 33, 51, 59–60, 67, 71, 77.

<sup>81</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Responses 7, 17, 22, 25, 27, 32, 47, 53, 70, 74, 76, 85.

<sup>82</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 22. [Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>83</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 53. [English; 1969–1973; St. Paulus Convent]

<sup>84</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 76. [Afrikaans; 1974–1978; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>85</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 7. [English; 1964–1969; St. Stithian’s College]

<sup>86</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 27. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Jagersfontein Sekondêre Skool]

toward History education were driven by the idea that it could be a useful tool toward attaining success in examinations. Smith notes that at ‘... secondary school, students are subjected to an authoritarian ‘top-down’ tradition of teaching by the teachers, often themselves poorly educated, who know that the emphasis in black schools is not on education, but on trying to pass examinations’.<sup>87</sup>

The perception that school administrations are responsible for the demise of History at secondary schools is widespread. Louis Smith apportioned much of the blame for the demise of History teaching at Mpumalanga secondary schools upon school principals:

The principals of the schools must take the biggest portion of blame for the death of History as a school subject. Because few learners take History they have the perception the History teachers carry lighter loads compared to other teachers in the school and believe that it is not fair that an educator teaches just a few children while other educators have to deal with classes of over forty learners. To even out the load for the other educators, History is cancelled and History educators are rechanneled to other subjects where there are many learners. The question of the value of History does not play a role in their decisions.<sup>88</sup>

The study of History is seldom held in high regard by senior staff members of Mpumalanga’s secondary schools. A Nkangala respondent noted that the School Management Team (SMT) ‘look down on it [History] as a subject for poor achievers. They do not see any value to History with regards to career pathing’.<sup>89</sup> Another Nkangala respondent related that the SMT did not encourage the study of History as a priority, instead encouraging Mathematics and Science.<sup>90</sup> History was regarded as a ‘redundant subject’ in one school which was thinking about replacing it with Afrikaans or Tourism.<sup>91</sup>

Calvin Buthelezi confirmed the perception that black secondary school History educators hold of SMTs and secondary school leadership generally toward History education. ‘SMTs have shown that they will easily take a decision to cancel History in the curriculum and provide the reason that learners do not pass the subject. They do not do any research to

<sup>87</sup> I. R. Smith, ‘New Lessons in South African History’, *History Today*, 43, 7 (1993), p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

<sup>89</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, pp. 148–149.

<sup>90</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 149.

<sup>91</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 149.

come up with informed reasons as to why learners fail the subject'.<sup>92</sup> Buthelezi, referring to the practice of placing low ability learners in the History class, also noted that '... History educators feel that they are given learners that were not able to do well in the science and commerce streams. They [educators] do not cope well with the situation because they complain about the language ability of these learners.'<sup>93</sup> Buthelezi further noted that 'learners who do poorly academically are made to do History with disastrous consequences of high failure rates'.<sup>94</sup>

History is all too often treated as a so-called 'dustbin' subject at Mpumalanga's secondary schools, suited to the needs of less able learners. All History-offering schools which were surveyed relegated History to the status of a subject reserved for those learners who were unable to take Mathematics, Science or commercial subjects. One Nkangala respondent did not display a high opinion of History-taking learners, noting that 'most of them are academically challenged or [their] IQ is poor. It is not because they like it [History] but because they have no choice'.<sup>95</sup> Another educator mentioned that the History learners themselves regard themselves as 'academically challenged' and as having a poor IQ.<sup>96</sup> Moosa Badat, History educator at Steelcrest High School noted that History had appeared to have been sidelined by the school administration and complained that 'we at Steelcrest make the more weaker learners take the subject, it has become a known fact that weak, lazy learners will be found in the History classes. Therefore this is a negative attitude toward History education ... we unfortunately get the lower end of the academic products of Steelcrest. Brighter, more intelligent learners should be encouraged to take History as a course at our school'.<sup>97</sup> Another Social Sciences educator at one of the schools in the area believes that the unambitious mandate required of Grade 12 History, Geography and Tourism educators by school administrations is simply to get their learners to pass.<sup>98</sup> One respondent to my 2012 educators' survey noted that '... Sadly, many schools treat the Social

<sup>92</sup> C. Buthelezi, e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009, as quoted by Black, p. 149.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1, as quoted by Black, pp. 147–148.

<sup>96</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 4, as quoted by Black, p. 148.

<sup>97</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. S. Badat, Middelburg, 29 November 2010.

<sup>98</sup> This educator did not wish to be named.



Sciences (including History) as ‘last resort’ subjects for learners who can’t do Science or Accounting, this dismal attitude has rubbed off on learners and parents (the community).’<sup>99</sup>

History learners, knowing that they take a subject regarded as of lesser value, seen as suited for learners of lesser ability, suffer from a damaged sense of self-esteem. Perhaps the saddest response which I obtained in both my 2008 and 2012 surveys came from a Nkangala History educator who described his History learners in the following way:

Learners share the same sentiment with the SMT (School Management Team) because when they are channeled to History they are told that it is because they cannot make it in Maths and Science. Thus learners take History already having the sense of failure...<sup>100</sup>

The fact that History educators are almost without exception teaching a subject which they perceive to be reserved for the less able learner cannot but have a negative impact upon their own perceptions of the subject. Because History educators are teaching many learners of low ability, their mandate from school management is not so much to aspire to excellent Grade 12 results, but is simply to get learners to pass.

There is a perception that the Education Department does not provide enough guidance to educators already struggling with the ‘new’ system. Ian Steenkamp admitted that the Social Sciences Curriculum Implementers under his control in Mpumalanga had not been able to exercise adequate control over educators:

Generally the standard of Social Science teaching in Mpumalanga is not good. Teachers have not been under the direct control of the DCES (Head Office) but have been advised by CIs who report to District Offices. Now that more serious exams are again being introduced at the end of Grade 9, rather than schools setting their own exams, teachers will be made to teach the syllabus with greater commitment or risk their teaching being exposed. For example, after courses teachers would not go back to schools and implement what they learned and found they needed more help. Nobody manages them and checks what is being taught. A common exam, written in June and November will help. The CIs have all done their own thing in different regions, another reason why a common exam will help.

<sup>99</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 13. [English; 1978–1982; Witbank High School]

<sup>100</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, p. 148.

Moderation of teachers' work in schools is often lacking. Files are stamped and signed but they are not inspected in depth. Better moderation will help Social Science. Most moderation at present is about window dressing rather than what actually happens in the classroom.<sup>101</sup>

A mixed response to the question 'Do you as a History educator believe that you are receiving enough support from the Department of Education' was received from Nkangala respondents who had completed the detailed questionnaire which I issued to them in 2008. Negative responses included the perception that adequate facilities which would enable better presentation of OBE and NCS methods were not provided by the Department<sup>102</sup> and that it over-emphasised Mathematics and Science subjects at the cost of History.<sup>103</sup> Lack of support from the Department of Education is a factor which cannot positively influence educator perceptions' of History education.

In the case of white, ex-model C educators, many do not attend departmental workshops. Many will not travel to townships or rural schools. They do not feel that the presenters are capable of teaching them anything of value. The common response to this on their part is that they can read the issued material, so why attend the presentations? It could be that racist attitudes lie at the heart of such an attitude. This applies to all offered subjects/learning areas.

Privileged schools in Mpumalanga appear to have little regard for the authority of the Education Department. Educators attend departmental workshops sporadically, preferring to obtain needed educational information from the predominantly white teachers' union, the SAOU (Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie). Generally such schools exist independently within the educational system, nominally adhering to departmental prescriptions but in reality, functioning according to their own norms and practices. This was confirmed by Ian Steenkamp, who noted that:

Ex-model C schools tend to do their own thing and they are left alone by the Department because they produce good results. CIs often feel

<sup>101</sup> Interview, Mr I. Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012.

<sup>102</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>103</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8, as quoted by Black, p. 144.

intimidated by these schools and the teachers in them, so they avoid them. Many of the teachers have a bad attitude to the DCES and the CIs and give the impression that they are merely tolerating them. By setting exams and doing other tasks for the CIs, teachers at these schools feel that they have them 'in their pockets'.<sup>104</sup>

Steenkamp points here to the widespread practice of experienced educators at ex-model C schools setting examinations and performing other tasks for the Curriculum Implementers in return for an unspoken agreement of non-interference in their schools.

A widely held perception among educators in Mpumalanga is that History is not as important as Geography as a component of the Social Sciences. Even educators who teach Social Science do not regard History as important as Geography. Kenielwe Mosala noted that in the teaching of Social Science, 'History may be neglected if the teacher is stronger in Geography'.<sup>105</sup> Ian Steenkamp noted the preponderance of Geography educators teaching Social Science in Mpumalanga:

Many Geography teachers teach History in Social Science. In fact many of them believe that History should be done away with. These attitudes transfer themselves to the learners. History in Social Science is often taught with the idea that the subject in any event won't continue in Grade 10. Because of this Social Science is taught by Geography educators because Geography is taught in the schools after Grade 9.<sup>106</sup>

Martin Fourie asserted that in the Social Sciences lessons at his school, Geography was 'definitely more emphasised' than History, as in any event, History was not offered as a subject at the school after Grade 9.<sup>107</sup> I obtained the same response from educators at many Mpumalanga ex-model C schools whom I interviewed between 2010 and 2012.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Interview, Mr I. Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012. 'CIs' refers to Curriculum Implementers, who have the task of advising educators how to teach and implement the curriculum requirements of their subject. The post is roughly equivalent to that of a School Inspector.

<sup>105</sup> Interview, Ms K. Mosala, Middelburg, 15 July 2012.

<sup>106</sup> Interview, Mr I. Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012.

<sup>107</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Fourie, Middelburg, 26 January 2011.

<sup>108</sup> Educators from the following ex-model C schools in Mpumalanga related that History was regarded as the junior component of Social Science at their school: Hoërskool Middelburg; Hoërskool Piet Retief; Hoërskool Evander; Hoërskool Volksrust; Hoërskool Sybrand Van Niekerk; Greendale High School and Hoërskool Reynopark. This indicates that the practice of relegating History to a place of lesser importance than Geography in the Social Sciences course is widespread in Mpumalanga ex-model C schools.

Black secondary school History educators whom I interviewed in 2008 felt negative about the GET (Grade 7–9) system of incorporating History and Geography education under the umbrella of a single Learning Area (subject), namely Social Sciences. One Nkangala educator noted that educators tend to be proficient in teaching either Geography or History which led to one of the subject areas suffering.<sup>109</sup> Another respondent indicated that because of this, learners were given half or incomplete information.<sup>110</sup> A third respondent pointed out that while some educators concentrate on History, others focus on the Geography section of the Social Sciences.<sup>111</sup>

Calvin Buthelezi noted that Mpumalanga secondary school History educators hold a prejudiced view of the relationship between History and Geography within the GET Social Sciences syllabus:

Most educators feel that there is very little connection between the GET and FET syllabi because they feel some educators concentrate more on Geography and neglect the skills needed to do the History section and as a result learners pass grade 9 with very little knowledge of how to work with sources or how to start writing an essay.<sup>112</sup>

Given this GET focus upon Geography at the expense of History, it is hardly surprising that in 2009, while only 2 433 learners in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga took History, 10 129 took Geography.<sup>113</sup>

Lack of resources at schools and among learners handicap the teaching of History and negatively influence perceptions of the subject in Mpumalanga. Many black secondary school History educators continue to perceive that a lack of physical resources continues to handicap their teaching of the subject. Every black secondary school educator whom I surveyed in 2008 complained about a lack of resources. A lack of educational resources remains widespread in Mpumalanga's traditionally black secondary schools. Surveyed educators complained of a lack of classrooms, audio-visual equipment,<sup>114</sup> laboratory and

<sup>109</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, p. 145.

<sup>110</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 145.

<sup>111</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6, as quoted by Black, p. 145.

<sup>112</sup> C. Buthelezi, e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009, as quoted by Black, p. 145.

<sup>113</sup> Mpumalanga Education Department, 'Regional Summary of Results – June 2009, issued 2009'.

<sup>114</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1, 4, 6, 8, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

library facilities.<sup>115</sup> Calvin Buthelezi noted that the lack of resources can also handicap the ability of learners to master the techniques of History study: 'There are areas that struggle with resources especially when referring learners to other sources when writing an assignment or dealing with oral history. Learners do not practise on a variety of sources in order to get used to the idea of coming to their own conclusion.'<sup>116</sup> A black secondary school History educator whom I surveyed in 2008 complained that a shortage of library facilities hampered his use of new approaches to teaching:

I am trying to use the new OBE approach. The learners do not appreciate the use of sources, we have no library; the primary feeder schools also have no libraries. This makes the new approach to the study of history very challenging.<sup>117</sup>

While many traditionally black secondary schools in Mpumalanga are in desperate need of well-equipped school libraries, in contrast, Steelcrest High School, a privileged ex-model C secondary school, closed down the reference section of their school library in the belief that learners obtained all the academic sources they required from the internet. It was sad to note that in 2010, a generous donation by a Canadian donor of thousands of reference books relating to most subjects but especially History, was hardly utilised and left to decay in school storerooms nearby Middelburg, despite invitations from the Education Department to schools to collect whatever books they wanted. The blame for neglecting this opportunity must primarily be laid at the door of educators who appear to do little to improve the poorly resourced position of their schools.<sup>118</sup>

Black secondary school History educators whom I surveyed in 2008 also felt that a lack of resources on the part of learners' parents handicapped the subject in the sense that it prevented the taking of learners on historical excursions or engaging in other enrichment activities. Most of the surveyed educators taught in schools which had large numbers of financially struggling parents. One educator pointed out that 'in black residential areas the situation has not changed much especially in squatter areas bogged down by

<sup>115</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, 6, 7, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>116</sup> C. Buthelezi, e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>117</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 157.

<sup>118</sup> I personally visited these storerooms in 2010 and witnessed this enormous waste of resources first hand.

unemployment.<sup>119</sup> Poor parents are reluctant to pay for historical excursions complaining about the cost of living and high expenses.<sup>120</sup> Another respondent noted that a lack of funds could be one cause for a lack of interest in History.<sup>121</sup> It must be noted that in the traditionally 'white' secondary schools in Mpumalanga which offer FET History or History as a component of the Social Sciences, History excursions seldom occur. The reason for this is not so much a lack of resources but rather a lack of interest and the directing of available resources to activities considered more worthwhile.

The lack of parents' financial resources at black secondary schools is at times an intangible factor which negatively influences educator perceptions of their vocation in its entirety. History educators are not exempt. In 2009 I was told that learner numbers at Tsiki-Naledi, one of the four schools in which learners were surveyed for purposes of my 2009 dissertation, were rapidly declining. This was because parents were redirecting them to surrounding rural schools where fees as low as R20 per annum were charged, significantly less than what was charged by Tsiki-Naledi. Educators working in a school with already poor matriculation results found this drain of learners to schools where academic results were even lower, hard to deal with. The History educator concerned expressed a feeling of despair about working in this situation which did not positively impact upon his perception of his role as an educator in general, let alone as a History educator.<sup>122</sup> By 2012, History was no longer offered at this school.

Not one of the 2012 surveyed or interviewed white educators made any reference to a lack of school resources hindering the learning activities of learners. Lack of school resources, be they physical, financial or educational, is a problem in Mpumalanga which is confined to traditionally black schools and which cannot be said to influence the perceptions toward teaching History or any other subject in the more affluent, traditionally white secondary schools. Educators at black secondary schools hold the perception that the poor socio-economic conditions in which learners live negatively affects their perceptions of History education. Dryden noted that given the often desperate socio-economic situation of many

<sup>119</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>120</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>121</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 7, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>122</sup> Interview, Mr D. Lukhele, Middelburg, 20 August 2008, as quoted by Black, pp. 151–152.

of the learners whom she surveyed, there were educators who felt that it was not so much what the learners were learning at school that was so important, but rather that they were attending school at all.<sup>123</sup>

One black secondary school History educator whom I surveyed in 2008 believed that the desperate social situation within the community in which his learners lived negated any possible positive influence of History education:

It [the value of History education] gradually diminishes as the learners are no longer motivated and some of them are demotivated by the rate of unemployment, lack of financial support – drugs, gangsterism, etc.<sup>124</sup>

A sobering perception of the present-day value of History as a secondary school subject was related by the same History educator, stationed at a rural school in Hendrina who felt that the difficult socio-economic circumstances under which learners lived removed the point of any education altogether:

Learners these days just feel that History teaching does not serve any purpose anymore. For them, politics is only for those who secure high paying positions, accompanied by benefits and richness. Frustrations and the fact that education has little incentives on the economy has eventually created a huge vacuum. On top of these, social grants cause many learners to lose focus and drop out. The issue of drugs and other factors such as HIV/AIDS has demoralised them to such an extent that education is of no use to people who could die anytime due to HIV/AIDS...<sup>125</sup>

The perception that poor language abilities of learners handicaps the teaching of History and the ability of learners to perform well in History is widely held by History educators in Mpumalanga. A black secondary school History educator related a commonly experienced problem:

One cannot deny the fact that English, being the language in which History is taught, which is the second language to most if not all learners I taught and am still teaching, becomes a hindrance against learners' expected high

<sup>123</sup> S. Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition: Case Studies of History teachers and Students in Cape Town Schools' (M. Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1999), pp. 49–50.

<sup>124</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 153.

<sup>125</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 150.

performance. The willingness is there for most of them but the language becomes a barrier.<sup>126</sup>

Job Mathunyane, a secondary school History educator for nearly forty years, described his experience of language problems encountered by present-day black secondary school learners:

The problem with our kids today – why they can't perform in maths and other subjects – is a language problem. Their academic performance is linked to language problems. How do kids answer a question or solve a problem if they don't understand the English?<sup>127</sup>

Problems with understanding English are however not confined to traditionally black secondary schools in Mpumalanga but also influence the teaching of History in traditionally white schools. Cynthia Kros, writing in 1988 about the written language abilities of first language speakers, demonstrated that even such learners did not understand some needed historical concepts such as 'revolution', 'justice', 'power', and 'democracy'.<sup>128</sup> One 2012 educators' survey respondent noted that her learners had difficulty understanding the language in the Social Sciences textbooks – 'Terminology and vocabulary must suit the grade which must learn from it [the textbook]. It's a History lesson, not a language lesson.'<sup>129</sup>

Closely allied to the perception that learners have a limited understanding of English is the perception educators hold that learners are not prepared to read, which impacts upon their ability to perform well in a subject which demands reading and an ability to write well. A respondent to the 2008 Educators' questionnaire, referring to black secondary school learners noted that 'History is supposed to encourage a balanced approach to life but as nobody is prepared to read, this remains a pipedream'.<sup>130</sup> A 2012 respondent, referring to white secondary school learners asserted that 'Kids

<sup>126</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1, as quoted by Black, p. 150.

<sup>127</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008, as quoted by Black, pp. 150–151.

<sup>128</sup> Kros, 'The Making of a Class' pp. 88–99, as quoted by Ndlovu, 'Perceptions of History', p. 6.

<sup>129</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 52. [Afrikaans; 1988–1992; Hoërskool Gimnasium Potchefstroom]

<sup>130</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 7, as quoted by Black, p. 153.



don't like reading or studying, which is a pity. Therefore it isn't a fun way of gathering information'.<sup>131</sup>

### 6.3 Positive educator perceptions

Many Mpumalanga secondary school educators appear to have a high regard for History education in general but are less appreciative of the value of History as a subject at school. Johan Stronkhorst, Hoërskool Middelburg principal, noted that he did 'see the value of school History. It develops broad-mindedness and a fuller world view.'<sup>132</sup> Fifty-one (58.6 per cent) respondents to the 2012 educators' questionnaire – all at the time educators employed by the Mpumalanga Education Department – noted that they valued History as a discipline in general.<sup>133</sup> Two noted that they had experienced a difference between school History and history in general:

I don't know about the school children, but my own children and family enjoy the history channel on DSTV.<sup>134</sup>

I personally love history. It is one of the subjects I majored in at university, and when I have time I would like to further my studies in History.<sup>135</sup>

Two respondents expressed the wish that they had taken History at school:

In retrospect, I wish to have learnt more history. I feel my knowledge is lacking.<sup>136</sup>

I really appreciate history and really am sorry I couldn't take it as a matric subject. As a teacher, I think that the modern media could revitalise History as a subject.<sup>137</sup>

One of the 2012 surveyed educators believed that if taught differently, History should hold a place of importance within the school curriculum:

<sup>131</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 65. [Afrikaans; 2000–2004; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>132</sup> Interview, Mr J. Stronkhorst, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>133</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 5–6, 9–13, 15, 19–22, 24–25, 27–28, 31–37, 39, 41–43, 47–48, 50, 54–58, 62–63, 65–66, 68–70, 74–77, 80, 82–83, 87.

<sup>134</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 15. [Afrikaans; 1977–1982; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>135</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 65. [Afrikaans; 2000–2004; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>136</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5. [English; 1987–1992; Greendale High School]

<sup>137</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 11. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Hendrik Verwoerd]

Why do we not take a topic like Egypt and the Pharaohs and discuss it in more detail, or the Roman Empire's ascendancy and decline? These are topics as relevant today as they were then. Principles and values can be discussed and taught. By the way – I find history fascinating at this stage in my life.<sup>138</sup>

Most of the 2008 surveyed black secondary school History educators perceived History as having value as a present-day school subject. Job Mathunyane believed that OBE education had been successful in the black community when it comes to Economics, Science and practical subjects such as Technology but that the cost of this is that learners are dying spiritually. Learners are, according to Mathunyane, losing their humanity. The computer is treated as the new god. The ethos behind education has become practical. If a thing has no economic value, it is seen as having no value at all. For Mathunyane, History education is a life skill. Knowing the meaning and history of one's name and heritage is a vital life skill needed at contemporary black secondary schools.<sup>139</sup> Other surveyed black secondary school educators provided mixed responses when it came to the question of what they considered to be the value of History as a present-day secondary school subject. Some saw the potential of the subject to encourage thinking while some, because of what they perceived to be negative attitudes on the part of learners, did not see much value in the subject.

Other positive perceptions toward History education include the insight provided by a respondent to my 2008 survey who believed that History was able to present learners with a realistic reflection of South Africa's history.<sup>140</sup> Five respondents to my 2012 educators' survey felt that History could help learners learn from the mistakes that had been made in the past.<sup>141</sup> One respondent appealed for the retention of History as a secondary school subject:

Do not remove a subject that can teach you not to make the same mistakes from the past. We need to become informed and to appreciate what we have.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>138</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 28. [Afrikaans; 1974–1978; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>139</sup> Interview, Mr J. Mathunyane, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008, as quoted by Black, p. 152.

<sup>140</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1, as quoted by Black, p. 153.

<sup>141</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 6, 21, 26, 77, 80.

<sup>142</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 21. [Afrikaans; 1966–1970; Hoërskool Westonaria]

Two respondents to the 2012 educators' survey felt that it was important that children study History at secondary school since they did not receive informal history education at home. One respondent noted that ' ... Informed individuals will feel that History is very important in education. The new generation children need to learn History at school because this (in some cases) will be the only opportunity they will receive to be presented by History and all that it entails,'<sup>143</sup> while another observed that ' ... I don't think that History is important to parents. I personally think we need more learners who are aware of History. Everything that children learn about world and local history they learn at home.'<sup>144</sup>

I was surprised to find that contrary to the widely held perception that History does not prepare learners for or facilitate them finding post-school employment one respondent to my 2008 educators' survey and two respondents to the 2012 survey felt that History education could assist learners in finding employment or with post-school tertiary education. History education had value 'in helping learners find jobs in government and public service, especially in the Department of Justice,'<sup>145</sup> and 'could also develop certain skills in learners which they will use in the future, e.g. the skill of memorising facts, this is a skill that a learner will use when he/she wants to become a doctor, attorney, etc.'<sup>146</sup> One respondent stated that ' ... History should be a subject that can offer further opportunities in tertiary education,' and added that it was able to open different career opportunities for learners.<sup>147</sup>

The perception that History education could educate citizens to become aware of their culture, heritage and political responsibilities was expressed by one 2008 educators' questionnaire respondent and five (5.7 per cent) 2012 respondents.<sup>148</sup> A knowledge of History education was regarded by a respondent as being important – 'to know where you are and where you're going you must know where you come from.'<sup>149</sup> The idea that to live

<sup>143</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 77. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Harrismith High School]

<sup>144</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 80. [Afrikaans; 1974–1978; Hoërskool Louis Trichard]

<sup>145</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2. [Afrikaans; 1996–2000; Hoërskool Sannieshof]

<sup>146</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 27. [Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Jagerfontein Sekondêre Skool]

<sup>147</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 74. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Potchefstroom Gimnasium]

<sup>148</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3, as quoted by Black, p. 153, and 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 3, 33, 44, 48, 54.

<sup>149</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 33. [Afrikaans; 1972–1976; Hoërskool Nelspruit ]

in a country you must know your heritage was expressed.<sup>150</sup> A desire for unity among South Africa's diverse population groups was expressed by a 2012 respondent:

Everybody has a right to be here. We all had to suffer and struggle to get to where we are today. Maybe if we took time and interest in each other's background there might derive a mutual feeling of survival which could be focused on to create a future of diverse cultures standing together rather than pulling in different directions.<sup>151</sup>

Two 2012 respondents believed that History education could inspire learners to become better citizens. As with any subject, History 'has a valuable place in producing well-rounded, knowledgeable, productive citizens.'<sup>152</sup> The past should inspire, rather than demoralise learners, inspiring them to become better citizens.<sup>153</sup> Trümpelmann notes that 'schools are places where learners are trained for citizenship'<sup>154</sup> and that 'history as a school subject stands in the front line'.<sup>155</sup> Listing various reasons why History ought to be studied at school, Van Jaarsveld noted that the subject prepared learners for citizenship responsibilities.<sup>156</sup>

The belief that History education has a redemptive, moral role to play in post-apartheid SA was expressed by the History educators questioned by Dryden in 1999 who all felt that History education had a healing role to play in helping learners to cope with life in post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>157</sup> Educators saw the value of History education in building up the confidence of children damaged by a violent and troubled society. '...We'll have to try and build up their future. We'll have to try and build up confidence in these children, teach them not to give up...'<sup>158</sup> Educators considered it important that learners knew their roots, and History education was seen as a way to give students hope for the future. Only one of the

<sup>150</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 3. [Afrikaans; 1978–1982; Hoërskool Piet Potgieter]

<sup>151</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 54. [Afrikaans; 1990–1994; Hoërskool Nylstroom]

<sup>152</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 13 [English; 1978–1982; Witbank High School]

<sup>153</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 18. [Afrikaans; 1971–1975; Hoërskool Vanderbylpark]

<sup>154</sup> M. H. Trümpelmann, 'An Alternative Curriculum for History Teaching in Secondary Schools in a Multicultural South Africa', Paper presented at the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, July 1990. Conference papers, in Trümpelmann, *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*, p. 90.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>156</sup> Van Jaarsveld, *'n Inleiding tot die Studie van Geskiedenis* (Cape Town, undated), p. 96, as quoted by Trümpelmann, p. 92.

<sup>157</sup> Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation'.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

educators I surveyed in 2008 and 2012 in any way perceived History as ethically didactical. This respondent viewed History as ‘an important life skills subject’.<sup>159</sup>

It is clear that perceptions of History educators toward their subject improve when they are empowered with content knowledge and skills. Responses obtained from black Mpumalanga History educators whom I surveyed in 2008 indicate that the Department of Education is clearly failing to provide adequate training to educators on National Curriculum Statement subjects including History and specifically the GET and FET History courses. Were the skills training offered to practising educators by universities such as UNISA provided on a widespread basis by the Department of Education it is likely that prevailing negative perceptions toward History education presently held by many secondary school educators and learners might significantly change. Calvin Buthelezi noted that more training of History educators in both method and content of their subject is urgently needed: ‘There is a serious need to do further training on the pedagogical approach and content especially on the case studies of different African countries’.<sup>160</sup>

Good leadership helps to encourage History educators and creates positive impressions of the subject. Positive responses toward History education from respondents I interviewed in 2008 and 2012 mostly revolved around the efforts of the local Curriculum Implementer (CI), Ms Mosala.<sup>161</sup> This dedicated departmental official is personally known to me. The enthusiasm and energy which she displays toward the well-being of History and the History educators in the Nkangala region never fails to astound. Several of the educators whom I surveyed related that her efforts had improved their performance and perceptions of History education. One respondent noted that: ‘The CI’s involvement is key to the teaching of History in schools however the department is not doing enough to popularise History for future careers’.<sup>162</sup> The CI is seen to organise workshops, provide extra information, facilitate

<sup>159</sup> 2012 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 69. [Afrikaans; 1975–1979; Hoërskool Nelspruit]

<sup>160</sup> C. Buthelezi, e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009, as quoted by Black, p. 155.

<sup>161</sup> A Curriculum Implementer (CI) is responsible for seeing that a subject or learning area curriculum is correctly implemented by educators in the region under his/her control. This involves providing ongoing on-the-job training, organising cluster meetings of educators and controlling their work. Curriculum Implementers do roughly the same kind of work that the School Inspector used to do. In some provinces the CI is known as a Subject Advisor.

<sup>162</sup> 2008 Educators’ questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, p. 156.

school visits and provide close support and monitoring.<sup>163</sup> Another noted that the CI visits schools 'to check if we are still on the right track'.<sup>164</sup> Moosa Badat reflected that he had received much support from Ms Mosala.<sup>165</sup> The role of good leadership in developing positive perceptions of History education among educators is crucial and is well demonstrated in the case of Ms Mosala. It is clear that the perceptions of local school leadership also greatly influence the perceptions of all educators.

The fact that a variety of teaching methods appear to be used by Mpumalanga History educators represents a positive perception of the subject. Present-day secondary school History educators appear to make use of several teaching methods when presenting their subject to learners. The OBE and NCS approach encourages varied approaches to teaching. During the apartheid era secondary school History educators, with the emphasis in History education heavily centered upon content, almost exclusively taught their subject in a narrative style. It was encouraging to observe that almost all the educators surveyed for purposes of my 2009 dissertation employed a variety of teaching methods. Surveyed Nkangala educators reported many different approaches to History teaching:

I use NCS methods in which learners are assigned in developing critical thinking skills by allowing them an opportunity to make self-discovery on content at hand rather than making any attempt to pump knowledge into their minds. Learners are currently assessed on the basis of Learning Outcomes as contained in the NCS curriculum by exposing them more in handling a variety of questions.<sup>166</sup>

Other surveyed black History educators noted that they made use of group work, peer assessment debates, case studies, research assignments, oral history projects, data analysis, cartoons, critical thinking, music, poetry and presentations in their History lessons.<sup>167</sup>

In 2012 there were only three FET History educators teaching the subject at 'white' ex-model C government schools in Mpumalanga – Ian Leach at Lowveld High School in

<sup>163</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 156.

<sup>164</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6, as quoted by Black, p. 156.

<sup>165</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. S. Badat, Middelburg, 29 November 2010.

<sup>166</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 1, as quoted by Black, p. 156.

<sup>167</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8, as quoted by Black, p. 157.

Mbombela, myself at Steelcrest High School in Middelburg and Naomi Uys at Hoërskool Ermelo. Ms Uys is regarded as the best History educator in Mpumalanga. Over a period of ten years her Grade 12 learners have consistently produced averages of over 80 per cent, an outstanding achievement. It is worth examining the perceptions which Ms Uys holds toward History education and for that matter toward her learners as these perceptions have been responsible for the success she has obtained with the subject. This success has been attained under trying circumstances, within the context of a conservative secondary school and deeply conservative Afrikaans community. I believed that since other secondary schools in Mpumalanga have never consistently produced Grade 12 History averages of over 60 per cent, that Ms Uys must surely teach gifted learners. When I surveyed Hoërskool Ermelo learners I discovered that the standard of the learners' written responses to the questionnaires which I had asked them to complete was no better than the standard of written responses I had gathered from other surveyed secondary schools and was in fact often worse. The fact that Ms Uys educates learners of ordinary ability makes the Grade 12 results which she has achieved all the more remarkable and makes it imperative to examine the perceptions which are the foundation of this remarkable educator's History teaching.

Kenielwe Mosala related the difficulty Ms Uys had in introducing History to Hoërskool Ermelo:

Naomi Uys is the teacher. She is liberal, which is reflected in the décor in her classroom. This despite Ermelo's well known resistance to admitting black learners. There was a battle within the school, which wanted to remove history from the curriculum despite excellent results (twelve history distinctions on higher grade within one year). The school claimed that history as a subject had no use. Headmasters are mostly negative. When I had a discussion about changes to the history curriculum with the Headmaster at Ermelo he switched off and left the conversation.<sup>168</sup>

Over the years Ms Uys has succeeded in changing the perceptions of the Hoërskool Ermelo school management and educators toward History education. She noted that when she first began teaching History at the school the educators 'thought it was worth nothing, but good

<sup>168</sup> Interview, Ms K. Mosala, Middelburg, 15 July 2010. It must be noted that the principal's post at the school is now held by a new incumbent.

results have earned their respect.<sup>169</sup> The School Management Team's (SMT) perceptions of History also became more positive as ' ... During the last few years, they have had six learners who have obtained 100 per cent. They are experienced people who can now see the value of History in the lives of their learners.'<sup>170</sup>

The positive perceptions which Ms Uys holds toward History education extend to the learners under her care. Ms Uys attributes much of the success she has had in teaching History to the way in which she strives to build up learners with positive feedback of the work they produce:

I get many learners who are very weak. I tell them that they can be winners. I mark their work positively. I always look for the positive aspects of their work. I don't focus on the negative. They begin to gain confidence in themselves. One learner ended up producing 97% - she started off as a failure. I told her that she would get over 95% for matric.<sup>171</sup> ... I will give learners marks just to build up their confidence, because if they achieve once, then they believe that they can do it.<sup>172</sup>

Ms Uys noted that she was 'very involved in the lives of the kids' and that she 'was crazy about children and my subject.'<sup>173</sup> Understanding teenagers is critically important. Ms Uys noted that 'The most important thing about History teaching is to have a love for and understanding of teenagers. I have had four of my own.'<sup>174</sup> Ms Uys described the History learners she taught as being 'like my own. Nothing is too much trouble for them or me.'<sup>175</sup> Because learners are teenagers, Ms Uys pointed out that 'lots of personal space' was created for them in class.<sup>176</sup>

In the context of a school which has had a history of racial conflict, Ms Uys takes the task of reconciliation between learners of different culture groups very seriously. She related that:

<sup>169</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>170</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>171</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>172</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>173</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>174</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 5 December 2010.

<sup>175</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>176</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.



Most of my learners are white and Afrikaans-speaking, others are black. This year we had a 'Wit Wolf' and a 'Julius Malema'. They both started off with very fixed ideas. By the end of the year, it was great to see how both of them were able to see things from both points of view. One described living in South Africa as being a two sided coin and that you had to understand the other side of the coin as well. That's what teaching history is all about.<sup>177</sup>

The positive perceptions Ms Uys holds toward education in general and History education in particular translate into a formidable work ethic. In fact, the boundary between her History classroom and private life appears blurred. She related how groups of learners often arrive at her home to benefit from supervised homework sessions around her kitchen table. Pizza and video evenings were regularly held at her home for History learners.<sup>178</sup> Other educators to whom I described Ms Uys' involvement in the lives of her learners and even the local History Curriculum Implementer – a great admirer of Ms Uys – felt that this level of devotion to duty was perhaps going too far and that magnificent academic results were not worth forfeiting one's private life.

The formidable work ethic adopted by Ms Uys is revealed in the effort which she puts into marking History test papers and assignments. She noted that:

It takes me over two hours to mark a history test paper. I write extensive comments. I sometimes write them long letters.<sup>179</sup> ...  
When I mark their work I try to involve their whole beings. I often write each child a long motivational letter, saying such things as: 'This is as a Head Boy's marks should look. Superb. Thank you very much', or  
'Dear learner, no reading, but brilliant', or  
'Ewald – a diamond...'<sup>180</sup>

The positive and unusual perceptions which Ms Uys holds toward History teaching extends to the use of unusual and untraditional teaching methods. Little use is made of the textbook – instead Ms Uys described herself as a storyteller: 'I am a good storyteller. Believe me, children must get at least 60% of their input in class, without reading the textbook'. Discussion is the predominant teaching method. Learners 'sit in a circle where everyone

<sup>177</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>178</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>179</sup> Interview, Ms.N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>180</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

feels a bond of trust ... we discuss everything together and involve everyone with one another ... My class sits in a circle. I call it King Arthur's circle of trust. I begin each period by congratulating children on their achievements or birthdays or anything good. I don't have any favourites. I look for the best in even the weakest child.' Each learner is given opportunities to introduce historical topics which 'motivates everyone to believe in themselves'. Any regimentation is avoided – 'I hate being regimented. This prevents children from being themselves'.<sup>181</sup> Ms Uys pointed out that her classroom did not appear to be organised – as in having tables and chairs laid out in neat rows – discussion, rather than furniture arrangement was what she considered important.<sup>182</sup> Learners have the opportunity to make use of a graffiti board in the classroom where they are free to paste whatever interests them in history. 'This way they feel involved and important. I never criticise or put down what they put up. It is their work'.<sup>183</sup>

One facet of Ms Uys' teaching method is her open-door policy. Learners may enter and leave as they wish. The classroom itself is never locked. The History room is open to other learners, who may have a free period as a result of an absent educator, to walk in and listen to the history lesson. Many interested non-History-taking learners take advantage of this:

Children who are happy with their subject choices may come and sit in my class to listen. The whole school knows the content of what I teach because my learners argue and discuss the work and involve other children.<sup>184</sup>

A double history period is sometimes utilised to hold a braai (barbecue) in the school quad. 'I have History braais with the learners. They come and talk history as they braai'<sup>185</sup>... I make sure that the coals are ready before the learners arrive. Everybody will stand around and we discuss and argue a topic.'<sup>186</sup> Such teaching methods assume a high level of maturity on the part of learners. Ms Uys appears to expect this from her learners – and receives it. Homework is not checked. 'I never check homework. If the teacher is good, the homework

<sup>181</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>182</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>183</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>184</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>185</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>186</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

will be done. If the teacher is bad, it won't be. The children work because they want to work ... character does not need rules'.<sup>187</sup> Lest it be assumed that the secret to Ms Uys' History-teaching success lies solely in the creation of an affable social environment, she pointed out to me that extensive use is made of the internet during lessons as learners are encouraged to research for themselves.<sup>188</sup>

In contrast to the many Social Sciences and History educators in Mpumalanga's secondary schools who do not hold positive perceptions about the subject they teach, Ms Uys is a rare and shining exception. She is proof that holding positive perceptions toward History – 'Success in History teaching depends entirely upon the teacher ... You must love your subject with a passion'<sup>189</sup> – makes the subject vital, interesting and attractive to learners and is the way to achieve outstanding Grade 12 History results. Not only have the perceptions of the school's management team, educators and learners toward History education been positively altered but so have those of many of the people in the conservative Afrikaans community of the area:

They see the value of it [History] in their children's lives. They actually gave me a large screen TV for my class as a present. They are always willing to help with the family tree assignments. The whole family is involved.<sup>190</sup>

The positive perceptions and all-consuming passion for History teaching displayed by Ms Uys would certainly have won the admiration of the late Prof. Leo Barnard who complained so bitterly that the negative attitudes of History educators at white secondary schools was largely responsible for the subject's decline.<sup>191</sup> Clearly, positive perceptions toward their subjects on the part of secondary school educators is the factor of paramount importance in determining the success and popularity of their subject.

Ms Uys is one of Mpumalanga's dedicated secondary school Social Sciences or History educators. Positive perceptions of history in general and History education in particular are

<sup>187</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>188</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>189</sup> Interview, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

<sup>190</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>191</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het Geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms?: Enkele Perspektiewe', *The Free State Teacher*, 85, 4 (1995), pp. 13–17.

held by educators in Mpumalanga. Many of the 2012 surveyed educators expressed their appreciation of popular history and some perceived some value in presenting History as a school subject. Most of the 2008 black secondary school History educators I surveyed expressed positive perceptions of History education. It is clear that as educators' perceptions of the subject became more positive, learners tend to respond with enthusiasm. A variety of teaching methods were reported to be used to teach History, a hopeful indication of positive educator perceptions of the subject. It is clear that two factors strongly influence the development of positive perceptions on the part of educators toward the subject – leadership and ongoing training. Where these factors were present, educators experienced positive experiences of History teaching and displayed positive perceptions toward it.

#### **6.4 Educator abilities**

The level of qualifications and educational abilities of many History educators in secondary schools remains low, a factor which can only negatively influence the perception and value which is attached to the subject. Traditionally, low qualifications and poor teaching abilities are associated with traditionally black secondary schools. While the qualifications of many black secondary school educators may leave much to be desired, the reality is that History is more widely taught by underqualified educators in traditionally white (ex-model C) schools in present-day Mpumalanga. To understand this, it must be noted that the administrations of traditionally white secondary schools in Mpumalanga are strongly driven to maintain white teaching staff complements at their schools, despite the fact that the vast majority of these privileged schools now boast learner populations which are predominantly black. These schools are increasingly employing young white 'student educators' on the school Governing Body payroll. Such students have typically just completed their own secondary school careers and are studying part-time to obtain teaching qualifications. Governing Body teaching posts for educators are offered by most ex-model C schools – posts over which the Education Department has no control or influence. Unqualified educators are often appointed to these posts. The general level of educator qualifications at ex-model C 'white' schools is ironically low, in my observation, lower than is the case in the traditionally 'black', disadvantaged schools where better qualified educators have to contend with class sizes of up to 60 learners and labour at times under testing, under-resourced conditions. It must be

noted that there are exceptions – Lowveld High School in Mbombela employs a staff more representative of the demographics of South Africa – but certainly in Middelburg, Steelcrest High School is the only one of four ex-model C schools which employs a single black student educator among a large contingent of under-qualified white students and educators while none of the other ex-model C schools employ any teaching staff who are not white. The desire to retain an all-white teaching staff has the unfortunate effect of ensuring a large complement of poorly qualified educators. This impacts upon the teaching of History, which, not being regarded as an ‘important’ subject is relegated to the ministrations of these educators. This simply serves to increase the negative perceptions associated with History education.

My own History-teaching experience points to the existence of an alarming lack of historical and general knowledge among present-day History educators at secondary schools in Mpumalanga. A good example of this was apparent at a Departmental History workshop held in Middelburg during 2007. I attended this workshop along with about 25 black male History educators and one coloured female educator from the Nkangala region. At that time there were no white FET History educators in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga. The agenda concerned familiarising educators with the new (at that time) Grade 12 History syllabus, which was due to be implemented for the first time in 2008. Almost all of the male educators knew very little, if anything at all, about historical and general knowledge issues which would be assumed as common knowledge for most educated adults. On the section concerning the history of the Middle East since 1948, very few educators appeared to have heard of the Suez Canal, let alone its role in history. On a section of the syllabus dealing with Angola’s struggle for liberation, few educators had heard of liberation movements such as the FNLA, MPLA or UNITA, let alone what ideological leanings these movements displayed. Such educators are clearly entirely reliant upon the details found in textbooks.

I have witnessed History educators at cluster meetings<sup>192</sup> in Middelburg complain that their knowledge of the Cold War (taught as part of the Grade 12 syllabus) was non-existent. One

<sup>192</sup> ‘Cluster meetings’ are held once or twice a school term by ‘cluster groups’ which are associations of subject teachers who meet to discuss curriculum and examination matters in an attempt to conduct ongoing training among themselves. All secondary school subject educators in Mpumalanga

complained that he found himself unable to teach the topic to his learners because he himself knew nothing about it. It is clear that a lack of subject and general knowledge pertinent to History teaching is widespread among the History-teaching corps in black secondary schools. No blame is attached to educators who themselves have suffered inadequate education. The point does however remain that such a lack of background knowledge cannot assist such educators (or their learners) in developing positive perceptions of History education. Calvin Buthelezi pointed out that the Mpumalanga Department of Education is attempting to remedy History educators' apparent lack of subject knowledge: 'We have workshops targeting content during holidays in order to strengthen their knowledge on the subject so that they can feel more comfortable in handling the new content.'<sup>193</sup>

Kenielwe Mosala despairingly complained to me that most History educators in black secondary schools show a great aversion to further study. She noted that especially in outlying, rural areas, few History educators are prepared to spend money on buying books or other materials which would enrich their own knowledge of the subject they teach.<sup>194</sup> Mdhululi, in his study of work-related attitudes and ethical responsibilities of educators in Mpumalanga, also noted that black secondary school educators he observed were unwilling to improve their lives academically.<sup>195</sup> My observations of educators at white schools is that many educators undertake further study. However the trend is strongly biased toward studying education in general, especially areas such as educational law and educational management, rather than studying academic subjects. I personally know many educators studying further in the field of education but none who study the content of an academic subject. Ex-model C schools in Mpumalanga are full of well qualified educational administrators but are not well endowed with well qualified academics.

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are obliged to attend such meetings, which typically should have an attendance of between ten and thirty educators. In reality most cluster groups are poorly attended. The idea behind the establishment of cluster groups was to share expertise and experience between colleagues.

<sup>193</sup> C. Buthelezi, e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009, as quoted by Black, p. 158.

<sup>194</sup> Interview, Ms K. Mosala, Middelburg, 2 May 2008.

<sup>195</sup> M.M. Mdhululi, 'A Psycho-Educational Model for Facilitation of Self Discipline for Educators in Rural Township Schools' (D.Ed. thesis, University of Johannesburg, 2004), p. iii.

Sadly, It seems clear that most History and Social Sciences educators within secondary schools, at least in Mpumalanga, do not attach a high value to their subject, if a general reluctance to study it is used as a yardstick.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In general, educators' perceptions toward History education in Mpumalanga are negative. The black secondary school History educators reflected mixed perceptions about the subject they teach. While many black secondary school History educators clearly lack subject /content knowledge, it is clear that most try hard to implement the new methods of History teaching. Many black secondary school educators in Mpumalanga labour under trying conditions which can only hamper the development of positive perceptions toward education in general and History education in particular.

White Social Sciences educators whom I interviewed or whom I have personally interacted with over many years of teaching in Mpumalanga tend to prefer teaching the Geography component of the Social Sciences course and hold negative perceptions toward History education. The vast majority of the white Mpumalanga secondary school educators whom I surveyed in 2012 believed – without the benefit of empirical evidence – that secondary school History education was a mouthpiece for ANC or government policies. In this kind of environment, the prognosis for a History education which seeks among other things to make fair comment on South Africa's apartheid past and to encourage a new non-racial way of thinking and behaviour among young people, is poor.

Many Social Sciences and History educators in Mpumalanga have been and still are confused by the many changes in the curriculum and History syllabus since 1994. This may largely be caused by a lack of supervision and guidance by the Education Department, more especially Curriculum Implementers who appear to work sporadically, with little centralised supervision.<sup>196</sup> It is clear that positive perceptions of History education are created by the examples set by good leadership.<sup>197</sup> Where such leadership was provided by Curriculum Implementers and when History educators had been able to gain a good understanding of the

<sup>196</sup> Interview, Mr I Steenkamp, Mbombela, 12 January 2012.

<sup>197</sup> Conversation with Ms H. Lubbe, 2007.

new method of school History education, they enjoyed teaching History and were successful in inspiring their learners to achieve success in the subject.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HISTORY EDUCATION IN MPUMALANGA, 1994–2012

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter will investigate the perceptions which learners have held toward the History education which they received at school since 1994. The chapter will focus on the province of Mpumalanga, since that is where I teach History. My 2009 study into the perceptions of black secondary school learners toward History education was centered on the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga.<sup>1</sup> The research which was conducted between 2010 and 2012 for purposes of this thesis was also conducted within Mpumalanga secondary schools. Although there is little recent comparable research concerning learner perceptions of secondary school History education in South Africa, it is my contention that the surveyed schools and learners of both my 2009 and this present study are representative of the attitudes and perceptions of South African learners in other provinces of South Africa. The findings of Sarah Dryden, who conducted research into the perceptions of Cape Town learners toward secondary school History education in 1999 are, for example, mirrored in my own findings for that time in Mpumalanga.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter will investigate changed perceptions of History education among Mpumalanga's secondary school learners chronologically in order to determine how learners' perceptions of secondary school History education have changed. As stated, Dryden's 1999 research into the perceptions of Cape Town secondary school learners toward the History education they received at school will be examined along with the perceptions of Mpumalanga secondary school educators who received their secondary school education between 1994 and 2006 and the perceptions of Mpumalanga black

<sup>1</sup> D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> S. Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition: Case Studies of History Teachers and Students in Cape Town Schools' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1999).

secondary school learners toward History which I uncovered in my own 2008 research. Finally my 2012 survey and findings will be examined in detail.

In 2002, the Mpumalanga Department of Education launched the Action Research in History Project. The aims of the project were to address the concern that ‘... In Mpumalanga the Grade 12 results of recent years have been very poor and the number of learners carrying on with History in the FET band [has] declined sharply during the past few years’.<sup>3</sup> Questionnaires probing the perceptions toward and progress of school History education of school Principals, History teachers and learners were composed and distributed to Mpumalanga’s secondary schools. Unfortunately however, although schools returned completed questionnaires, these were never analysed and were later disposed of during a change of office.<sup>4</sup> A potentially rich source of information was lost. No matter how unsuccessful this departmental attempt at investigating secondary school History education was, the fact that the effort was made at all indicates that the position of History education at secondary schools was indeed a cause for concern.

## 7.2 Learner perceptions of History education: 1999 research

Dryden, in her 1999 study of the perceptions of Cape Town learners toward secondary school History notes that the tendency of the white secondary school learners she surveyed was to avoid South African history – and for that matter South African issues generally – and to focus instead on overseas, particularly on Britain as their place of ancestral origin.<sup>5</sup> Dryden selected four traditionally white secondary schools as part of her survey. She found learners in these schools to be ‘relatively isolated from the post-apartheid realities of South African society’.<sup>6</sup> Their experience of South Africa was shaped by their experience of other places:

<sup>3</sup> Mpumalanga Department of Education, Memo to Deputy Director General for Education, ‘Action Research in History Project: Distribution of Questionnaires to Schools in Mpumalanga’ from Dr H. Maritz, 20 August 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Telephonic conversation, Mr I Steenkamp, Deputy Chief Education Specialist for GET Social Sciences in Mpumalanga, 2 August 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Dryden, ‘Mirror of a Nation’, pp. 26–43, especially p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.

Overseas is part of life for many of the students at Peninsula High, Ocean High, River High and to a lesser extent, Hoërskool Noord. The experience of living or visiting somewhere else shapes the way these children think about their own country.<sup>7</sup>

Dryden quotes an educator relating how particularly English-speaking white children did not have a strong attachment to South Africa, thinking that ‘they’ve got their backs to the country and they face out to sea ... psychologically I think this is how they actually feel about their country too’.<sup>8</sup> Another educator interviewed by Dryden pointed out that white people felt threatened by a new South African society which they perceived offered them an uncertain future, resulting in ‘cynical and scared notions of what South Africa is for white people and the students’ ideas that their future might not be in South Africa draws these students to a history that is immersion in somewhere else, in overseas.’<sup>9</sup> Dryden is describing a pattern of cognitive disassociation as the learners she surveyed were living in South Africa but were unwilling to be emotionally connected to their country of residence. They felt themselves to be outsiders and experienced a sense of exclusion.

Dryden’s research into the perceptions of coloured learners in the Western Cape toward the History education which they received was that uncertainty about their own futures in South Africa resulted in them not having an appreciation of History:

The so-called coloured students of this school do not know where to look for their futures. Their country is now creating a place for Africans, continues to hold a place for whites, but, as they see it, this South Africa does not imagine a place for those in the middle: the so-called coloured.<sup>10</sup>

Dryden’s predominant finding about the perceptions which black secondary school learners held toward the History education which they were receiving was that they did not want to

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

learn about South African history because it was too painful and stirred up feelings of bitterness and anger.<sup>11</sup> She quotes interviewed learners who expressed this feeling:

It makes me angry, so I leave it behind.<sup>12</sup>

Apartheid, no. I don't think we can talk about things because it makes pain for other people and their families ... it makes them hurt to remember things ... it gets personal to us. And sometimes we see our mothers crying in their room. So it's a part of a history. It can hurt us when you see your mother crying just because you can't have a lot of things, like a better education.<sup>13</sup>

Another pertinent finding which Dryden made was that the poor teaching she encountered in some of the schools she surveyed did not assist learners to develop positive perceptions of History education. She observed that History educators felt that their subject had been marginalised at their schools. An educator related that 'There is so little attention to our subject'.<sup>14</sup> Many educators however appeared to marginalise the subject themselves as Dryden observed little effort being made in classrooms. Very few actual History lessons were presented by educators at the surveyed schools.<sup>15</sup> Educators at black secondary schools appeared to Dryden to be disheartened and unsure about what to do with History teaching.<sup>16</sup> With each teacher 'trying to figure it out for him or herself',<sup>17</sup> Dryden pointed out that 'The interim period between moving away from outdated and biased syllabuses and approaches to education and creating a system that meets the needs and aspirations of the new South Africa may be seen as 'wasted' time. No one really knows what or how to teach and uncertainty can prevail'.<sup>18</sup> Little progress through the syllabus was observed and most teaching that did take place was simple rote learning which comprised of simple notes scribbled on blackboards. Dryden sadly notes that '... at many schools teachers have lost their hope. They believe our children will fail'.<sup>19</sup> These negative perceptions toward their

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 53.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111–112.

subject and profession on the part of educators cannot but have negatively influenced the perceptions which learners held toward History education.

At the same time Dryden notes that good, even adventurous History teaching had the potential to excite learners about the subject. She cites the example of students at Central High who were excited about doing new things in History classes. Learners studied topics like the history of the World Cup and the history of techno music.<sup>20</sup>

Even though Dryden's dissertation is about the perceptions of learners toward History education in the Western Cape, there is no evidence to suggest that the perceptions of learners in other parts of South Africa during the 1990s toward History education would have been much different. The overwhelming impression is that during the first years of South Africa's new democracy, young people were struggling to discover what their place in this new society would be. The attitudes held by young people varied between indifference, denial, uncertainty and pain – all of which did not encourage them to view the study of History generally and South African history in particular, with enthusiasm. Further, the influence of negative educators upon the perceptions of their learners toward History education was not confined to the Western Cape.<sup>21</sup>

Dryden's Western Cape findings were echoed by white, mainly Afrikaans-speaking educators who received their secondary school education between 1994 and 2006 and who completed detailed questionnaires as part of my research into perceptions toward History education in Mpumalanga.

### **7.3 Learner perceptions of history education: white secondary school learners**

The considered and thoughtful responses of Brian Sutton, a respondent who completed the educators' questionnaire and who attended Hoërskool Kanonkop in Middelburg between 1994 and 1998 may reflect the perceptions toward History education of many post-1994 Afrikaans-speaking learners. He notes that there was a difference in his perceptions of

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> See S. P. Lekgoathi, 'Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994', *South African Historical Journal*, 58 (2007), pp. 226–252.

History education before and after 1994. This contribution is worth close examination because it provides insight into how a rapidly changing world interacted with the accumulated world view of this learner:

This sounds so clichéd but to me there is a definite change in my view of History pre- and post-1994. There is a clear difference because that is when I went to High School along with all the political changes that took place in South Africa.

I have vivid memories of 31 May '*Republiek-dag*' [Republic Day] celebrations going back to nursery school days where we painted banners in orange, white and blue and did '*volkspele*' [folk games]. I still have a picture of me in a '*volkspele*' costume. I remember watching movies on the big white screens in our Primary School Hall propagating patriotism and building national pride. We were taught all the '*volksliedjies*' [cultural/folk songs] in the *FAK-Sangbundel* [Federation for Afrikaans Culture Songbook].

This may freak you out but I still have my Standard Two History script. I think it must be another case of a teacher (Linda van der Merwe) who tickled my fascination with stories of our and world history (from whichever perspective it was taught then). I tend to hoard but this is indeed the only script I kept. Emily Hobhouse, Dick King, Wolraad Woltemade, Dirkie Uys - all those heroic figures I remember from those days.

I have had a fascination with 'overseas' even before I knew what it really meant. World history took things to a new level. I loved hearing about the French and Russian Revolutions, and the World Wars.

My father fought in Angola but I never knew what that was about. I feel as though I was brought up in a cocoon. I learnt all about Apartheid after it was abolished. The only black people I learned about were Shaka Zulu who was killed by his brother Dingaan who then assassinated Piet Retief. I did not know anything about politics in history, to me, they were a collection of interesting stories...

I had History up to Standard 7 but the subject at High School made no impression on me. People's attitudes also changed. There was not one learner who chose History in Standard 8 in my year and I don't think there has been one since. I approached one of the teachers in

Standard 9 and took History as an extra subject. She gave me the textbooks and notes and I had to study it all by myself. I was given matric work and wrote tests set by her and did assignments – the topic was the Second World War – I loved it! In the third term of that year I had to choose between Accounting and History seeing that they wouldn't allow me to have eight subjects. Well, what can I say.

Nobody chose it as a subject in Standard 8. I don't know if it was because of the illusion we were brought up in was shaken up a bit and everything we were made to be proud of was suddenly bad. I was a prefect in Primary School and one of our duties was to hoist and take down the flag. There was a procedure to follow, it was folded a certain way and it may never touch the ground. Everything changed – our heroes and stories were branded as one-sided and untrue.<sup>22</sup>

The perception that whites were excluded from the History syllabus was expressed by white educators I surveyed who had attended secondary school in Middelburg between 1994 and 2006.<sup>23</sup> One noted that 'they concentrate on 'black' history and ignore the role whites played in the history of this country',<sup>24</sup> while another felt that the syllabus should consist of '... an equal amount of lessons from all the different cultures. One culture should not get preference'.<sup>25</sup> An angry respondent noted that the Social Sciences had 'turned into a circus ... These History lessons focus mainly on apartheid and the holocaust and nothing else'.<sup>26</sup> Brian Sutton expressed these feelings well:

There still remains a question mark behind the objectivity of historians and political agendas ... Our history, as with every other country in the world, is stained with events to feel embarrassed about. Our current political landscape is not stable – I don't know if it is ever meant to be. Our history is used as a political tool to stir emotions.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 24. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>23</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 2, 6, 10, 24, 41.

<sup>24</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>25</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 10. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>26</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 65. [Afrikaans; 2000–2004; Hoërskool Lydenburg]

<sup>27</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 24. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

Powerful, negative emotions were expressed by a respondent who related how his school had to cope with racial transition in the 1990s. The respondent related how learning about the past 'stirred some hate emotions within the learners, because they were not open at that stage to gain a complete overview of what happened in history'.<sup>28</sup> Respondents complained that learners did not like History 'because most of it is too political'<sup>29</sup> and that History 'has become unpopular because people are tired of hearing about certain events like apartheid'.<sup>30</sup> One respondent saw History as 'A subject that was taken by black people and totally turned into a one point perspective ... Boring – always doing the same thing – apartheid!'<sup>31</sup>

A thoughtful respondent expressed a belief that the History taught in post-apartheid South Africa was appreciated differently by different cultural groups:

[The appreciation of History] ... depends on whose shoes you are standing in. I know that the black members of my community are relieved to finally have a place in the pages of time. I also believe that the white members of the community aren't all that happy as most of them believe that whites are made out to be the bad guys and none of the 'white' history is included like the settlers, Van Riebeeck and Van der Stel.<sup>32</sup>

Many of the respondents who had studied History at secondary school after 1994 reported being let down by their teachers. Many respondents relate that they found History to be a boring subject:

I never liked History, thought it was boring and not necessary.<sup>33</sup>

They thought it was useless, boring and a load of work. Some however enjoyed it ... Children don't seem to care about what

<sup>28</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 22. [Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>29</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 30. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>30</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 25. [English; 1999–2001; Pretoria Girls High School ]

<sup>31</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 41. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Vryheid]

<sup>32</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 85. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>33</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 26. [Afrikaans; 1999–2003; Hoërskool Kanonkop]



happened in the past. They know it is a lot of work to learn, including dates. Learners seem to have the impression that history is boring.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the topics were interesting but the topics were very boring [sic]. I did not see why we had to learn some of the History topics because they were not applicable to my life at the time. For the most part I just learned the work and was not paying any attention to the content of the syllabus. Like a parrot ... Sometimes History cannot be presented in an interesting way to the learners.<sup>35</sup>

History was sadly considered to have been a waste of time by respondents. One noted that 'About 75 per cent of the learners thought the subject was a waste of time.'<sup>36</sup> Another mentioned that 'It was considered a waste of time, post-1994.'<sup>37</sup> Learners did not always grasp the point of the subject:

They thought it was a waste of time. They could not see the relevance to our daily lives.<sup>38</sup>

Most learners did not see why they had to study and learn History at all. They were not interested in the subject and its content.<sup>39</sup>

Most of the surveyed educators who had taken Social Sciences at secondary school post-1994 related that their experience of History educators had been far from positive. In reporting that most learners did not like History, one respondent squarely blamed the teacher who 'did not do a good job to make it interesting'.<sup>40</sup> Poor teaching methods were blamed by another respondent for learners' lack of interest in History 'because not all schools are blessed with brilliant teachers ... They ensure that learners copy down notes, learn the points, without understanding the content. The key is to make it interesting, like a story to stimulate them...'<sup>41</sup> The presentation of the content was seen by other respondents

<sup>34</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 74. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Potchefstroom Gimnasium]

<sup>35</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 77. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Harrismith High School]

<sup>36</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2. [Afrikaans; 1996–2000; Hoërskool Sannieshof]

<sup>37</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 24. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>38</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 72. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; CVO Middelburg]

<sup>39</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 77. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Harrismith High School]

<sup>40</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 12. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>41</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 22. [Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Steelcrest High School]

to have been as important but lacking.<sup>42</sup> Negative teaching was felt by a respondent to 'break down all the positive things this country has going for it'.<sup>43</sup> Other respondents noted not liking the teacher and felt that the teacher had not spent enough time in the class:

I would rather have listened *if the teacher were there* [my emphasis] because the textbooks gave us two double meanings [sic]...<sup>44</sup>

I have accepted the fact that *it is not being taught to learners and probably never will be* [my emphasis].<sup>45</sup>

Positive experience of History educators – and especially primary school History educators – were related by some respondents. One respondent found primary school History more interesting, recalling that 'I remember more of my primary school History than high school. My primary school teacher told very interesting stories about history subjects, the whole class enjoyed it very much. High school was just boring'.<sup>46</sup> Sutton relates enjoying primary school History, writing of Linda van der Merwe, his primary school History teacher, who 'tickled my fascination with stories of our and world history'.<sup>47</sup> The teacher was, according to one respondent, responsible for making History alive and enjoyable:

We didn't have a choice, we had to like it, because our teacher was a History fanatic! He really put so much into his classes. After a lesson you really would feel as though you were living in that time frame. That made History understandable and interesting.<sup>48</sup>

The perceptions toward History of the post-1994 secondary school attending educators whom I surveyed were clearly greatly influenced by the negative, or positive attitudes of their teachers toward the subject. While it will be clear that perceptions toward History on the part of South African young people have changed over time the attitude of teachers toward the subject remains the primary factor in creating, or preventing positive perceptions of learners toward it.

<sup>42</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 49, 72.

<sup>43</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 75. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>44</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 30. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>45</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 74. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Potchefstroom Gimnasium]

<sup>46</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 31. [Afrikaans; 1996–2000; HTS Middelburg]

<sup>47</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 24. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>48</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 75. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

Many of the white, Afrikaans-speaking respondents who had completed their secondary school education between 1994 and 2006 believed that History was not one of the 'important' subjects at school. Responses included the belief that parents of learners 'feel that you should take 'important' subjects such as Maths and Science to ensure yourself or your child a career'.<sup>49</sup> Other respondents noted similar feelings:

... society has become career orientated and they feel that you should take 'important' subjects like Maths and Science.<sup>50</sup>

It [History] wasn't given top priority, when compared to the 'difficult' subjects. They only took the subject when there was no other option. No interest displayed.<sup>51</sup>

I think as far as the community was concerned they couldn't have cared less for History education – because – let's be honest, it was never one of "the" important subjects that would enable you to become a doctor or a lawyer or a pilot, as Mathematics, Biology or Chemistry might have been or still is.<sup>52</sup>

Social Sciences textbooks appear to have made little impression on the educators I surveyed. Most respondents could not remember anything about the textbooks which were used. Those who could related that they had found them to be 'very boring and mostly dated'.<sup>53</sup> A respondent noted that 'The textbooks that we used, I cannot recall their titles, were a bit on the boring side. Then again there is not a lot of things about a high school textbook that can be exciting to a learner'.<sup>54</sup>

Not all the surveyed educators who had experienced secondary school History education as learners in the decade after 1994 had negative comments to make about the subject. One respondent had found History 'exciting and fun'<sup>55</sup> while another 'always enjoyed History

<sup>49</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop]  
<sup>50</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 10. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Hoërskool Kanonkop]  
<sup>51</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 22. [Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Steelcrest High School]  
<sup>52</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 85. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]  
<sup>53</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 49. [Afrikaans; 1994–1998; Hoërskool Secunda]  
<sup>54</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 72. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; CVO Middelburg]  
<sup>55</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2. [Afrikaans; 1996–2000; Hoërskool Sannieshof]

very much'.<sup>56</sup> A common story was related by a respondent who commented that 'I enjoyed it, it was before OBE; in fact mine was the last group before OBE kicked in – I only had History until Grade 9. Then it was cancelled at school.'<sup>57</sup>

The responses I received to the educators' questionnaire from representatives of a generation of white, mainly Afrikaans-speaking secondary school learners, between 1994 and 2006 makes for depressing reading. The tone of most responses is cynical about the new South Africa and about the place of whites within it. The majority of respondents saw little value in receiving History education which they perceived to be biased ANC government propaganda. These negative perceptions were supported by what most respondents perceived to be lacklustre teaching at best or no History teaching at all, at worst. The depressing responses which I received from the educators' questionnaire in general and the responses of the post-1994 secondary school educated teachers in particular did not prepare me for the pleasant discovery I made when a fresh generation of 2012 white learners displayed a far more positive attitude toward life in South Africa in general and History education at school in particular.

#### **7.4 Learner perceptions of History education: 2008 research**

During the course of 2008 I conducted three surveys among black secondary school learners in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga in order to uncover their perceptions toward History education. The first survey examined the perceptions toward History education of a group of 22 Grade 9 and 68 Grade 10 learners at Steelcrest High School. Learners submitted written responses to the question 'Is History education in South African schools necessary or not?' Ninety responses were received. Due to four spoilt responses the sample size was reduced to 86. The surveyed learners were all members of various English classes. Forty-eight of the Grade 10 learners did not take History as a FET subject while all of the grade 9 respondents took History (along with Geography) as a component of their Grade 9 Social Sciences course. The second survey took the form of a six-question questionnaire issued to Grade 10 to 12 non-History-taking learners at four surveyed schools. One hundred and

<sup>56</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 57. [Afrikaans; 1994–1999; H/S Brits]

<sup>57</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 65. [Afrikaans; 2000–2004; H/S Lydenburg]

twenty questionnaires were issued and 78 completed questionnaires were returned. The third survey took the form of a 15-question questionnaire which was issued to History-taking Grade 10–12 learners at the same four surveyed schools. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were issued and 84 completed questionnaires were returned.

A brief summary of the findings of my 2008 research into the perceptions of History education held by black secondary school learners in Mpumalanga follows:<sup>58</sup>

My research indicated that various negative perceptions about History education were held by black secondary school learners in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga. These negative perceptions included the following:

- People should be more interested in the future than the past.<sup>59</sup>
- Value is not seen in learning about past events, philosophies or people.<sup>60</sup>
- A scientific and technological future in which the study of History has no place is envisioned.<sup>61</sup>
- History study is okay for learners who cannot cope with Mathematics and Science.<sup>62</sup>
- History education will not help learners with their future careers.<sup>63</sup>
- Most learners, both History and non-History takers, saw History education in a utilitarian way. Respondents from both surveyed groups of learners perceived History education primarily in terms of equipping, or not equipping learners for a career.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', pp. 167–178.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167–168, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 1, 19, 50, 61, 75, 80.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 85, 87, 89–96, 100–101, 105, 107, 109–114, 117–118, 120, 126–128, 131, 133, 137–139, 141, 143–145, 150, 152, 159, 161–162.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 92, 101, 105–106, 114–115, 125, 157, 160.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 5, 61.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169–170, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 85–88, 92–93, 95, 102–104, 107–111, 113, 119–122, 124–125, 127–129, 140–141, 154, 160–161.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 4, 9, 10–14, 16, 22–23, 25–28, 32–35, 40–42, 44–46, 54, 58, 61, 63–65, 67, 72, 75–77, 79–80; 2008 non-History-taking learners'

- History study will not attract bursaries for higher education.<sup>65</sup>
- History is seen as a do-it-yourself subject.<sup>66</sup>
- History education opens up old wounds and should therefore be left alone.<sup>67</sup>
- History focuses on conflict between black and white, eliciting hurt or angry emotions.<sup>68</sup>
- A reluctance to interact with South Africa's apartheid past.<sup>69</sup>
- Learners did not like learning about racism.<sup>70</sup>
- Learners did not like writing essays.<sup>71</sup>
- History study involves too much work.<sup>72</sup>
- A poor relationship with History educators<sup>73</sup>
- Poor classroom discipline.<sup>74</sup>
- Some learners felt that their parents did not approve of History education at school.<sup>75</sup>

Positive perceptions which learners held about History education included the following:

- History study can help us know more about the apartheid past.<sup>76</sup>
- History will help us understand the past better.<sup>77</sup>

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questionnaire, Responses 85–88, 92–93, 95, 102–104, 107–111, 113, 119–122, 124–125, 127–129, 140–141, 154, 160–161.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170–171, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 114, 116.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 20, 73, 75–76; 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 109, 116, 137.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 23, 28, 48, 50, 62, 71, 82, 87.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172–173, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 28, 82, 87.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 85, 89–90, 94, 101, 110–112, 117–118, 131, 133, 136, 159, 162; 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 13, 16, 22, 36, 55–56, 75, 82.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173–174, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 57, 79.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 24, 39, 45, 49–50, 52, 63, 69–73, 76, 78–81.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3–4, 20, 24, 31, 33, 44, 46–47, 54, 63, 67, 69–72.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 33, 39, 51, 53, 75.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3–4, 12, 25, 33, 44, 47, 54, 73.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 87, 90, 94–98, 101, 106, 108–110, 113, 115–116, 124, 126–127, 141, 159.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 1–4, 6, 8–15, 17, 21, 24–25, 29, 31, 36, 39, 43, 46, 49, 52, 54, 57–59, 63, 65, 68, 70, 73–74, 79–80, 83, 86, 88.

- History might help people to attain a better future and not repeat the mistakes of the past.<sup>78</sup>
- History-taking learners from the two poorer schools which were surveyed showed a greater interest in learning about the struggle for freedom in South Africa.<sup>79</sup>
- History studies are valuable in helping learners to prepare for a legal career.<sup>80</sup>
- History will assist learners with a future political career.<sup>81</sup>
- History helps people gain useful general knowledge.<sup>82</sup>
- History study develops logical thought.<sup>83</sup>
- History study may help learners to know about their personal cultural roots and backgrounds.<sup>84</sup>
- Some learners felt that studying History might be good for its own sake.<sup>85</sup>
- Some learners studied History because they loved the subject.<sup>86</sup>
- History can help to develop a solid set of personal values.<sup>87</sup>
- Studying History leads to personal enrichment.<sup>88</sup>
- History study can help to develop academic skills.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 5–8, 13, 16, 18–20, 22, 24, 25, 27–29, 31–33, 36–37, 39, 42–45, 47, 49–50, 52–53, 56–65, 67, 69–73, 76–78, 81–82.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178–179, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Response 22; 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 51, 54.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 7, 14, 31, 33, 53–54, 55, 59.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 5, 7–9, 11–12, 14, 15, 17–19, 22–23, 26–29, 31–33, 35–38, 42–43, 45–47, 50, 52–62, 64, 66–79, 81; 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 6, 12, 15, 17, 20–21, 23, 25, 32–34, 40, 46–47, 68–69, 80–81.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 5, 10, 17, 20, 25, 28, 32–33, 37, 49, 59, 61, 67, 74.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 11, 21, 28–29, 31–32, 42, 45, 52, 70, 72, 75, 79–80.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 15, 21, 28–29, 31, 34–35, 39–40, 43, 46–47, 49, 59, 61, 67, 74.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180–181, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 4–5, 7, 12–13, 15, 17, 21–22, 24, 26, 28–29, 31–33, 35–36, 39–40, 43, 45–46, 50–59, 62–68, 70, 72–73, 77–79, 81, 85–86, 88–89; 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 89, 95, 103, 111, 119, 125, 152; 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 7, 9, 15–17, 20, 22–24, 26–27, 30–33, 36, 39, 44–45, 52–54, 56–58, 67, 70–71, 73–78, 81–82.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 2, 14, 16, 22, 32, 37, 40, 42, 44, 47, 50, 53–54, 60, 88.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182, 13 of 18 2008 History-taking learners' Responses recorded at Middelburg Combined School. 72 per cent of school's responses. Questionnaire numbers not provided.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183, 15 2008 History-taking learners felt that history study could help develop a solid set of personal values. Questionnaire numbers not provided.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183, 24 2008 History-taking learners saw the main value of history education as personal enrichment.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 41, 43, 49–50, 56, 72; 2008 History-taking learners'

- History should be made a compulsory subject at school.<sup>90</sup>

The main findings of my 2009 study of the perceptions of black Mpumalanga secondary school learners toward History education were as follows:

As was the case with Dryden's 1999 research among black secondary school learners in Cape Town my 2008 research among black secondary school learners in Mpumalanga revealed a desire to avoid a painful apartheid past. One respondent related that studying history 'can bring back bad memories and open forgotten wounds',<sup>91</sup> while another felt that South African history 'focuses on blacks versus whites and their problems but only makes us aggressive and full of hatred'.<sup>92</sup> The following respondents expressed bitter emotions:

I think we should leave the past behind and forget, so that we can carry on with our lives. If every day we hear how our grandparents and our family members struggled we will become more violent. Especially when we hear about apartheid then we begin to hate.<sup>93</sup>

History is a subject that is not so important in my opinion. Simply because specially for black kids learning or being told about history is like adding petrol to a fire. What I mean is teachers tell us about the most historic topic in South Africa, in my opinion 'apartheid'. Apartheid makes me sick. Watching clips and pics of how white people treated our grandmothers and grandfathers makes me want to drop an atom [bomb] on white people.<sup>94</sup>

In the three 2008 surveys I conducted, eight learners (8.9 per cent)<sup>95</sup> in the Steelcrest Grade 9 and 10 survey; 15 learners (19.2 per cent)<sup>96</sup> in the non-History-taking survey and eight

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questionnaire, Responses 10, 14, 21, 36, 58.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 25, 46, 50, 56, 86, 88.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Response 23.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Response 28.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Response 82.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Response 87.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 23, 28, 48, 50, 62, 71, 82, 87.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173, 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 85, 89–90, 94, 101, 110–112, 117–118, 131, 133, 136, 159, 162.



learners (9.5 per cent)<sup>97</sup> in the History-taking survey expressed a reluctance to interact with South Africa's apartheid past. These findings from my 2008 research reflect sad emotions.

The major finding of my 2008 research was that young black South African people have been overwhelmed by a philosophy of pragmatic materialism,<sup>98</sup> which deeply impacted upon how secondary school learners perceived the value of History education. History education was perceived as having diminished utility in a commercially oriented world which valued people more for reasons of material success than academic attainment.<sup>99</sup> This attitude toward life has a negative effect on school History education which is perceived to not offer financial rewards among its benefits. History is therefore judged as being irrelevant and without meaning to the collective aspirations of contemporary society.<sup>100</sup> In line with the philosophy of pragmatic materialism I noted that the response of many learners to the possibility of studying History would tend to be to ask 'why?' since they did not appreciate the relevance of the subject. I noted that very few secondary school learners appeared to be interested in the past.<sup>101</sup> The 2012 research I conducted, although only four or five years later indicated to me that the perceptions that secondary school learners hold toward History education – and by extension – to life in general, is changing. A scrutiny of the findings of my 2012 research outlined below will indicate that learners are in fact becoming more positive about History education and see its value in terms of career opportunities and personal enrichment. No one can deny the pervasive and enduring nature of a self-centered pragmatic material approach to life but my 2012 research indicates that young people in our society are slowly becoming less influenced by this philosophy and are becoming more open to appreciating non-material values in life.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173, 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 13, 16, 22, 36, 55–56, 75, 82.

<sup>98</sup> The concept of pragmatic materialism has been described by R. Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol. I and II' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981); P. Kallaway, 'History Education as a Popular Version of the TRC', *Notes for the Values in Education History Panel* (2000), 1, as quoted by R. Sieborger 'History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience', *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, 1,1 (2000), pages unnumbered; and G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools' (D.Ed thesis, University of South Africa, 2003).

<sup>99</sup> Black, p. 190.

<sup>100</sup> Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness', p. 25.

<sup>101</sup> Black, p. 190.

## 7.5 Learner perceptions of History education: 2012 research

During the course of 2012, I conducted three surveys among secondary school learners from Mpumalanga in an effort to determine the perceptions which they held toward the History education offered at their schools as well as toward the subject of History in general.<sup>102</sup> The first group of surveyed learners were Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners, whom the Education Department expects will take History as an equal component with Geography. The second group consisted of learners in Grade 10 to 12 who had chosen to take History as an elective Further Education and Training (FET) subject. The third group consisted of learners who had elected not to, or who were in fact never offered the choice of taking History as a FET subject. I was keen to find out whether there were any differences in the surveyed learners' perceptions of History education between these learners and Dryden's 1999 group, the white secondary school educators who had experienced high school education after 1994 and the black secondary school learners I surveyed in 2008. Findings pertinent to these three groups of 2012 learners will be analysed separately. A small degree of repetition will allow a great deal of information to be presented understandably. Comparisons between the three 2012 surveyed groups as well as between these learners and the earlier mentioned secondary school learners will be offered at the end of the analysis.

I must mention the high degree of willingness of learners to complete the survey. No intentionally spoilt questionnaires were returned. The answers given were honest. I was impressed by the intellectual and expressive capabilities of many of the respondents. History, and other educators at the surveyed schools were very helpful in helping to gather information. The Principals of both Steelcrest High School and Hoërskool Middelburg were particularly helpful and interested in the research.

<sup>102</sup> Details of the numbers of respondents to these surveys may be found in the Bibliography.

### 7.5.1 Grade eight and nine Social Sciences learners

**TABLE 7.1**

GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS			
SCHOOL	Gd 8	Gd 9	TOTAL
Steelcrest High School	149	134	283
Hoërskool Middelburg	118	86	204
Middelburg Muslim School	9	9	18
TOTAL	276	229	505

A total of 505 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners completed questionnaires. Table 7.1 above illustrates the statistical breakdown of learners from Steelcrest High School, Hoërskool Middelburg and the Middelburg Muslim School.

The questionnaire completed by these learners posed the following questions.<sup>103</sup> A number of short 'yes or no' questions (1, 2, 5 and 14) were included to ascertain learners' attitudes toward history in general. Questions 3, 4 and 6 explored the reasons why learners wished to study History after Grade 9, or not. Questions 7, 8 and 9 about learners favourite topics and historical personalities were included to enable me to compare the responses and perceptions of present day (2012) learners with those of past junior high school learners, especially as tabulated in the 1991 HSRC research into learners' perceptions of History<sup>104</sup> or as described in Dryden's 1999 dissertation<sup>105</sup> or my own 2008 research.<sup>106</sup> The purpose of these questions was to determine to what extent learners' perceptions toward South African history and indeed toward South Africa itself had changed. Questions 10 and 11 are questions which were formulated by Mazabow (2003), as he set about determining the level of historical consciousness displayed by high school learners.<sup>107</sup> Questions 12 and 13 sought to probe the perceptions of junior high school learners toward their textbooks, or at times, the lack of them.

<sup>103</sup> See Appendices 2–4 for examples of the questionnaires used.

<sup>104</sup> A. van der Merwe, A. Vermaak and S. Lombard, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History in the RSA: HSRC Education Research programme No. 19* (Pretoria, 1991).

<sup>105</sup> Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition'.

<sup>106</sup> Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education'.

<sup>107</sup> Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness'.

TABLE 7.2

GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS RESPONDENTS' HOME LANGUAGE							
LANGUAGE	STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL		HOËRSKOOL MIDDELBURG		MIDDELBURG MUSLIM SCHOOL		TOTAL
	GD 8	GD 9	GD 8	GD 9	GD 8	GD 9	
ENGLISH	16	20	32	12	9	7	96
ZULU	76	56	10	15	0	1	158
PEDI	19	11	5	0	0	0	35
SWATI	8	13	1	4	0	0	26
SOTHO	3	11	4	1	0	1	20
AFRIKAANS	6	6	64	51	0	0	127
NDEBELE	12	11	0	0	0	0	23
OTHER	9	6	2	3	0	0	20
TOTAL	149	134	118	86	9	9	505

Table 7.2 above depicts the home languages spoken by the Social Sciences respondents. A representative spread between home languages and hence cultures was obtained. Most of the respondents who spoke a traditional African language spoke Zulu, which is the *lingua franca* of Mpumalanga. Many of the learners who spoke English as a home language, particularly those from the Middelburg Muslim School were of Indian extraction. Hoërskool Middelburg provided a large contingent of Afrikaans-speaking learners. A wide and representative spread of cultures was obtained. When analysing the learners' responses to questions I noted the cultural group of each respondent to ascertain whether there was any difference between the respondents of different cultural groups in their perceptions of History education. Few significant differences were apparent, which in itself illustrates that in South Africa, nearly twenty years into its democratic dispensation, young people from various cultural groups are perceiving life in an increasingly similar way. Hoërskool Middelburg had large contingents of learners who spoke English, Afrikaans and indigenous African languages and therefore lent itself to informative comparisons between the perceptions of different cultural groups. Where relevant, the analysis of questions which follow will note and comment on cultural differences which were apparent in learners' responses.

TABLE 7.3

GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS				
DO YOU STUDY HISTORY AS PART OF YOUR SS COURSE?				
		Gd 8	Gd 9	Combined Gd 8 and 9
Steelcrest High School	YES	149 (100%)	134 (100%)	283 (100%)
	NO	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
H/S Middelburg	YES	105 (89.0%)	76 (88.4%)	181 (88.7%)
	NO	13 (11.0%)	10 (11.6%)	23 (11.3%)
Afrikaans-speaking H/S Middelburg learners	YES	58 (90.6%)	44 (86.3%)	102 (88.7%)
	NO	6 (9.4%)	7 (13.7%)	13 (11.3%)
English-speaking H/S Middelburg learners	YES	30 (93.8%)	12 (100.0%)	42 (95.5%)
	NO	2 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.5%)
African language speaking H/S Middelburg learners	YES	19 (86.4%)	22 (95.7%)	41 (91.1%)
	NO	3 (13.6%)	1 (4.3%)	4 (8.9%)
Middleburg Muslim School	YES	9 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	18 (100.0%)
	NO	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 7.3 above reflects the results of a seemingly simple question: do you study History as part of your Social Sciences course? Since the Education Department requires that History and Geography be studied as equal components of the Social Sciences in Grades seven to nine, a 100 per cent 'yes' response would be expected to this question. Learners from Steelcrest High School and the Middleburg Muslim School recorded a 100 per cent 'yes' response. Learners from Hoërskool Middelburg appeared divided in their response to the question, with 11.3 per cent of learners responding 'no', History had not been studied as a component of the Social Sciences course. The fact is that History is included in the Social Sciences curriculum at Hoërskool Middelburg but to such a limited extent that the History component of their Social Sciences course eluded some learners altogether. Afrikaans-speaking learners at the school reflected a slightly higher level of unawareness of having studied History (11.3 per cent) than did other language groups. This could be because History is less emphasised in the Social Sciences classes which are populated by Afrikaans-speaking learners than those populated by English or indigenous African language speaking

learners. Interviews with the two educators responsible for teaching Social Science at Hoërskool Middelburg confirmed that Geography is emphasised during Social Science lessons as the subject is offered by the school as a FET subject, while History is not.<sup>108</sup> It must be noted that both educators felt negatively about History study. Grade eights at Hoërskool Middelburg begin their year in Social Sciences with an intensive study of the French Revolution, though few other history topics appear to be taught subsequently. It should be noted that Chapter eight which provides a survey of many secondary schools in Mpumalanga highlights the fact that History is not taught at all as part of the Social Sciences in many of the province's schools.<sup>109</sup> Hoërskool Middelburg does make an effort to introduce Social Sciences learners to History but not as an equal partner to Geography.

History is taught at Steelcrest High School and Middelburg Muslim School as an equal partner to Geography in the General Education and Training (GET) phase. Steelcrest offers both subjects from Grade 10, while Middelburg Muslim School offers neither from Grade 10.

**TABLE 7.4**

<b>GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS</b>				
<b>WOULD YOU LIKE TO STUDY HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT?</b>				
		<b>Gd 8</b>	<b>Gd 9</b>	<b>Combined Gd 8 and 9</b>
<b>Steelcrest High School</b>	<b>YES</b>	57 (38.3%)	39 (29.1%)	96 (33.9%)
	<b>NO</b>	92 (61.7%)	95 (70.9%)	187 (66.1%)
<b>H/S Middelburg</b>	<b>YES</b>	32 (27.1%)	19 (22.1%)	51 (25.0%)
	<b>NO</b>	86 (72.9%)	67 (77.9%)	153 (75.0%)
<b>Afrikaans-speaking H/S Middelburg learners</b>	<b>YES</b>	16 (25.0%)	10 (19.6%)	26 (22.6%)
	<b>NO</b>	48 (75.0%)	41 (80.4%)	89 (77.4%)
<b>English-speaking H/S Middelburg learners</b>	<b>YES</b>	7 (21.9%)	2 (16.7%)	9 (20.5%)
	<b>NO</b>	25	10	35 (79.5%)

<sup>108</sup> Interview, Mr P. Bothma, Middelburg, 19 November 2010 and conversation, Mr J. Van Niekerk, Middelburg, 25 October 2011.

<sup>109</sup> See Chapter eight.

		(78.1%)	(83.3%)	
<b>African language speaking H/S Middelburg learners</b>	<b>YES</b>	9 (40.9%)	7 (30.4%)	16 (35.6%)
	<b>NO</b>	13 (59.1%)	16 (69.6%)	29 (64.4%)
<b>Middelburg Muslim School</b>	<b>YES</b>	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	5 (27.8%)
	<b>NO</b>	6 (66.7%)	7 (77.8%)	13 (72.2%)

Table 7.4 above asked learners whether they would like to study History as a FET subject. The results obtained were both encouraging and surprising. A third of the surveyed Steelcrest High School Social Sciences learners (33.9 per cent); 25.0 per cent of Hoërskool Middelburg learners and 27.8 per cent of Middelburg Muslim School learners indicated that they would like to take History as a subject after Grade 10. Note that neither Hoërskool Middelburg nor the Middelburg Muslim School offer History as a FET subject. At Hoërskool Middelburg, indigenous African language speaking learners (35.6 per cent) are keenest to take History as a post Grade 9 subject while English-speaking learners (20.5 per cent) appear to be the least keen.<sup>110</sup> This surprised me as well as the principal of the school who had expected Afrikaans-speaking learners to be least keen on taking History as an elective subject.<sup>111</sup>

It is interesting to note that the desire to take History after Grade 9 declines as learners progress from Grade 8 to 9. This was evident among all cultural groups and in all three surveyed schools. Steelcrest High School showed a reduction of interest in taking History between Grade 8 and 9 of 9.2 per cent; Hoërskool Middelburg 5.0 per cent and Middelburg Muslim School of 11.1 per cent. This can be explained by the fact that during the course of Grade 9, learners have to select their FET subjects which many will continue with at tertiary level. Analysis of further questions in the Social Sciences learner survey as well as the History-taking and non-History-taking FET learners will indicate that the suitability of a subject for future career purposes is a prime consideration when learners make Grade 9 subject choices. Nevertheless it is clear that among Grade 8 and 9 learners, even those who attend schools which do not offer History after Grade 9, there is substantial goodwill toward

<sup>110</sup> It must be noted that these, and other deductions made in this chapter were made on a single sampling.

<sup>111</sup> Conversation, Mr J. Stronkhorst, Middelburg, 25 July 2012.

as well as interest in the subject, certainly enough to subsidise History classes in both Hoërskool Middelburg and the Middelburg Muslim School.

TABLE 7.5

GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS				
DO YOU WATCH TELEVISION SHOWS OR DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT HISTORY?				
		Gd 8	Gd 9	Combined Gd 8 and 9
Steelcrest High School	YES	103 (69.1%)	77 (57.5%)	180 (63.6%)
	NO	46 (30.9%)	57 (42.5%)	103 (36.4%)
H/S Middelburg	YES	66 (55.9%)	54 (62.8%)	120 (58.8%)
	NO	52 (44.1%)	32 (37.2%)	84 (41.2%)
Afrikaans-speaking H/S Middelburg learners	YES	41 (64.1%)	32 (62.7%)	73 (63.5%)
	NO	23 (35.9%)	19 (37.3%)	42 (36.5%)
English-speaking H/S Middelburg learners	YES	16 (50.0%)	9 (75.0%)	25 (56.8%)
	NO	16 (50.0%)	3 (25.0%)	19 (43.2%)
African language speaking H/S Middelburg learners	YES	9 (40.9%)	14 (60.9%)	23 (51.1%)
	NO	13 (59.1%)	9 (39.1%)	22 (48.9%)
Middelburg Muslim School	YES	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	7 (38.9%)
	NO	7 (77.8%)	4 (44.4%)	11 (61.1%)

Table 7.5 above represents the level of learner interest in watching television shows or documentaries about history. The results obtained indicate that learners do have a significant interest in popular history. Steelcrest High School learners (63.6 per cent) show the most interest in watching history on television, followed by Hoërskool Middelburg learners (58.8 per cent) and Middelburg Muslim School learners (38.9 per cent). This certainly contradicts the idea that contemporary young people have little interest in history. While there does not appear to be a significant difference between the levels of interest in television history displayed by Grade 8 or 9 learners, at Hoërskool Middelburg and Middelburg Muslim School Grade 9s appeared more interested (by 6.9 per cent and 33.4 per cent respectively) than were their Grade 8 counterparts. Grade 8 learners at Steelcrest High



School exhibited the most interest in watching television history, with 69.1 per cent reporting that they watched such programmes.

**TABLE 7.6**

<b>GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS</b>				
<b>IS HISTORY A VALUABLE SUBJECT?</b>				
		<b>Gd 8</b>	<b>Gd 9</b>	<b>Combined Gd 8 and 9</b>
<b>Steelcrest High School</b>	<b>YES</b>	107 (71.8%)	86 (64.2%)	193 (68.2%)
	<b>NO</b>	42 (28.2%)	48 (35.8%)	90 (31.8%)
<b>H/S Middelburg</b>	<b>YES</b>	81 (68.6%)	48 (55.8%)	129 (63.2%)
	<b>NO</b>	37 (31.4%)	38 (44.2%)	75 (36.8%)
<b>Afrikaans-speaking H/S Middelburg learners</b>	<b>YES</b>	48 (75.0%)	26 (51.0%)	74 (64.3%)
	<b>NO</b>	16 (25.0%)	25 (49.0%)	41 (35.7%)
<b>English-speaking H/S Middelburg learners</b>	<b>YES</b>	17 (53.1%)	8 (66.7%)	25 (56.8%)
	<b>NO</b>	15 (46.9%)	4 (33.3%)	19 (43.2%)
<b>African language H/S Middelburg learners</b>	<b>YES</b>	15 (68.2%)	16 (69.6%)	31 (68.9%)
	<b>NO</b>	7 (31.8%)	7 (30.4%)	14 (31.1%)
<b>Middelburg Muslim School</b>	<b>YES</b>	6 (66.7%)	6 (66.7%)	12 (66.7%)
	<b>NO</b>	3 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	6 (33.3%)

Table 7.6 above represents responses to the question of whether or not Social Sciences learners regarded History as a valuable subject. The results were similar for all three surveyed schools. Grade 8 and 9 learners at Steelcrest High School felt most positive toward History, with 68.2 per cent feeling that it was a valuable subject. Results for the Middelburg Muslim School (66.7 per cent) and Hoërskool Middelburg (63.2 per cent) were similar. Indigenous African language speakers at Hoërskool Middelburg (68.9 per cent) felt most strongly that History was a valuable subject, while their Afrikaans (64.3 per cent) and English-speaking counterparts (56.8 per cent) felt slightly less positive toward the subject. Both Steelcrest High School and Hoërskool Middelburg demonstrate that Grade 8 learners find History to be more valuable than do their Grade 9 counterparts. At Steelcrest, the perception of History being valuable drops by 7.6 per cent between the grades while at

Hoërskool Middelburg the drop between grades is 12.8 per cent. Grade 8 Afrikaans-speaking learners at Hoërskool Middelburg show the greatest appreciation for History, with 75.0 per cent of respondents stating that they perceived it to be a valuable subject. Again, the overwhelming perception among surveyed Social Sciences learners is one of appreciation of and goodwill toward History education.

Question three asked learners to write down the reasons why they would like to study History as a FET (Grade 10–12) subject. They were asked to leave the question unanswered and to move on to the next question if they felt that they would not like to take History after Grade 9. Some 347 learners (68.7 per cent) opted to leave the question unanswered,<sup>112</sup> leaving 158 learners (31.3 per cent) stating that they would like to take History as a FET subject after Grade 9. Considering the variety of FET subjects offered at all three surveyed secondary schools, this is a surprisingly positive figure. In contrast to my 2008 research which probed the perceptions of black secondary school learners in Mpumalanga toward History education, few surveyed Social Sciences learners (16 learners or 3.2 per cent) expressed the need to study History beyond Grade 9 as a requirement for the study of law when proceeding to tertiary education.<sup>113</sup> This shift may indicate that learners are developing a more discerning attitude toward History education.

It was clear that there were GET learners from all three surveyed schools who enjoyed studying History:

I would like to take History because it is a very interesting and broad subject. My thirst for knowledge is satisfied by watching videos on historical events and reading books on the subject.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–4, 7, 9–10, 13–14, 17, 20, 22–23, 24–25, 30–35, 38–46, 48–57, 60–61, 63, 69, 72, 74, 76, 79–81, 83–84, 89, 91–92, 94–98, 100, 103–104, 106–107, 113–114, 116–118, 121–122, 124–125, 127–141, 144, 146, 148–154, 158–159, 161–166, 168–174, 177, 178, 181, 184–187, 190–191, 195–199, 201–207, 210–211, 213, 215–216, 222, 224–225, 230–232, 236, 238–239, 241–242, 244–256, 258–268, 270–271, 276–283, 285–293, 295, 297–298, 301–304, 306–311, 313, 315–328, 331–337, 339–342, 344–346, 348, 350–351, 353, 355–357, 359, 361–366, 368–369, 371–372, 374–377, 379–381, 385–388, 390–391, 395–397, 399, 402–408, 410–418, 421–428, 430–434, 436–440, 442, 444–445, 447–448, 450–453, 455, 458–461, 463–466, 468–471, 473–475, 478, 480, 482–490, 493–494, 496–497, 499–500, 502–505.

<sup>113</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 6, 67, 68, 82, 88, 101, 147, 157, 208, 217, 223, 226, 237, 329, 338, 443.

<sup>114</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 123. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 8; Steelcrest High School]

I would like to take History as a FET subject up to Grade 12 because I think History is fascinating. Some think it's boring but with good teachers it's not. You learn more about the "good old days". You learn how the world began and it's always good to know how the past can be compared to the modern world we live in today.<sup>115</sup>

To this day I am fascinated by History. Learning about things which occurred in the past opens my mind and way of thinking. For me, being informed about my past and the past of the world shows me what to expect in the future and what to avoid. I honestly love History.<sup>116</sup>

You can learn many interesting facts about the past and how people in those days lived in the world before or after Christ. You can also feel people's excitement and pain as you learn more about their culture and faith.<sup>117</sup>

When answering question four which required respondents to write down the reasons why they would *not* like to take history as a FET subject, 350 (69.3 per cent) learners provided various reasons why history was not appealing to them.<sup>118</sup> Four respondents answered this and the previous question wrongly by penning responses to both questions instead of choosing one. The major reason for History not being an attractive elective subject choice was that it was not perceived as career-friendly (142, or 28.1 per cent of surveyed learners).<sup>119</sup> With the task of making FET subject choices looming, it is no surprise that

<sup>115</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 182. [English; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>116</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 243. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>117</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 358. [Afrikaans; Grade 8; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>118</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–4, 7, 9–10, 13–14, 17, 20, 22–25, 30–35, 38–46, 48–57, 60–61, 63, 69, 72, 74, 76, 79–81, 83–84, 89, 91–92, 94–98, 100, 103–104, 106–107, 113–114, 116–118, 121–122, 124–125, 127–141, 144–146, 148–154, 158–159, 161–166, 168, 170, 172–174, 177–178, 181, 183–187, 190–191, 195–199, 201–207, 210–211, 213, 215–216, 222, 224–225, 230–232, 235–236, 238–239, 241–242, 244–256, 258–268, 270–271, 273–274, 276–283, 285–293, 295, 298, 301–304, 306–311, 313, 315–328, 331–337, 339–342, 344–346, 248, 350–351, 353, 355–357, 359, 361–362, 364–365, 368–369, 371–372, 374–377, 379–381, 385–388, 390–391, 394–397, 399, 402–408, 410–418, 421–428, 430–434, 436–440, 442, 444–445, 447–448, 450–453, 455, 458–461, 463–466, 468–471, 473–475, 478, 480, 483–490, 493–494, 496–497, 499–500, 502–505.

<sup>119</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–4, 9–10, 13–14, 20, 25, 30–31, 34, 39, 44–46, 49, 51–52, 60, 89, 92, 94, 97, 100, 104, 122, 129–130, 132–135, 138–139, 144, 146, 149, 158–159, 164–165, 174, 177, 181, 185–186, 191, 195, 199, 201–202, 207, 211, 215, 222, 224–225, 231, 245–236, 239, 241, 244–245, 247–252, 255–256, 258–262, 266, 273–274, 280, 283, 286, 291, 298, 309, 316, 323, 332, 337, 340, 345, 377, 379, 385, 387, 391, 396, 402, 406, 412–413, 421–422, 425–428, 431–433, 436–440, 445, 448, 450–453, 455, 458–459, 464–466, 471, 473–474, 478, 480, 484–485, 489, 493–

Grade 9 learners perceive History as more career unfriendly than do their Grade 8 counterparts. At Steelcrest, 39 (26.2 per cent) of Grade 8 learners perceived history to be career unfriendly, while 45 (33.6 per cent) Grade 9 learners felt the same way. At Hoërskool Middelburg the figures were 16 (13.6 per cent) and 37 (43.0 per cent) respectively.

In answering question six, which asked respondents to outline why they thought many learners chose not to take history after Grade 9, 39 learners (7.7 per cent)<sup>120</sup> felt that young people are more oriented toward the future rather than the past:

Because many learners want to learn new things and not old things.<sup>121</sup>

They don't choose history after Grade 9 because history focuses on the past. They can also study for the future.<sup>122</sup>

They do not think it is an interesting subject. They don't like learning about the past. They prefer to talk about the present and the future.<sup>123</sup>

They prefer learning about new things like technology, the latest phones, cars and new technical stuff.<sup>124</sup>

History was perceived by 50 (9.9 per cent) learners to be too difficult or to involve too much work.<sup>125</sup> More Grade 8 Social Sciences learners at Hoërskool Middelburg (19 or 16.1 per cent)<sup>126</sup> than Steelcrest High School Grade 8 Social Sciences learners (13 or 8.7 per cent)<sup>127</sup>

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494, 499, 502.

<sup>120</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 17, 23, 47, 63, 82, 94, 100, 102, 138, 149, 177, 193, 216, 218, 220, 228, 242, 275, 290, 302, 311, 325–326, 360, 377, 407, 420, 434, 436, 442, 444, 447, 455, 466, 472, 477–478, 483–484.

<sup>121</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 17. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 8; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>122</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 63. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 8; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>123</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 100. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 8; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>124</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 275. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>125</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 7, 22, 55–57, 83, 95–96, 107, 113–114, 134, 190, 198, 216, 232, 242, 278, 285, 289, 292, 301, 304, 306, 308, 319, 324, 327–328, 331, 333, 341, 369, 372, 375, 386, 397, 403, 468, 475, 484, 488–489, 494, 496–497, 499–500, 504.

<sup>126</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 285, 289, 292, 301, 304, 306, 308, 319, 324, 327–328, 331, 333, 341, 369, 372, 375, 386, 397.

<sup>127</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 7, 22, 55–57, 83, 95–96, 107,

felt that History involved too much work or experienced the subject as difficult. This may indicate that although History is not taught there as much as it is at Steelcrest High School, it is taught more intensively. Relatively more Middelburg Muslim School Grade 8 and 9 learners (8 or 44.4 per cent)<sup>128</sup> perceived History as more difficult than did Social Sciences learners at both Steelcrest High School and Hoërskool Middelburg which may indicate that the subject is taught to them in considerable depth.

Responses to question four indicate that History was perceived as being boring by 71 (14.1 per cent) learners.<sup>129</sup> History was seen by some as a subject which could easily send one to sleep:

I fail History a lot and I don't like it. It makes me sleep and I like watching, not reading.<sup>130</sup>

Because I don't like to be told history. History makes me go to sleep when I am in the history class. I feel like bunking or being absent. History is a boring subject.<sup>131</sup>

The perception of History as a boring subject may be seen as a direct indictment upon the teaching of the subject. Learners at both Steelcrest High School and Hoërskool Middelburg connected finding History boring with the performance of their teachers:

I'm not that interested in History. I find it very boring because I'm not interested in the past. A lot of times it just brings pain. Then we end up fighting for no reason. I don't like the way it's explained. Maybe if I got a better teacher.<sup>132</sup>

I would not like to take History because my current History teacher makes me hate History. He is not up to date with everything, can't

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113–114, 134.

<sup>128</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 488–489, 494, 496–497, 499–500, 504.

<sup>129</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 7, 10, 31, 33, 38, 42, 49, 53–54, 76, 91, 116–117, 121, 131, 137, 148, 150–151, 153–154, 162–163, 166, 178, 181, 183, 195, 197, 206, 238, 246, 248, 253, 255, 262, 264, 266, 271, 276–277, 279, 301, 307, 321, 324, 326–328, 333–334, 336, 346, 359, 374, 385–387, 399, 423, 431–432, 438, 460, 463, 465, 470–471, 483, 499, 504.

<sup>130</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 7. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 8; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>131</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 150. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>132</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 148. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 8; Steelcrest High School]

explain properly and talks so slow and boring [sic] that you forget what he has already said. History is the past, let's forget the past.<sup>133</sup>

I don't understand why we have to learn about countries that don't even learn about us. The subject is fun but some of our History teachers are boring and slow. We prefer teachers who are energetic and then we will enjoy and decide to take History.<sup>134</sup>

In responding to question six, boredom was regarded as a major negative factor, with 210 (41.6 per cent) of learners mentioning that History was boring in their responses to the question.<sup>135</sup> Such a high percentage of learners who experience History as boring may point to unsatisfactory teaching due either to sheer laziness on the part of educators to prepare lessons sufficiently or to educators using ineffective, outdated teaching methods or to the efforts of inexperienced educators. At Steelcrest High School, Social Science in general and the History portion in particular is often used to fill an educator's timetable. To such an educator, History teaching may be a part time endeavour. To the end of 2011 the school made use of the services of an educator who seldom taught learners anything about the subject and in fact failed to even mark final year Social Science examination scripts. His replacement in 2012 was an inexperienced first year educator with no formal background in History or Geography. This educator struggled to discipline and instruct her classes but at least made an effort to teach. Steelcrest High School is regarded as a good government secondary school and has been consistently ranked in the top 100 South African high schools. Social Sciences and History education simply does not feature highly in the school's educational priorities and this is reflected in the allocation of educators to teach these subjects.<sup>136</sup> At Hoërskool Middelburg the Social Sciences educators themselves profess to

<sup>133</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 151. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>134</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 238. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>135</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 3, 4, 5, 10–11, 25, 34, 37, 40, 43–45, 49, 51–53, 58, 60–62, 67, 70–71, 75, 78, 80, 82, 84–85, 88, 89–91, 94, 99, 106–107, 110, 116–117, 119, 123, 125–126, 131–133, 136–137, 139, 142, 144, 148, 151–155, 157, 160–161, 163–164, 166, 172–173, 179–183, 188, 192, 195–197, 200, 203, 207, 211, 214–218, 220–221, 226–227, 229–230, 233–234, 237–238, 240–241, 243, 245–246, 248–251, 253–254, 256–257, 259–262, 264–265, 267–268, 270–271, 273, 276–279, 281, 283, 291, 294, 299–302, 305, 307–309, 314–315, 318–320, 322, 327–329, 331–333, 335–338, 342–344, 346, 358–359, 372, 379, 385–387, 392–393, 396–397, 399–400, 403–405, 407, 411, 420–421, 423, 426, 432, 436, 439, 446, 448, 450, 456–457, 460–461, 463–464, 468, 471–475, 479, 483, 485, 488–489, 491–492, 494, 496, 498–500, 502.

<sup>136</sup> Personal observation. I have taught at Steelcrest High School for 16 years.

have little interest in History and do not see any value in the subject.<sup>137</sup> It is not therefore surprising that so many surveyed learners at both schools experience History as boring.

When answering question four, only 12 (2.4 per cent) surveyed learners reported that History brought back painful memories of the past.<sup>138</sup> This finding was also reflected in learners' responses to question six, when only 8 learners (1.6 per cent) regarded a desire to avoid learning about South Africa's apartheid past as a factor in preventing learners continuing their study of History after Grade 9.<sup>139</sup> This is in contrast to the evidence presented in Dryden's 1999 dissertation, in which the recalling of painful apartheid-era memories was a potent factor particularly among black secondary school learners in the Cape Town area,<sup>140</sup> as well as the findings of my own 2008 research into the perceptions of black secondary school learners in the Mpumalanga area toward the study of History at school.<sup>141</sup> Nearly two decades after the end of the apartheid era uncomfortable personal memories are fading. The present generation of secondary school learners have no personal experience of apartheid. Those learners who do not wish to learn about South Africa's apartheid past feel this way because they do not wish to learn about History in general, not particularly because they wish to avoid confronting memories of apartheid.

Interestingly, there were learners, (19 or 3,8 per cent) who while noting that they had no intention of taking History as a FET subject, made very positive comments about the subject.<sup>142</sup>

Yes, history is quite interesting, to know who I am, where I come from and what happened till now. I won't take it because my career doesn't need History as a subject.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Interview, Mr P. Bothma, Middelburg, 19 November 2010 and conversation with Mr J. van Niekerk, Middelburg, 25 October 2011.

<sup>138</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 69, 121, 148, 178, 184, 276, 287, 381, 405, 444, 447.

<sup>139</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 15, 148, 184, 201, 205, 207, 281, 287.

<sup>140</sup> Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation', pp. 52–53, 62.

<sup>141</sup> Black, 'Perceptions of History Education', pp. 167–186.

<sup>142</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 13, 103, 144, 172, 215, 222, 225, 238, 241, 267, 325, 372, 436, 438, 439, 442, 452, 487.

<sup>143</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 215. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

History is a nice subject but I don't think I'll do it because I am more interested in accounting and civil engineering than History although it is interesting and we get to figure out and research what happened in the past.<sup>144</sup>

An analysis of questions seven, eight and nine is most informative in revealing both the perceptions which surveyed Social Sciences learners hold toward History education as well as their outlook on the world and their place in it. Question seven asked learners to write down which topics they would most like to learn about in the History section of their Social Sciences course. Blank responses (no choices made) were returned by 84 learners (16.6 per cent).<sup>145</sup> The most popular topics proved to be the World Wars (90 learners, 17.8 per cent);<sup>146</sup> apartheid (87 learners, 17.2 per cent);<sup>147</sup> South African History (84 learners, 16.6 per cent)<sup>148</sup> and the French Revolution (77 learners, 15.2 per cent).<sup>149</sup> Other topics nominated by significant numbers of respondents include the holocaust (35 learners, 6.9 per cent);<sup>150</sup> Nazi Germany (24 learners, 4.8 per cent);<sup>151</sup> American history ( 20 learners, 4.0

<sup>144</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 241. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>145</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 30–33, 38, 40, 48–50, 53, 127, 151, 154, 171–172, 175, 178, 180, 195, 199, 202–203, 217, 229, 235, 266, 273, 275–276, 278, 280, 282, 286, 295, 298, 324, 326, 328, 330, 332, 341–342, 347–348, 364–366, 369, 376–377, 380, 395–396, 410, 412–413, 414, 421–423, 432, 434–435, 446–447, 454–455, 460–461, 464, 466, 470, 473, 478, 483, 485–486, 497, 499–500, 502–505.

<sup>146</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 8, 29, 44, 58, 62, 71, 106, 108, 115, 124, 129, 135, 140, 147, 150, 161, 173, 176, 179, 182, 186, 190, 205–206, 209, 213, 218–220, 224–225, 227, 231, 234, 236, 240, 246, 253, 257, 261, 270, 274, 277, 283–284, 300–301, 310, 312, 327, 331, 337, 339, 344, 346, 353–355, 357, 368, 374, 384–386, 392, 400, 405, 409, 416, 419, 424, 433, 437, 440–441, 443, 449, 451–452, 458, 462, 468, 472, 480–481, 487, 492–493.

<sup>147</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 34, 36, 39, 41–43, 45–46, 52, 60–62, 64–65, 67, 69–70, 73–74, 76–77, 79, 81–85, 87–88, 97, 102, 106, 110, 119, 125, 147, 149, 155, 159, 163–164, 170, 179, 182 – 184, 188–189, 191, 194, 197, 200–201, 206, 211–212, 220, 222, 225, 227, 231, 240–241, 249, 254, 256, 258–260, 262, 269, 287, 294, 312, 317–318, 387, 426, 429, 431, 433, 439, 450–451, 456, 472, 495.

<sup>148</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 5–6, 9–10, 13–14, 22, 26, 29, 34, 52, 54–57, 59, 63–64, 68, 70, 73, 79, 89–90, 96, 100, 125, 142–144, 155, 159, 165, 170, 173, 176, 182, 189, 198, 220, 230, 238, 240–241, 243, 246–247, 250, 253, 258–259, 260, 281, 291, 294, 300, 303–306, 309, 311, 313, 322, 336, 338, 357, 367, 384, 390, 411, 416, 420, 426, 429, 431, 439, 449, 456–457, 468, 477, 489.

<sup>149</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 5, 11, 14, 26, 28, 36–37, 41, 46–47, 59, 61, 64, 67, 73, 76–78, 85, 88–91, 94, 98–99, 107, 112–114, 117–119, 121–122, 126, 129, 132–135, 137, 140, 142–143, 145–146, 149, 173, 177, 209, 222, 261, 299–300, 315, 318, 320, 323, 325, 338, 349, 361, 363, 371, 375, 381, 387, 394, 398, 420, 458, 487, 491–493.

<sup>150</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 35–36, 47, 58–61, 64, 67, 69–70, 72, 74–76, 78, 80, 86, 96, 102–104, 109, 113, 116, 119–120, 123, 166, 193, 216, 219, 226–227, 243.

<sup>151</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 104, 125–126, 157, 166, 167, 173–174, 177, 182, 196, 200, 212–213, 219–220, 222, 226, 230, 243–244, 257, 309, 345, 350, 409, 433, 463.



per cent);<sup>152</sup> evolution (18 learners, 3.6 per cent);<sup>153</sup> ancient Egyptian history (15 learners, 3.0 per cent);<sup>154</sup> the history of science/inventions (13 learners, 2.6 per cent);<sup>155</sup> Classical history (13 learners, 2.6 per cent);<sup>156</sup> pre-history (13 learners, 2.6 per cent);<sup>157</sup> the history of cars ( 11 learners, 2.2 per cent);<sup>158</sup> Biblical or Islamic history (10 learners, 2.0 per cent)<sup>159</sup> and ancient history (7 learners, 1.4 per cent).<sup>160</sup>

It is clear that the most popular topics chosen by learners relate to topics included in the Social Sciences History syllabus, such as the French Revolution (Grade 8) and Nazi Germany (Grade 9). A surprisingly wide variety of topics were chosen, indicating that learners had a broad spectrum of historical interests. All topics chosen were well represented in all schools, except the holocaust and Nazi Germany, which were almost exclusively nominated by Steelcrest High School learners, indicating that these topics were not studied by Grade 9 learners at Hoërskool Middelburg or the Middelburg Muslim School because History is not taught there as an equal partner with the Geography component of the Social Sciences curriculum. Few differences in choice of topics on account of cultural differences or school allegiance were apparent.

Question eight asked learners to write down the names of impressive people about whom they had learnt in the History section of their Social Sciences course. Blank responses were returned by 91 learners (18.0 per cent).<sup>161</sup> Hoërskool Middelburg returned by far the most

<sup>152</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 4, 8, 42, 44, 51, 62, 106, 134, 142, 157, 161, 220, 226, 241, 254, 329, 419, 440, 491.

<sup>153</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 62, 66, 119 – 120, 124, 163, 194, 204, 228, 251, 259, 263, 362, 402, 441 – 442, 459, 482.

<sup>154</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 192, 248, 251, 256, 292, 296–297, 331, 343, 358, 438, 456, 469, 475–476.

<sup>155</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 153, 181, 271, 281, 333, 335, 372, 426, 430, 450, 471, 488–489.

<sup>156</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 62, 121, 123, 139, 142, 158, 192, 212, 241, 329, 344, 354, 371.

<sup>157</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 93, 95, 141, 152, 182, 198, 206, 293, 307, 321 – 322, 334, 482, 484.

<sup>158</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 18, 22, 242, 263–264, 268, 271, 281, 349, 448, 496.

<sup>159</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 72, 289 –290, 296, 299, 307, 451, 490, 492, 494.

<sup>160</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 95, 168, 198, 221, 252, 399, 493.

<sup>161</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 51, 72, 124, 134, 136, 137, 140–141, 161, 163, 169, 173, 190, 199, 229, 241, 282, 321, 329, 332, 343, 346–347, 351–353, 357, 359, 361, 363–367, 370, 372, 379–380, 383, 387, 391, 393, 395, 397, 399, 402–403, 410–418, 422, 424–425, 428–

blank responses, 28 Grade 8 learners (23.7 per cent of Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 8 respondents)<sup>162</sup> and 44 Grade 9 learners (51.2 per cent of Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 9 respondents).<sup>163</sup> This may indicate that many Grade 8 learners had not been greatly impressed by any historical personalities, which may point toward uninspiring History teaching. The high percentage of blank Grade 9 returns from Hoërskool Middelburg is no surprise since little or no History teaching is offered as part of the Social Sciences curriculum in Grade 9. Most Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 9 learners recalled historical personalities they had learned of in their Grade 8 study of the French Revolution. Two respondents from the Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 9 group added the comments that they ‘Could not remember’<sup>164</sup> and ‘Have not actually learned about history a lot’,<sup>165</sup> to their blank historical personality returns. The fact that History is also hardly taught in Grade 9 at Middelburg Muslim School was revealed by the comments made by two Grade 9 respondents, one of whom noted that he/she ‘Can’t remember’<sup>166</sup> and a second respondent who related that ‘We didn’t do so much History so I don’t know.’<sup>167</sup>

People who had impressed learners the most were Nelson Mandela (156 learners, 30.9 per cent);<sup>168</sup> Adolf Hitler (111 learners, 22.0 per cent);<sup>169</sup> Louis XVI (104 learners, 20.6 per

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430, 434–435, 438–439, 442, 445–448, 454–457, 460, 463–464, 466, 469–471, 475, 478–480, 483–484, 486–487, 497, 505.

<sup>162</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, see Responses in footnote 169 above, from 321 to 399.

<sup>163</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, see Responses in footnote 169 above, from 402 to 487.

<sup>164</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, Response 460. [Afrikaans; Grade 9; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>165</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, Response 484. [Afrikaans; Grade 9; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>166</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, Response 497. [Indian English speaker; Grade 9; Middelburg Muslim School]

<sup>167</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, Response 505. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Middelburg Muslim School]

<sup>168</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, Responses 1–2, 4–6, 9, 14–15, 25, 32–38, 40–42, 44, 47–49, 52–53, 55, 57, 59–65, 73–77, 79, 82–84, 91–92, 101, 106, 108, 112, 116, 118–119, 125, 130, 138–139, 143, 149–150, 153, 155, 159, 165, 174–175, 179–182, 188–189, 193–195, 198, 200–205, 207, 210–211, 213, 215, 217, 221–223, 228, 230–232, 235–238, 243, 246–247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 266–269, 271, 276, 278–281, 287, 320, 322–323, 325, 327, 330–331, 334, 338, 344, 348, 368, 374, 384, 390, 396, 298, 406, 420, 426–427, 432–433, 436–437, 440, 443–444, 449–451, 453, 455, 467, 473–474, 482, 495, 501, 504.

<sup>169</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners’ questionnaire, Responses 123, 142, 150–151, 153–155, 159–160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 170–171, 176–178, 180–186, 188–189, 193–198, 200–208, 210, 212–215, 217–220, 224–226, 228, 230, 234–240, 242, 244–257, 260, 262–265, 267–271, 273–281, 283, 327, 344, 348, 355, 371, 409, 433, 441, 499–500, 502, 504.

cent);<sup>170</sup> Jan Van Riebeeck (102 learners, 20.2 per cent)<sup>171</sup> and Marie Antoinette (79 learners, 15.6 per cent).<sup>172</sup> Other historical figures noted by respondents as impressive include Vasco de Gama (45 learners, 8.9 per cent);<sup>173</sup> Rousseau (32 learners, 6.3 per cent);<sup>174</sup> Napoleon (31 learners, 6.1 per cent);<sup>175</sup> Anne Frank (16 learners, 3.2 per cent);<sup>176</sup> Columbus (12 learners, 2.4 per cent)<sup>177</sup> and Robespierre (11 learners, 2.2 per cent).<sup>178</sup>

It was clear that choosing people who had impressed learners the most was closely related to the syllabus which the learners were doing. Nevertheless the choices which were made reveal interesting trends. Given that the Grade 8 History syllabus and more especially the teaching which the respondents had received in History at the time of the surveys centered on the French Revolution, as well as the fact that the Grade 9 syllabus, at the time the survey was conducted, focused upon the History of Hitler and Nazi Germany more than South African history, it is notable that Nelson Mandela and Jan Van Riebeeck were placed first and third on the learners' list of impressive historical personalities. Nelson Mandela did not feature in South African History syllabuses in 1991, yet even so, the Human Sciences Research Council's 1991 investigation into the teaching of History found that among Standard 7 (Grade 9) learners, overseas historical figures were more popular choices as

<sup>170</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 5, 8–10, 12, 15–17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31, 35, 37, 42–43, 45, 47–50, 54–56, 58, 88–89, 101, 106, 113–115, 120–122, 126, 132–133, 144, 154–155, 157, 168, 171, 176, 178, 187, 193–194, 217, 244–245, 250, 274, 289–295, 297, 299, 303–304, 307, 309, 311–314, 316–320, 324, 327, 328, 330, 333–334, 338–342, 344–345, 356, 375, 378, 388, 441, 447, 481, 490–493, 495.

<sup>171</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3–6, 8–11, 12–16, 20–23, 26–27, 29, 34–36, 39–40, 45–46, 50, 55, 57, 59, 62–65, 70, 75–76, 78–81, 83, 85, 88, 90–92, 94–105, 107–109, 113–121, 127–130, 166, 179, 180–181, 217, 238, 247, 272–274, 276–278, 297, 307, 309, 311, 348, 405–406, 419, 421, 423, 453, 462, 468.

<sup>172</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 10, 29, 88–89, 100, 119, 123, 126, 132–133, 157, 170–171, 178, 189, 191, 193, 237, 244–245, 250, 261, 274, 276, 290–297, 297, 299–300, 303–314, 316–319, 323–324, 326–328, 330–331, 333–334, 336, 338–341, 344–345, 356, 371, 375–376, 378, 388, 404, 472–473, 481, 491–493.

<sup>173</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 6–7, 11–12, 16, 20–21, 23, 28, 44, 46, 60–61, 64–65, 67, 69, 74, 76, 79, 82–83, 85, 87–88, 97–98, 101, 107, 113, 117, 119–120, 125, 127–129, 144, 216, 270, 297, 303, 309, 384, 390, 453.

<sup>174</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 290–292, 295, 297, 298–300, 302–309, 311–317, 323, 333, 335, 338, 349, 381, 394.

<sup>175</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 2–5, 7–10, 12, 14, 16–25, 27–29, 132–133, 200, 210, 213, 294, 488–489.

<sup>176</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 152, 155, 166–168, 220, 238, 246, 250–251, 253, 255, 258–259, 267, 276.

<sup>177</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 13, 61–62, 99, 105, 247, 325–326, 385, 449, 459.

<sup>178</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 8, 89, 123, 130–133, 294, 333, 335, 378.

impressive people for learners. Cavour, Hitler and Gandhi feature as the most popular choices for black, white, coloured and Indian learners respectively. South African historical personalities do not feature highly in the top five choices of any racial classification, Shaka doing the best by appearing in the top five of every racial group except in the choice of the black respondents.<sup>179</sup> Dryden found in her 1999 study of the perceptions which Cape Town secondary school learners held toward History education that the trend among learners was to avoid engaging with South African history and to be more interested in foreign, particularly European history. This was especially so among the learners of European descent whom she surveyed.<sup>180</sup> The choice of Nelson Mandela as the most impressive historical personality learnt about was made by over 30 per cent of respondents. The appeal of Mandela spreads across cultural barriers – 13 Afrikaans-speaking Hoërskool Middelburg learners (11.3 per cent of the Afrikaans-speaking Social Sciences learners surveyed at Hoërskool Middelburg)<sup>181</sup> and 7 English-speaking learners (15.9 per cent)<sup>182</sup> surveyed at the same school chose him as an impressive historical figure they had learned about. Jan van Riebeeck was chosen as an impressive historical figure by 73 African language speaking Steelcrest High School Grade 8 learners – 57.5 per cent of the total number of African language speaking Grade 8 Steelcrest respondents.<sup>183</sup> The surveyed learners from all three schools did not appear to be concerned with the ethnic or cultural identity of those they considered to be impressive historical figures. I did not notice significant cultural differences between the choices that the surveyed learners made. This is indeed a hopeful trend for those concerned with the establishment of a new, non-racial society in South Africa.

Another trend to emerge from the choices of impressive historical personalities that Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners made was the enduring influence of the History education learners received at primary school. I convened a focus group of 10 Steelcrest High School Grade 8 learners in an attempt to discover why so many Grade 8 learners had selected

<sup>179</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al*, *An Empirical Investigation into the Teaching of History*, pp. 188–194.

<sup>180</sup> Dryden, pp. 26–43, especially p. 34.

<sup>181</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 320, 322, 344, 348, 358, 374, 406, 420, 427, 467, 473 – 474, 482.

<sup>182</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 323, 325, 327, 390, 426, 440, 449.

<sup>183</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3–6, 8–10, 12–16, 20–23, 26–27, 29, 34–36, 39–40, 45–46, 50, 55, 57, 59, 62–65, 70, 75–76, 78–81, 83, 85, 88, 90–92, 94–105, 107–109, 113–121, 127–130.

historical figures such as Vasco de Gama, Jan van Riebeeck and Christopher Columbus as impressive figures. Members of the group represented five different Middelburg primary schools. The learners all responded by informing me that they greatly enjoyed History at primary school and had particularly enjoyed learning about voyages of discovery.<sup>184</sup>

Question nine asked learners to write down the names of impressive people about whom they would like to learn more in the History section of their Social Sciences course. Blank responses were returned by 81 learners (16.0 per cent).<sup>185</sup> Relatively fewer Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 8 and 9 respondents – 41 (20.1 per cent)<sup>186</sup> as opposed to 72 (35.3 per cent)<sup>187</sup> returned blank responses to this question as compared to the previous question, indicating that while a significant number of Social Sciences learners at this school had found historical figures they had learned about uninspiring, there was a stronger desire to learn more about historical people they themselves believed might be interesting. Two historical figures dominated the list of impressive people about whom learners would like to know more – Nelson Mandela (121 learners, 24.0 per cent)<sup>188</sup> and Adolf Hitler (67 learners, 13.3 per cent).<sup>189</sup> Other historical figures who learners expressed curiosity to learn more about included Jacob Zuma (38 learners, 7.5 per cent);<sup>190</sup> Albert Einstein (25 learners, 5.0

<sup>184</sup> Focus group, Grade 8 Steelcrest High School learners, 8 March, 2012.

<sup>185</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 30, 53–54, 72, 74–75, 78, 84, 96, 122, 144, 148, 150–151, 166, 169–170, 176, 185, 195–196, 199, 201–203, 221, 229, 231–234, 241–242, 253, 270, 279, 280, 283, 290, 350, 352, 356, 359–360, 363–364, 366, 370, 372, 377, 387, 390, 395, 397–398, 403, 409–410, 413, 421–422, 425, 434–435, 439, 442, 445, 447, 457, 463, 468–470, 474, 477–480, 486, 498, 505.

<sup>186</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, see Responses in footnote 193 above, from 290 to 486.

<sup>187</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, see Responses in Footnote 193 above, from 321 to 487.

<sup>188</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 5, 9–10, 12–13, 21, 23, 26–27, 36, 38–41, 44, 46–47, 59, 61, 63, 67, 76–77, 79–82, 88–91, 95, 97–98, 100–104, 107, 109, 114–116, 118–121, 125, 132–134, 145, 149, 152, 154–155, 162, 164, 168, 171, 182–184, 187, 191, 197–198, 206, 212, 214, 219, 224, 238, 240, 243, 248, 254, 256–259, 261–262, 265, 272–275, 282, 318, 322–323, 333, 336, 341, 376, 380, 388, 396, 402, 417, 429–431, 436, 443, 448, 450, 454, 461, 476, 481, 483, 488, 490, 493, 495–496, 499.

<sup>189</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 51, 123, 126–127, 129, 132–133, 135, 138, 140–141, 149, 161, 165, 177, 190, 211, 220, 223, 236, 247, 257, 272, 284, 300–301, 304, 309–310, 321, 324, 329–330, 334–335, 337, 340, 344–348, 353, 355, 357, 365, 368, 371, 374, 385, 399–400, 405, 428, 441, 446, 462, 466, 473, 481, 484, 487, 488, 499–500, 503.

<sup>190</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 6, 11–12, 15, 17, 21–22, 24, 28, 33, 38, 49, 52, 55, 57, 59, 69, 79–82, 91–92, 104, 112, 132–133, 153, 200, 217, 223, 263, 266, 268, 276–277, 338, 482.

per cent);<sup>191</sup> Napoleon (23 learners, 4.6 per cent);<sup>192</sup> Steve Biko (22 learners, 4.4 per cent);<sup>193</sup> Julius Malema (18 learners, 3.6 per cent);<sup>194</sup> Gandhi (15 learners, 3.0 per cent);<sup>195</sup> Hector Peterson (13 learners, 2.6 per cent);<sup>196</sup> Vasco de Gama (13 learners, 2.6 per cent);<sup>197</sup> Thabo Mbeki (12 learners, 2.4 per cent);<sup>198</sup> O. R. Tambo (10 learners, 2.0 per cent)<sup>199</sup> and Leonardo da Vinci (10 learners, 2.0 per cent).<sup>200</sup>

It is evident that a wide range of historical characters inspire the curiosity of learners. Nelson Mandela is cited as both the personality whom the respondents most enjoyed learning about and as the person they would most like to learn more about. It is noteworthy that South African personalities fill seven of the top thirteen positions. This indicates that learners have a wide range of historical interest as well as an interest in South African history. While some of the choices learners made appear in the Social Sciences History syllabus, others, such as Jacob Zuma, Steve Biko, Julius Malema and Thabo Mbeki do not, indicating that the historical and political awareness of these learners extends beyond the prescriptions of the syllabus. As was not the case when nominating favourite historical personalities whom they had learned about, when it came to nominating personalities about whom they would like to know more, there were some differences between cultural groups or schools. Thabo Mbeki, Julius Malema, Steve Biko and O. R. Tambo had not aroused the curiosity of any English or Afrikaans-speaking learners indicating that African language speaking learners had a greater interest in South Africa's liberation struggle.

<sup>191</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 237, 246, 255, 295, 308–309, 315–316, 335–336, 338, 367, 373, 394, 399, 412, 428, 446, 458, 465, 471, 482, 484, 488, 493.

<sup>192</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 4–5, 7, 9, 14, 62, 132–133, 21, 297–298, 300, 307, 310, 337, 354, 365, 378, 399, 458, 462, 488.

<sup>193</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 38, 82, 100, 164, 171, 197, 205–206, 212, 238–240, 243, 248, 259, 261–262, 269, 273, 275, 431, 502.

<sup>194</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 19, 21, 27, 29, 52, 55, 59, 92, 94, 146, 160, 165, 171, 200, 210, 268, 278, 282.

<sup>195</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 6, 15, 181, 240, 245, 256–257, 267, 427, 433, 438, 440, 493, 499–500.

<sup>196</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 162, 184, 193–194, 219, 222, 228, 235, 239–240, 261, 272–273.

<sup>197</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 11, 68, 73, 77, 83, 87, 101, 119, 173, 301, 338.

<sup>198</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 26, 29, 63, 65, 73, 77, 103–104, 115, 118, 159, 184.

<sup>199</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 38, 48, 77, 100, 125, 135, 184, 240, 262, 376.

<sup>200</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 69, 124, 351, 365, 382, 394, 464, 481, 491–492.

Respondents from Steelcrest High School indicated a greater interest in learning about South African political figures than respondents from Hoërskool Middelburg or Middelburg Muslim School.<sup>201</sup>

Questions 10 and 11 which explored respondents' views about the need to study the past and whether the past could teach anything meaningful were inspired by Gerald Mazabow's 2003 work on the development of historical consciousness among South African secondary school learners.<sup>202</sup> Mature, thoughtful answers were received from respondents. Only 30 blank responses (5.9 per cent) were received to question 10 which asked the question 'Why do we need to study the past?'.<sup>203</sup> Such a low blank return figure on a question which required thoughtful consideration indicates that learners did indeed take the questionnaire seriously and that they possess a considerable degree of intellectual ability. Responses to the question of why the past needs to be studied included the idea that we can learn from the past (192 learners, 38.0 per cent);<sup>204</sup> that the past could help us know more about our roots or origins (64 learners, 12.7 per cent);<sup>205</sup> that it could inform us about the experiences of relatives (28 learners, 5.5 per cent);<sup>206</sup> that it could teach us how people had lived (51 learners, 10.1 per cent);<sup>207</sup> that it could help us to predict the future (51 learners, 10.1 per

<sup>201</sup> Only one Hoërskool Middelburg respondent (Response 376) expressed an interest in learning more about O. R. Tambo; while one Hoërskool Middelburg respondent (Response 431) and one respondent from Middelburg Muslim School (Response 502) expressed an interest in learning more about Steve Biko. No respondents from these schools expressed any interest in learning more about Julius Malema or Thabo Mbeki.

<sup>202</sup> Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness'.

<sup>203</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 38, 48, 51–53, 72, 75, 80, 153, 184–185, 199, 203, 210, 241, 263, 270, 274, 280, 282–283, 298, 365, 395, 410, 413, 434–436, 490.

<sup>204</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 5, 15, 29, 36, 44, 49, 56, 67, 71, 82, 86, 89, 94, 97, 102, 104, 110, 116, 118–120, 123–133, 139–142, 145, 148–149, 151–152, 155, 170–171, 179–180, 182–183, 188, 191–194, 196, 200–202, 207–208, 211, 213–215, 219–223, 225, 229–230, 232–233, 235–237, 239–240, 243–244, 248, 251, 253–254, 256–258, 273, 278, 281, 285, 287, 289–290, 293–295, 305–309, 311, 316, 318, 322–323, 325–331, 333–337, 339, 342–347, 350–351, 354, 360, 375–382, 384, 386, 392, 394, 399–402, 404–405, 412, 414–415, 417, 419–421, 427, 429, 432–433, 437, 440–446, 448–452, 455, 457–458, 462, 466–468, 472, 478–480, 482, 491–495, 500, 502, 504.

<sup>205</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 9–10, 30, 58, 66, 70, 92, 95, 99–100, 106, 116, 149, 159, 163, 188, 215, 237, 239–240, 248, 250, 256, 273, 275, 278, 300, 312, 326–328, 332–333, 335, 338, 342–343, 356, 361, 372–373, 379, 397, 411, 419–421, 424, 429, 432–433, 437, 439, 442–443, 445–446, 450, 452, 478, 481, 495, 501–502.

<sup>206</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 3–4, 37, 41, 54, 58, 67, 70, 99, 101, 106, 112, 123, 134, 147, 161, 195, 216, 224, 226, 231, 278, 356, 373, 411, 419–420, 446.

<sup>207</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 6–8, 16, 22, 28, 65, 67, 89, 99, 116–117, 134, 146–147, 159–161, 173, 177–178, 182, 198, 204, 224–227, 232, 240, 244, 260, 269, 317, 323, 348, 358, 361, 373, 384, 390, 411, 418, 423, 428–429, 446, 484, 493, 495, 499.

cent);<sup>208</sup> that it could help us know more about the struggle for freedom in South Africa (23 learners, 4.6 per cent)<sup>209</sup> and that it could help teach good values (9 learners, 1.8 per cent).<sup>210</sup> Negative responses included the sentiment that we do not need to study the past (29 learners, 5.7 per cent)<sup>211</sup> or that if it did need to be studied that this was simply to assist learners pass examinations (4 learners, 0.8 per cent).<sup>212</sup>

Question 11 posed the question whether the past could teach us anything meaningful. The responses to this question are depicted in Table 7.7 below:

**TABLE 7.7**

GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS				
DOES THE PAST TEACH US ANYTHING MEANINGFUL?				
	Response	Gd 8	Gd 9	Combined Grade 8 and 9
<b>Steelcrest High School</b>	YES	130 (87.2%)	101 (75.4%)	231 (81.6%)
	NO	10 (6.7%)	12 (9.0%)	22 (7.8%)
	SOMETIMES	6 (4.0%)	5 (3.7%)	11 (3.9%)
	DON'T KNOW	0	0	0
	BLANK RESPONSE	3 (2.0%)	16 (11.9%)	19 (6.7%)
<b>Middelburg Muslim School</b>	YES	7 (77.8%)	9 (100.0%)	16 (88.9%)
	NO	1 (11.1%)	0	1 (5.6%)
	SOMETIMES	1 (11.1%)	0	1 (5.6%)
	DON'T KNOW	0	0	0
	BLANK RESPONSE	0	0	0
<b>Hoërskool Middelburg</b>	YES	96 (81.4%)	63 (73.3%)	159 (77.9%)
	NO	11 (9.3%)	16 (18.6%)	27 (13.2%)
	SOMETIMES	6 (5.1%)	2 (2.3%)	8 (3.9%)

<sup>208</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 13, 15, 35–36, 44, 49, 86, 90, 94, 120, 123, 126–129, 131, 139, 142, 162, 176, 179, 192, 219, 223, 243, 251–252, 271, 284–285, 325, 329, 331, 334, 336–338, 344–345, 347, 380–382, 392, 417, 420, 444, 462, 479, 481, 491.

<sup>209</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 68, 73, 88, 112–113, 163, 195, 197, 231, 240, 248–249, 261, 269, 278, 287, 319, 333, 338, 493–494, 499, 504.

<sup>210</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 61, 102, 104, 110, 127, 130, 325, 450, 455.

<sup>211</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 31, 50, 166, 169, 171–172, 190, 245, 250, 266, 268, 279, 301, 320–321, 324, 359, 368, 391, 403, 407–408, 447, 465, 471, 488, 496, 498, 503.

<sup>212</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 76, 84, 98, 368.



	DON'T KNOW	2 (1.7%)	0	2 (1.0%)
	BLANK RESPONSE	3 (2.5%)	5 (5.8%)	8 (3.9%)

The overwhelming majority of surveyed Social Sciences learners (407, 80.6 per cent for all respondents)<sup>213</sup> felt that the past could teach meaningful lessons. This high percentage surprised me. Respondents from Middelburg Muslim School (16 learners, 88.9 per cent)<sup>214</sup> felt the most positive that History could teach meaningful lessons. Few learners (50, 9.9 per cent)<sup>215</sup> felt that History could not teach meaningful lessons. Grade 8 learners from Steelcrest High School and Hoërskool Middelburg felt more positive that History could teach meaningful lessons than did their Grade 9 counterparts ( a drop of 11.8 for Steelcrest High School and 8.0 per cent for Hoërskool Middelburg), a trend evident elsewhere in my survey indicating that History loses some popularity among learners as they progress from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Only two Grade 8 Hoërskool Middelburg learners<sup>216</sup> claimed not to know whether History could teach meaningful lessons while a low number of blank returns (27 learners, 5.3 per cent)<sup>217</sup> to this question were received.

Question 13 asked respondents to write down their good or bad perceptions of the Social Sciences (History) textbooks they used. Grade 8 respondents from Steelcrest High School shared textbooks in class and Grade 8 and 9 respondents from Middelburg Muslim School made use of their own issued Social Sciences textbook. Grade 9 Steelcrest High School learners and both Grade 8 and 9 learners at Hoërskool Middelburg did not receive Social Sciences textbooks and relied on photocopied notes. The photocopied notes which Hoërskool Middelburg learners received in Grade 8 were from the same textbook used by

<sup>213</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–13, 15–30, 32–37, 41–42, 44, 46–47, 54–56, 60–73, 75–84, 86–93, 95, 97–150, 154–155, 158–160, 162–163, 165–166, 172–179, 181–184, 186–189, 191–195, 197–198, 200–201, 204–209, 212–214, 216–228, 230–262, 264, 267–270, 274–275, 281, 283, 285–318, 323, 325–326, 329–333, 335–341, 343, 345, 347–358, 360, 362–367, 369–373, 375–376, 378, 380–389, 392–402, 405–406, 409, 411–414, 416–417, 419–433, 436–443, 445–446, 448–451, 453–456, 458–460, 462–464, 466–468, 472–473, 477–482, 484, 487–493, 495, 497–505.

<sup>214</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 488–493, 495, 497–505.

<sup>215</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 14, 31, 39, 43, 49, 51–52, 85, 94, 96, 151, 161, 164, 196, 199, 210, 215, 265–266, 278–279, 282, 320–322, 324, 346, 355, 359, 361, 377, 379, 391, 403, 404, 407–408, 418, 434, 452, 457, 461, 465, 469, 471, 475, 483, 485–486, 496.

<sup>216</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 301, 368. [Afrikaans; Grade 8; Hoërskool Middelburg and Afrikaans; Grade 8; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>217</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 48, 50, 74, 153, 157, 167, 169–171, 180, 185, 190, 202–203, 229, 272, 276–277, 280, 284, 356, 374, 410, 435, 447, 470, 476.

Steelcrest High School Grade 8 learners, *Social Sciences Today*.<sup>218</sup> Grade 9 learners from both schools received notes copied from the same textbook, namely *Social Sciences Today*.<sup>219</sup>

Most learners who had been issued with a Social Sciences textbook noted that they had found the book to be good. Thirty-nine (26.2 per cent)<sup>220</sup> Steelcrest High School Grade 8 learners had found the textbook good, while only 10 (6.7 per cent)<sup>221</sup> reported finding the book to be bad. Interestingly, overwhelmingly positive responses to the textbook emerged from two of the five surveyed Grade 8 classes while few positive responses were forthcoming from the other (three) Social Sciences classes indicating that the influence of the teacher is critical in determining the perceptions – in this case toward the textbook, for good or bad – of learners. Blank responses were returned by 100 (67.1 per cent)<sup>222</sup> Steelcrest High School Grade 8 learners. This implies that over two thirds of the Grade 8 Steelcrest High School Social Sciences group had no strong feeling – for good or bad – about the textbook at all. Most Middelburg Muslim School learners also felt favourably about their Social Sciences textbooks, with five Grade 8 learners (55.6 per cent)<sup>223</sup> and seven Grade 9 learners (77.8 per cent)<sup>224</sup> reporting that their perception of the books was good.

Learners who had been issued with notes were divided over whether or not they were good or bad. Thirty-three (24.6 per cent)<sup>225</sup> Steelcrest High School Grade 9 learners felt that the notes they had been issued with were good, while 24 (17.9 per cent)<sup>226</sup> noted that they

<sup>218</sup> J. Earle, G. Keats, A. Clacherty, B. Maclagan, B. Roberts, P. Thraves *Grade 8 Social Sciences Today: Learners' Book* (Cape Town, 2005).

<sup>219</sup> J. Earle, G. Keats, K. Morrison, B. Maclagan, B. Roberts, P. Thraves *Grade 9 Social Sciences Today: Learners' Book* (Cape Town, 2006).

<sup>220</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3–12, 14–18, 20–24, 26–29, 31–32, 49, 89–90, 92, 97, 123, 126, 129–130, 132–133, 145.

<sup>221</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 13, 19, 92, 101–103, 108, 110, 131.

<sup>222</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 30, 33–48, 50–88, 91, 95–96, 98–107, 109, 111–122, 124–125, 127–128, 134–144, 146–149.

<sup>223</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 488–489, 491–493.

<sup>224</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 498–503, 505.

<sup>225</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 159–160, 174, 176, 179, 184, 186, 188, 193–194, 205, 207, 214–215, 218, 225–226, 228, 231, 234–237, 240, 242, 244–246, 252, 262–263, 267, 270.

<sup>226</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 153–154, 157, 163, 165–166, 182, 192, 195, 200–201, 209–210, 217, 220–221, 232, 239, 253–255, 259, 264–265.

were bad. Blank responses were received from 48 (35.8 per cent)<sup>227</sup> Steelcrest High School Grade 9 learners. Other respondents simply indicated that notes had been received. Seventy-two (61.0 per cent)<sup>228</sup> Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 8 learners felt that their issued notes were good, while 18 (15.3 per cent)<sup>229</sup> felt that they were bad. Seven (5.9 per cent)<sup>230</sup> felt the notes were too difficult and complicated. Other respondents simply indicated that notes had been received. Thirty-four (39.5 per cent)<sup>231</sup> of Hoërskool Middelburg Grade 9 learners approved of their issued Social Sciences notes while 17 (19.8 per cent)<sup>232</sup> felt them to be bad. Seven (8.1 per cent)<sup>233</sup> found the notes to be boring. Other respondents simply indicated that notes had been received. Some responses revealed that in Grade 9 at Hoërskool Middelburg little or no history is actually taught:

We are not yet at the History section.<sup>234</sup>

It's good [the notes], based on Geography but in History I don't know because we have not done any!<sup>235</sup>

Bad – half the things we don't learn!<sup>236</sup>

Good for now but we don't have History at the moment.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>227</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 150, 155, 162, 164, 167–169, 170–171, 173, 178, 180, 183, 185, 189–190, 196–197, 199, 202–204, 206, 208, 216, 219, 222, 224, 229–230, 238, 243, 247, 250–251, 261, 271–278, 280–283.

<sup>228</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 286–290, 292–295, 297–299, 302–311, 312–316, 318, 321, 327, 329–333, 335–338, 340, 344–348, 351, 353, 356, 361–362, 364–365, 369–370, 373, 375–378, 381, 383–384, 386–390, 392, 394–395, 397, 399.

<sup>229</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 285, 296, 300, 319–320, 322, 324–326, 328, 334, 339, 342, 352, 360, 374, 385, 393.

<sup>230</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 285, 302–304, 307–308, 319.

<sup>231</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 402, 405–406, 409, 412, 414, 417–418, 425–429, 436, 440, 443–446, 450–451, 453, 468–470, 472, 474, 477–480, 484–485, 487.

<sup>232</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 403, 411, 419, 424, 431–433, 441, 447–448, 452, 458, 471, 473, 476, 483, 486.

<sup>233</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 419–420, 431, 441, 448, 452, 471.

<sup>234</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 407. [Afrikaans; Grade 9; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>235</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 436. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 9; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>236</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 449. [English; Grade 9; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>237</sup> 2012 Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Response 475. [Afrikaans; Grade 9; Hoërskool Middelburg]

### 7.5.2 FET (Grade 10–12) History-taking learners

**TABLE 7.8**

HISTORY-TAKING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS													
	STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL			EASTDENE COMBINED			MIDDELBURG COMBINED			HOËRSKOOL ERMELO			TOTAL
GRADE	10	11	12	10	11	12	10	11	12	10	11	12	
	28	19	29	23	23	10	8	6	9	14	31	27	227

Table 7.8 above records the numbers of learners who completed the History-taking secondary school learners' questionnaire. Four schools took part in the survey, namely Steelcrest High School, Eastdene Combined School, Middelburg Combined School and Hoërskool Ermelo.<sup>238</sup> Steelcrest High School is a typical ex-model C school. The learner population is 780, about 95 per cent of whom are African language speaking learners, with a small representation of coloured, Indian and white learners. There is one History class per grade (10–12). Learners enjoy a variety of socio-economic circumstances, some living in poor homes whose parents cannot afford school fees to others who come from affluent homes. Eastdene Combined School has about 1400 learners. The school used to be Middelburg's Indian High School during the apartheid era but its demographics have changed and over 90 per cent of the present learners are indigenous African language speaking learners. The school is not as well resourced as Steelcrest High School and the majority of its learners come from homes with strained economic circumstances. The school has one History class per grade (10–12). Middelburg Combined School used to be Middelburg's coloured high school during the apartheid era. It presently has a mixed population of coloured and indigenous African language speaking learners. It is the poorest of the surveyed schools with few educational facilities. Most of its 1200 learners do not come from affluent homes. The school has one History class per grade (10–12). Hoërskool Ermelo is an extremely well equipped, affluent secondary school situated in the Mpumalanga town of Ermelo. Its school population of 800 consists mainly of white, English or Afrikaans-speaking learners. A small number of indigenous African language speaking learners attend. The majority of the white learners are from affluent homes. The same

<sup>238</sup> Information regarding learner numbers and school fees were obtained telephonically from the Ermelo High School Marketing Department and the school offices of Eastdene and Middelburg Combined schools during February 2012. Information for Steelcrest High School was personally availed to me by the school office during February 2012.

applies to some of the African language speaking learner population, although some live in the local township in less affluent conditions. The school has two History classes in Grades 10 and 11 and one Grade 12 History class. The spread of learners who completed the questionnaire is broadly representative of the learner population found in Mpumalanga and most parts of South Africa.

TABLE 7.9

HISTORY-TAKING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS RESPONDENTS HOME LANGUAGE													
	STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL			EASTDENE COMBINED			MIDDELBURG COMBINED			HOËRSKOOL ERMELO			TOTAL
LANGUAGE	GD 10	GD 11	GD 12	GD 10	GD 11	GD 12	GD 10	GD 11	GD 12	GD 10	GD 11	GD 12	
ENGLISH	4	5	2	3	6	3	2	2	3	2	4	2	38
ZULU	12	9	14	12	8	2	2	0	2	11	16	7	95
PEDI	6	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
SWATI	4	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	10
SOTHO	0	1	2	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	9
AFRIKAANS	1	0	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	11	18	40
NDEBELE	1	1	4	2	5	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	16
OTHER	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>227</b>

Table 7.9 above depicts the home languages – and hence the cultural affiliations – of the 227 surveyed History-taking learners. Learners speaking various indigenous African languages (including ‘other’) accounted for 65.6 per cent of the total number of respondents; Afrikaans-speaking learners accounted for 17.6 per cent and English-speaking respondents accounted for 16.7 per cent. Zulu speaking learners accounted for 41.9 per cent of the total number of respondents.

TABLE 7.10

HISTORY-TAKING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS REASONS FOR CHOOSING HISTORY AS SUBJECT: COMBINED RESULTS – GRADES 10–12									
	STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL		EASTDENE COMBINED		MIDDELBURG COMBINED		HOËRSKOOL ERMELO		
REASONS	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	
History requires little insight	18 (23.4%)	48 (63.2%)	13 (23.2%)	31 (55.4%)	4 (17.4%)	19 (82.6%)	26 (36.1%)	40 (55.6%)	
Few other subjects available	26 (34.2%)	42 (55.3%)	18 (32.1%)	26 (46.4%)	10 (43.5%)	12 (52.2%)	10 (13.9%)	55 (76.4%)	
To study History at a tertiary level	53 (69.7%)	21 (27.6%)	36 (64.3%)	13 (23.2%)	14 (60.9%)	8 (34.8%)	44 (61.1%)	18 (25.0%)	
Gives better understanding of	65 (85.5%)	5 (6.6%)	49 (87.5%)	1 (1.8%)	20 (87.0%)	1 (4.3%)	59 (81.9%)	8 (11.1%)	

<b>politics</b>								
<b>Like teacher who teaches History</b>	35 (46.1%)	26 (34.2%)	19 (33.9%)	26 (46.4%)	19 (82.6%)	3 (13.0%)	59 (81.9%)	5 (6.9%)
<b>Will help in the world of work</b>	61 (80.3%)	8 (10.5%)	37 (66.1%)	7 (12.5%)	21 (91.3%)	0 (0%)	58 (80.6%)	9 (12.5%)
<b>Persuaded by teacher</b>	9 (11.8%)	59 (77.6%)	4 (7.1%)	44 (78.6%)	1 (4.3%)	22 (95.7%)	11 (15.3%)	52 (72.2%)
<b>Persuaded by parents</b>	9 (11.8%)	57 (75.0%)	6 (10.7%)	37 (66.1%)	0 (0%)	23 (100.0%)	8 (11.1%)	56 (77.8%)
<b>My friends chose History</b>	3 (3.9%)	65 (85.5%)	4 (7.1%)	38 (67.9%)	2 (8.7%)	21 (91.3%)	10 (13.9%)	54 (75.0%)
<b>Was made to change subject choice</b>	7 (9.2%)	60 (78.9%)	8 (14.3%)	34 (60.7%)	1 (4.3%)	22 (95.7%)	11 (15.3%)	54 (75.0%)
<b>Achieve high marks in History</b>	60 (78.9%)	7 (9.2%)	47 (83.9%)	3 (5.4%)	20 (87.0%)	1 (4.3%)	60 (83.3%)	6 (8.3%)

Table 7.10 reflects the responses to question one which asked respondents to tick the reasons that best suited their opinion of why they had chosen to take History as a FET subject. The table the respondents were provided with is the same table used for Standard seven (Grade nine) learners in the Human Sciences Research Council's 1991 investigation into the state of History teaching in South Africa, and similar to the table used in the Standard 9 (Grade 11) survey.<sup>239</sup> The reason why I chose to use the same selection of options for my survey was to enable me to compare the responses of learners in 1991 and 2012. It must also be noted that in the HSRC 1991 research respondents were only asked to tick one response while I invited respondents to tick however many of the given responses they felt applied to them. It must be noted that not all of my respondents ticked every possible option – therefore the 'yes' and 'no' columns for each school never amount to 100 per cent for any option. Broadly speaking, the results obtained were similar for all four surveyed schools. Significant differences will be noted in the analysis which follows.

It was disturbing that so many learners ( 61, 26.9 per cent) felt that History was a subject requiring little insight. Surprisingly, the highest percentage of such learners (36.1 per cent) were from Hoërskool Ermelo, by far the highest performing History-offering school in Mpumalanga. The lowest percentage of learners who felt that History needed little insight (17.4 per cent) were to found at Middelburg Combined School. This statistic could relate to the teaching methods employed by educators, implying that History is taught in a manner

<sup>239</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al*, Table 6.10 (Standard 7), p. 194 and Table 7.4 (Standard 9), p. 201.

which relies upon rote learning and memorisation. It was also disconcerting to note the high number of learners (64, 28.2 per cent) who had chosen History because few other subjects were available to choose. Hoërskool Ermelo (13.9 per cent) had the fewest percentage of learners who felt that they had chosen History because there were few other subjects available to them.

A pleasingly high number of learners (147, 64.8 per cent) stated that they wished to continue studying History at tertiary level. A powerful motivator for choosing History as a FET subject was a liking for the teacher who taught it. This was especially the case for Hoërskool Ermelo (81.9 per cent) and Middelburg Combined School (82.6 per cent). This points to the powerful influence that History educators have in promoting their subject. A high number of learners (177, 78.0 per cent) also felt that their History education would be useful to them in the world of work. This counters the generally held belief that History is not a valuable career-related school subject.

Few learners appeared to have been persuaded by teachers, parents or friends to take History. Surprisingly few reported having been forced to take the subject as a result of subject choice options, Hoërskool Ermelo (15.3 per cent) having the highest percentage of reluctant History-taking learners. A high percentage of learners (187, 82.4 per cent) reported taking History after Grade 9 because they had achieved high marks in History in previous grades.

The Human Sciences Research Council's 1991 research into History teaching reveals some markedly different responses to a similar set of options posed to Standard 9 (Grade 11) History-taking learners and the same set of options posed to Standard 7 (Grade 9) learners. Responses in these surveys were classified under racial groupings, the four traditional groups used being black, white, coloured and Indian. Given that the HSRC respondents were only invited to select one possible option, it is to be expected that the percentages for a particular option will be lower than was the case in my survey. Nevertheless, comparisons can be made.

Very few respondents in both HSRC Standard 7 and 9 surveys felt that History was a subject requiring little insight. Responses supporting this view ranged in both surveys between 1.90 and 6.87 per cent – far lower than the results obtained in my 2012 survey (26.9 per cent). Such a difference in perception can only be accounted for in the teaching and presentation of the subject.

Another significant difference between the HSRC 1991 survey and my 2012 survey is to be found in the percentage of learners who wished to continue studying History at tertiary level. Few Standard 9 (1991) learners (responses range from 4.11 to 16.46 per cent across the racial classification) wished to continue studying History while 64.8 per cent of my 2012 surveyed history-taking FET learners wished to continue studying the subject. Few HSRC 1991 respondents (responses ranged from 2,51 to 11.94 per cent) had elected to continue studying History because they had obtained good marks in the subject. In contrast, 82.4 per cent of my 2012 respondents indicated that obtaining high marks had encouraged them to continue with History after Grade 9.

**TABLE 7.11**

<b>HISTORY-TAKING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS VALUE OF HISTORY AS A SUBJECT: SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH HISTORY COMBINED RESULTS – GRADE 10–12</b>									
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL</b>			<b>EASTDENE COMBINED</b>			<b>MIDDELBURG COMBINED</b>		
	<b>YES</b>	<b>TO A LESSER EXTENT</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>TO A LESSER EXTENT</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>TO A LESSER EXTENT</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>To distinguish between true and slanted facts</b>	54 (71.0%)	12 (15.8%)	4 (5.3%)	46 (82.1%)	1 (1.8%)	4 (7.1%)	17 (73.9%)	4 (17.4%)	0 (0%)
<b>To examine historical documents critically</b>	50 (65.8%)	14 (18.4%)	2 (2.6%)	38 (67.9%)	7 (12.5%)	2 (3.6%)	17 (73.9%)	3 (13.0%)	1 (4.3%)
<b>To remember facts well</b>	47 (61.8%)	17 (22.4%)	8 (10,5%)	42 (75.0%)	7 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	20 (87.0%)	2 (8.7%)	0 (0%)
<b>To realize that different people see the same thing differently</b>	59 (77.6%)	8 (10.5%)	4 (5,3%)	40 (71.4%)	12 (21.4%)	2 (3.6%)	15 (65.2%)	6 (26.1%)	1 (4.3%)
<b>To distinguish between the different ways in which</b>	58 (76.3%)	12 (15.8%)	3 (3,9%)	34 (60.7%)	8 (14.3%)	4 (7.1%)	17 (73.9%)	5 (21.7%)	0 (0%)



<b>different people look at the same situation</b>									
<b>To answer essay-type questions</b>	34 (44.7%)	24 (31.6%)	11 (14,5%)	34 (60.7%)	7 (12.5%)	6 (10.7%)	11 (47.8%)	11 (47.8%)	0 (0%)
<b>To analyse historical documents</b>	49 (64.5%)	13 (17.1%)	7 (9.2%)	38 (67.9%)	5 (8.9%)	5 (8.9%)	9 (39.1%)	10 (43.5%)	2 (8.7%)
<b>To gather information and arrange it logically</b>	47 (61.8%)	15 (19.7%)	7 (9.2%)	34 (60.7%)	8 (14.3%)	4 (7.1%)	14 (60.9%)	5 (21.7%)	2 (8.7%)

<b>HISTORY-TAKING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS VALUE OF HISTORY AS A SUBJECT: SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH HISTORY COMBINED RESULTS: GRADE 10–12</b>			
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>HOËRSKOOL ERMELO</b>		
	<b>YES</b>	<b>TO A LESSER EXTENT</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>To distinguish between true and slanted facts</b>	60 (83.3%)	6 (8.3%)	0 (0%)
<b>To examine historical documents critically</b>	39 (54.2%)	27 (37.5%)	3 (4.2%)
<b>To remember facts well</b>	51 (70.8%)	15 (20.8%)	3 (4.2%)
<b>To realise that different people see the same thing differently</b>	60 (83.3%)	7 (9.7%)	2 (2.8%)
<b>To distinguish between the different ways in which different people look at the same situation</b>	54 (75.0%)	9 (12.5%)	3 (4.2%)
<b>To answer essay-type questions</b>	43 (59.7%)	18 (25.0%)	5 (6.9%)
<b>To analyse historical documents</b>	49 (68.1%)	15 (20.8%)	4 (5.6%)
<b>To gather information and arrange it logically</b>	54 (75.0%)	11 (15.3%)	3 (4.2%)

Table 7.11 reflects the responses to question two which asked respondents to tick the reasons that best suited their opinion of which skills could be acquired while studying History. The table the respondents were provided with is the same table used for Standard seven (Grade nine) learners in the Human Sciences Research Council's 1991 investigation into the state of History teaching in South Africa.<sup>240</sup> The reason why I chose to use the same selection of options for my survey was to enable me to compare the responses of learners in 1991 and 2012. For this series of responses the HSRC 1991 research respondents were given

<sup>240</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al*, Table 7.8, pp. 208–209.

the option to tick more than a single response. Again, I invited respondents to tick however many of the given responses applied to them. It must be noted that not all of my respondents ticked every possible option – therefore the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ columns for each school never amount to 100 per cent for any option. Broadly speaking, the results obtained were similar for all four surveyed schools.

What is interesting about Table 7.11 above is not that there were no significant differences in the perceptions displayed for any of the 2012 surveyed schools, but rather in the differences between the perceptions of these learners and those of the Standard 9 (Grade 11) learners surveyed by the Human Sciences Research Council in 1991. These differences illustrate that the recent emphasis in History teaching – namely to inculcate historical skills into learners has succeeded in dramatically changing the way modern learners perceive the subject. Because these differences are profound, I have included the HSRC 1991 table below, so that comparisons are clearer. Since both groups had been instructed to select as many skills as they wished to, comparisons between the two groups are, in this case, direct.

**TABLE 7.12** VALUE OF HISTORY AS A SUBJECT: SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH HISTORY<sup>241</sup>

	Response	POPULATION GROUP							
		Black		White		Coloured		Indian	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To distinguish between true and slanted facts	Yes	163	64.94	178	47.98	159	56.58	139	53.05
	To a lesser extent	54	21.51	162	43.67	106	37.72	99	37.79
	No	34	13.55	31	8.36	16	5.69	24	9.16
To examine a historical document critically	Yes	81	34.47	113	30.79	84	30.77	131	50.38
	To a lesser extent	86	36.60	166	45.23	112	41.03	78	30.00
	No	68	28.94	88	23.98	77	28.21	51	19.62
To remember facts well	Yes	177	68.08	228	61.62	174	61.92	157	59.70
	To a lesser extent	57	21.92	109	29.46	91	32.38	79	30.04
	No	26	10.00	33	8.92	16	5.69	27	10.27
To realise that different people see the same thing differently	Yes	165	67.62	274	73.85	177	62.99	190	72.24
	To a lesser	46	18.85	82	22.10	76	27.05	45	17.11

<sup>241</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al*, Table 7.8, pp. 208–209.

	extent								
	No	33	13.52	15	4.04	28	9.96	28	10.65
To distinguish between the different ways in which different people see the same thing differently	Yes	134	54.69	239	54.42	150	54.15	164	62.12
	To a lesser extent	70	28.57	100	26.95	103	37.18	74	28.03
	No	41	16.73	32	8.63	24	8.66	26	9.85
To answer essay-type questions	Yes	177	71.08	195	53.13	184	64.79	200	75.47
	To a lesser extent	48	19.28	132	35.97	75	26.41	56	21.13
	No	24	9.64	40	10.90	25	8.80	9	3.40
To analyse historical documents	Yes	111	47.23	80	21.74	58	21.25	114	44.19
	To a lesser extent	71	30.21	174	47.28	137	50.18	96	37.21
	No	53	22.55	114	30.98	78	28.57	48	18.60
To gather information and arrange it logically	Yes	173	67.58	229	61.56	139	49.64	182	68.42
	To a lesser extent	56	21.88	117	31.45	110	39.29	70	26.32
	No	27	10.55	26	6.99	31	11.07	14	5.26

There is a substantial difference between the perceptions of the value of History in assisting learners to acquire academic skills between the 2012 and 1991 surveyed secondary school learners. Distinguishing between true and slanted facts was a skill felt to have been acquired through History study by 177 (78.0 per cent) of the 2012 surveyed History-taking learners while the comparable figure for the various racial groups surveyed in 1991 was 64.94 per cent for black respondents, 47.98 per cent for whites, 56.58 per cent for coloureds and 53.05 per cent for Indians. Other perceptions of skill acquisitions which differ markedly include the skill of examining historical documents critically, where 144 learners (63.4 per cent) of 2012 respondents selected an affirmative response compared to 34.47 per cent for 1991 black respondents, 30.79 per cent for white, 30.77 per cent for coloured and 50.38 per cent affirmative responses for Indian respondents. A significant difference is found when it comes to the historical skill of analysing historical documents, where 145 (63.9 per cent) of the 2012 respondents felt that they had acquired this historical skill compared to only 47.23 per cent for 1991 black respondents, 21.74 per cent for white, 21.25 per cent for coloured and 44.19 per cent for Indian respondents.

Remembering facts well was a historical skill which a comparable percentage of respondents from both surveys affirmed as having been acquired through History study, though the 2012 group scored this affirmation slightly higher. The same can be said for the skill of realising that different people see the same things differently and the skill of distinguishing between the different ways in which people look at the same situation although again, in both cases, 2012 respondents felt more strongly that these skills had been acquired through studying History. The last measured skill, namely that of gathering information and arranging it logically was felt to have been acquired fairly evenly by both surveyed groups, though Hoërskool Ermelo's 2012 learners (75.0 per cent) felt more equipped in this area than did other learners from both surveyed groups.

Answering essay type questions was a skill which the 1991 respondents felt better equipped at, with 71.08 per cent of black respondents, 53.13 per cent of white, 64.79 per cent of coloured and 75.47 of Indian respondents opting in the affirmative, compared to 122 (53.7 per cent) of the 2012 respondents. This is not surprising given the content-based emphasis of 1991 secondary school History education.

The comparison above clearly shows that the perceptions of History-taking learners in respect of the skills which they believe that they have acquired as a result of their History study have changed substantially between 1991 and 2012. This is undoubtedly as a result of the skills-based approach to secondary school History education which was introduced with Outcomes-based Education. It is clear that the skills-based approach has been successful in changing the perceptions learners hold about History education and it is heartening to see that this approach is indeed adopted at the Mpumalanga History-offering secondary schools I surveyed.

Responses received to question three which asked History-taking FET respondents to list topics which they would like to know more about clearly revealed that these learners displayed a greater interest in studying South African history than did their Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences counterparts. Very few blank responses were received – only 12 (5.3 per

cent)<sup>242</sup> as compared to 16.6 per cent of the surveyed Social Sciences learners, indicating that the level of interest in History was, as to be expected, considerably higher than the surveyed GET learners who had not chosen to take History as an elective post-Grade 9 subject.

South African history (93 learners, 41.0 per cent)<sup>243</sup> and more specifically apartheid history (70 learners, 30.8 per cent)<sup>244</sup> were by far the most popular topics which aroused the interest of the surveyed FET History-taking learners. This is in contrast to the surveyed GET learners, who, while not uninterested in South African history, displayed more interest in foreign history. Surveyed FET History-taking respondents further expressed an interest in studying Zulu history (23 learners, 10.1 per cent of all respondents, or 24.7 per cent of respondents displaying an interest in South African history)<sup>245</sup> This may be related to the fact that Zulu is the language most widely spoken by the surveyed indigenous language speakers. Interest in the history of the South African War (13 learners, 5.7 per cent of all respondents).<sup>246</sup> A high percentage of Afrikaans-speaking respondents (21 of 39 Afrikaans-speaking learners, 53.8 per cent) expressed an interest in learning more about South African history.<sup>247</sup> Three Afrikaans-speaking learners from Hoërskool Ermelo expressed an interest in learning more about Zulu history.<sup>248</sup> These results are in contrast to Dryden's 1999 findings which suggested that white History learners in the Western Cape preferred studying European, rather than South African history.<sup>249</sup> As with the surveyed Grade 8 and 9 learners, this suggests that there has been a change in the perceptions of South African

<sup>242</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 13, 41, 46, 67, 96, 147, 168, 176, 178, 189, 225.

<sup>243</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 12, 15–16, 20, 23–28, 32–33, 36, 40, 53–54, 56, 59, 62, 64–65, 72–73, 80, 82–83, 85–87, 90–91, 93–95, 97–98, 100, 106, 110, 112–114, 118, 122, 124–125, 127–132, 136, 142–143, 148, 155–157, 161–163, 166–167, 172, 177, 180–181, 188, 191–192, 194, 196–197, 199–202, 204–207, 212–213, 218–220, 224, 226–227.

<sup>244</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 10, 12, 24–26, 32–33, 45, 47–48, 53–54, 59, 64–65, 70, 79, 83–84, 86–87, 94, 97–98, 100, 104, 106, 108, 114–117, 119, 121–122, 124–125, 127, 130–131, 134–135, 141–142, 144, 148–151, 153, 160, 162, 164, 170, 172–173, 180, 183, 186–188, 190–193, 195, 202, 224, 227.

<sup>245</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 73, 83–85, 93–95, 106, 110, 114, 117–118, 128, 138, 156–157, 162, 188, 191, 196, 205, 212, 226.

<sup>246</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 82, 90, 162, 200, 202, 204–207, 212–213, 224–226.

<sup>247</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 20, 62, 130, 142–143, 177, 180–181, 197, 200–202, 204–207, 212–213, 218–219, 224, 226.

<sup>248</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 205, 212, 226.

<sup>249</sup> Dryden, pp. 26–43.

secondary school learners. There appears to be less difference in the way young people of different cultural groups view their country. The growth of a common sense of patriotism is evident in my study.

The desire to study South African, rather than foreign history is evident in a rather sad contribution from a Hoërskool Ermelo learner:

I would like to learn about apartheid. About what happened in South Africa. What was the cause of it. I want to learn and know every little detail there is to know about apartheid instead of learning about Russians and what they did or how they were killed. I want to know the history of how my grandparents were killed, instead of strangers.<sup>250</sup>

Less popular topics which FET History-taking learners expressed an interest in learning more about<sup>251</sup> were Hitler and Nazi Germany (25 learners, 11.0 per cent);<sup>252</sup> Ancient history (24 learners, 10.6 per cent);<sup>253</sup> World Wars (22 learners, 9.7 per cent);<sup>254</sup> slavery (22 learners, 9.7 per cent);<sup>255</sup> Russian history (21 learners, 9.3 per cent);<sup>256</sup> American history (18 learners, 7.9 per cent);<sup>257</sup> Asian history (17 learners, 7.5 per cent);<sup>258</sup> African history (17 learners, 7.5 per cent)<sup>259</sup> and the French Revolution (15 learners, 6.6 per cent).<sup>260</sup>

<sup>250</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 172. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 11; Hoërskool Ermelo]

<sup>251</sup> These include topics which attracted 10 or more nominations.

<sup>252</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 11, 33, 38, 44, 53, 63, 73, 141, 144, 149, 156, 159–160, 166, 169, 171, 177, 188, 198–200, 202, 207, 224.

<sup>253</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 6, 9, 17, 22, 25, 29, 36, 39–40, 42, 58, 71–72, 130, 137, 146, 166, 169, 182, 185, 201, 203, 206.

<sup>254</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 14–15, 32–33, 38, 43, 47, 53, 60, 63, 87, 110, 130, 135, 141, 146, 181, 184, 188, 193, 217.

<sup>255</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 16, 35, 55, 62, 65, 78, 89, 93, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 119, 124, 138, 141, 148, 153, 171, 200.

<sup>256</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 4, 11, 14, 19, 34, 44, 58, 101–103, 111, 117, 120, 149, 153, 164, 175, 193, 195, 209.

<sup>257</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 16, 21, 42, 44, 87, 103–104, 108, 152–153, 156, 166, 169, 179, 193, 213, 218.

<sup>258</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 6, 8, 16, 40, 42, 45, 86, 92, 156, 161, 184, 203–206, 222.

<sup>259</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 7–8, 14, 24–25, 28, 32, 53, 62, 65, 76, 100, 139, 169, 199, 214.

<sup>260</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 62–63, 72, 83, 102–103, 109, 113, 133, 135–136, 144, 201, 215–216.

These results indicate that a great diversity of interest in various historical topics was displayed by the surveyed History-taking learners. Some topics, such as Hitler and Nazi Germany had received coverage in the History syllabus learners had studied while others, such as ancient and Asian history had not. I had expected these learners to display a wider variety of historical interest than their Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences counterparts but this was not the case – the Social Sciences learners also found a wide variety of historical topics to be of interest.

Adolf Hitler was regarded by FET History-taking respondents as the most impressive person learned about in class (81 learners, 35.7 per cent).<sup>261</sup> He was followed by Lenin (78 learners, 34.4 per cent);<sup>262</sup> Stalin (70 learners, 30.8 per cent);<sup>263</sup> Nelson Mandela (64 learners, 28.2 per cent)<sup>264</sup> and Shaka (52 learners, 22.9 per cent).<sup>265</sup> Other historical figures cited by respondents with ten nominations or more include Steve Biko (34 learners, 15.0 per cent);<sup>266</sup> Sonni Ali (31 learners, 13.7 per cent);<sup>267</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr (24 learners, 10.6 per cent);<sup>268</sup> Karl Marx (23 learners, 10.1 per cent);<sup>269</sup> Fidel Castro (19 learners, 8.4 per cent);<sup>270</sup> Tsar Nicholas II (13 learners, 5.7 per cent);<sup>271</sup> Gandhi (12 learners, 5.3 per cent);<sup>272</sup>

<sup>261</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 9, 12, 16–17, 23, 27–28, 30, 38, 42, 44–45, 47, 49–50, 53, 59–60, 62–63, 65–66, 68, 70–71, 74, 76, 112, 130–132, 134–135, 137, 141, 144–146, 153, 156, 158–159, 163–164, 169–171, 173, 175, 178–180, 182–183, 185–186, 189–191, 193, 195, 197, 199–200, 202–204, 206–208, 212, 214–216, 218–219, 224–227.

<sup>262</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 5–8, 10–11, 15, 18, 22, 24–25, 28, 30, 37, 43, 45–46, 106–107, 113, 123–127, 130–132, 142–143, 145–149, 151, 153–155, 163–164, 166, 170–171, 173–175, 178–180, 183, 186–188, 190–198, 202–203, 206–207, 218–220, 224–225, 227.

<sup>263</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 4–5, 7–8, 10–12, 17–18, 21, 23–24, 27–30, 37–38, 43, 123–127, 130, 132, 141, 146, 158–159, 163–164, 166, 171–175, 177–180, 182–184, 186–187, 189, 191–193, 196–203, 205–207, 212, 214–216, 220, 225, 227.

<sup>264</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2–3, 5–10, 14–16, 20–21, 24–26, 33, 40, 43–46, 51, 55–57, 61, 64, 70–73, 86, 99, 116, 124–125, 135, 137, 141, 144, 149, 153, 155, 157–158, 160–165, 173, 185, 187–188, 195, 201, 206–207, 212, 217, 219, 221, 224.

<sup>265</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 5, 9, 16, 25, 30, 35–36, 61, 65, 73, 98, 100–104, 108–111, 113, 116–119, 122, 127, 130–131, 164, 170, 183–184, 188–192, 195, 205, 208, 210–211, 214–219, 222–223, 226.

<sup>266</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 8–9, 14–16, 21, 23–26, 32, 44, 135, 137, 147–153, 155, 164, 205, 207–209, 211, 219–223, 227.

<sup>267</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 58, 60, 62, 66–67, 77–79, 81, 83–86, 88–89, 92, 94–98, 103–104, 106–108, 114, 117, 122, 134, 139.

<sup>268</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 16, 44, 59, 72, 141, 147–148, 150–153, 155, 158–159, 162, 171, 208–211, 220–223.

<sup>269</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 2, 6, 14, 32, 34–35, 37, 46, 52, 105, 113, 120, 124–125, 155, 191, 193–194, 196, 200, 208, 213.

<sup>270</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 12, 18, 23–25, 123, 126, 129, 147–148, 150–152, 155, 157, 162, 168, 212.

<sup>271</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 5, 11, 43, 46, 101–102, 104, 108–

Zhu Di (11 learners, 4.8 per cent);<sup>273</sup> and Zeng He (10 learners, 4.4 per cent).<sup>274</sup> Only five blank responses (2.2 per cent) were received from respondents.<sup>275</sup>

All of the above historical figures are to be found in the current Grade 10 to 12 History syllabuses. It is therefore not surprising that they have been selected by respondents as historical figures who impressed them the most. It is clear that different History educators emphasise different personalities in their teaching. Choices for Zhu Di and Zeng He, but for one learner, emanate entirely from Eastdene Combined School. Choices for both Lenin and Stalin are more frequent among learners from Hoërskool Ermelo. The inclusion of Mandela, Shaka and Biko, all in prominent positions, indicates that the surveyed learners do not avoid an interest in South African history or South African historical personalities. It is also interesting to note that learners from all culture groups, including Afrikaans-speaking learners found Nelson Mandela (11 responses),<sup>276</sup> Shaka (9 responses)<sup>277</sup> and Biko (4 responses)<sup>278</sup> impressive personalities to learn about.

Despite a different syllabus, it is worthwhile to compare my 2012 research findings with those of the Human Sciences Research Council from 1991.<sup>279</sup> The 1991 findings are classified according to race. Standard 9 (Grade 11) learners listed few South African historical personalities as impressive people learned about and where they are mentioned, they do not occupy prominent positions. Black 1991 Standard 9 History learners found Bismark, Hitler and Napoleon to be the most impressive personalities whom they had learned about. Paul Kruger occupies fourth place in their hierarchy of impressiveness, while Nelson Mandela occupies position seven. Steve Biko occupies position ten. Four of the top five positions are occupied by foreign personalities. Surveyed white learners selected Hitler,

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109, 114–115, 120, 154.

<sup>272</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 33, 40, 44, 47–48, 56, 63, 67, 74, 86–87, 125.

<sup>273</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 77–79, 82, 85–87, 92, 94, 96–97.

<sup>274</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 78, 83, 86–87, 91, 94–97, 134.

<sup>275</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 41, 54, 69, 121, 176.

<sup>276</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Afrikaans-speaking learners', Responses 3, 20, 137, 141, 201, 206–207, 212, 217, 219, 224.

<sup>277</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Afrikaans-speaking learners', Responses 184, 205, 214–219, 226.

<sup>278</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Afrikaans-speaking learners', Responses 137, 205, 207, 219.

<sup>279</sup> Van der Merwe, *et al*, pp. 218–219.



Bismark and Napoleon as their top three impressive historical personalities. Paul Kruger, General De Wet, Jan Smuts and Cecil John Rhodes make up the South African contingent of the top ten. Nelson Mandela does not get a mention. Mandela is not found in either the coloured or Indian selections which are also dominated by foreign historical personalities. Mandela, Shaka and Biko occupying positions three to five indicates that present day secondary school learners display more interest in local historical personalities than did their apartheid-era counterparts. A similar trend was noted about the preferences of Grade 8 and 9 Social Sciences learners.

Nelson Mandela (72 learners, 31.7 per cent) attracted the most nominations when FET Grade 10–12 History-taking respondents were asked to list impressive people about whom they would like to learn more.<sup>280</sup> Shaka (30 learners, 13.2 per cent)<sup>281</sup> and Steve Biko (30 learners, 13.2 per cent)<sup>282</sup> each attracted significant interest from learners. Other historical figures about whom learners were interested in knowing more included Adolf Hitler (24 learners, 10.6 per cent);<sup>283</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr (19 learners, 8.4 per cent);<sup>284</sup> O. R. Tambo (17 learners, 7.5 per cent);<sup>285</sup> Barack Obama (14 learners, 6.2 per cent);<sup>286</sup> Winston Churchill (13 learners, 5.7 per cent);<sup>287</sup> Benito Mussolini (11 learners, 4.8 per cent);<sup>288</sup> Gandhi (10 learners, 4.4 per cent);<sup>289</sup> Jacob Zuma (9 learners, 4.0 per cent)<sup>290</sup> and Chris Hani (9 learners, 4.0 per cent).<sup>291</sup> Respondents returned only 16 blank responses.<sup>292</sup>

<sup>280</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 35–36, 45–48, 53, 56, 60, 62–66, 69–70, 72–74, 77, 79, 87–88, 91, 94, 97–99, 102–104, 107–109, 113, 115, 117, 122–131, 138–144, 147–148, 150–152, 163–164, 167, 172, 183, 185, 188, 191, 199, 214, 218, 227.

<sup>281</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 13, 35, 59, 65, 70, 74, 82–83, 91, 93–94, 97–100, 106–107, 115, 119–120, 124, 136, 148, 158, 161, 165, 179, 185, 188, 191.

<sup>282</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 14, 16, 22–25, 28, 32, 47–48, 53, 59, 70, 83, 86, 99, 113, 115–116, 119, 127–132, 152–153, 192.

<sup>283</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 38, 78, 99, 123, 139, 156, 160, 163–165, 167–168, 171, 174, 177, 185, 188–189, 191, 198–199, 206–207, 213.

<sup>284</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 12, 16–18, 26, 48, 72, 141, 149, 152, 159–160, 166, 171, 184, 195, 205, 222.

<sup>285</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3–4, 12, 15, 27–28, 45, 53, 59, 84, 113–114, 116–117, 119, 122, 153.

<sup>286</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-takers learners' questionnaire, Responses 36, 46, 58, 87, 102, 134–135, 157–158, 162, 210–211, 223, 227.

<sup>287</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 19, 24, 28, 36, 159, 160, 170, 178, 182, 190, 193, 195, 205.

<sup>288</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 170, 174, 180, 186, 190, 193–194, 196, 206–207, 226.

<sup>289</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 33, 37, 40, 72, 88, 91, 105, 109, 210.

A surprisingly wide general knowledge and sphere of historical interest was displayed by the choices that learners made. In my view, the general historical knowledge of some learners may be more extensive than that of some of their educators. One Steelcrest Grade 12 learner expressed the wish to learn more about 'Tokugawa Leyasu, King Boris of Russia, Gandhi, the Dalai Lama and Buddha'<sup>293</sup> while another Steelcrest High School Grade 12 learner wished to discover more about 'Julius Caesar, Nero, William Wallace, Attila the Hun, Darius of Persia, Gandhi, Ramses II, Catherine of Russia and Oda Nobunoga of Japan'.<sup>294</sup> It is difficult to imagine any secondary school History educator being equipped to teach about such an extensive list of historical personalities. It is easy for educators to underestimate the interests and capabilities of learners. The advice given to me by a wise Professor of Church History, namely that it is important for teachers to have enough humility to be aware that some of their students may have more intellectual ability than they themselves have, seems applicable to secondary school History educators.<sup>295</sup>

In responding to question 12 which asked respondents why they had chosen to study History after Grade 9 almost all learners were able to identify the reasons why they had opted to take History as an elective FET subject. Only six (2.6 per cent) blank responses were received.<sup>296</sup> Responses were very positive – 60 learners (26.4 per cent)<sup>297</sup> reported taking History because they liked or loved the subject and 93 learners (41.0 per cent)<sup>298</sup> found

<sup>290</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 46, 61, 69, 77, 87, 98, 128, 139, 158.

<sup>291</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 12, 24, 28, 32, 43, 114–116, 122.

<sup>292</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 30, 31, 41, 55, 67–68, 80–81, 85, 111, 146, 175–176, 200, 221, 224.

<sup>293</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 1. [English; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>294</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 6. [English; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>295</sup> Discussion with the late Professor Calvin Cook, Head of the Department of Divinity at Rhodes University.

<sup>296</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 57, 67, 85, 119, 176, 200.

<sup>297</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–2, 13, 16–17, 21, 26, 30–32, 34, 39, 41–44, 48–52, 56, 59, 74, 83, 86, 96, 106, 108, 110, 143–144, 148–150, 152–153, 156, 161–162, 165, 168–170, 178, 182, 188, 194, 202, 204, 206–207, 209, 213–214, 220, 222–224, 227.

<sup>298</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11–12, 23, 27, 33, 35–36, 38, 40, 45, 47, 53–54, 60, 63–66, 70, 72, 75, 77, 79, 82, 91–93, 95, 98, 100–101, 103–105, 107, 109, 113–114, 116, 121–122, 124–125, 130, 132–137, 139–140, 142, 145–148, 151, 154–155, 159–160, 164, 171, 173, 174, 177, 180–181, 183–184, 191, 193, 195–196, 199, 201, 203, 205, 211–212, 215–217, 219, 221, 225–226.

History interesting. Only one learner mentioned that he/she loved the subject and found it interesting,<sup>299</sup> which means that 67.8 per cent of surveyed learners responded positively by noting either an interest in History or a love for it. The following responses, both from Grade 10 Hoërskool Ermelo learners, display an infectious love for History:

Me and History are in a relationship. I love history with all my heart and am good at it.<sup>300</sup>

I really loved the subject. It was a subject that kept me working at night to find out why things happened the way they did.<sup>301</sup>

Few negative responses were received. I was pleasantly surprised to find that only 15 learners (6.6 per cent) mentioned having taken History after Grade 9 because of subject choice issues.<sup>302</sup> One Eastdene Combined School learner's response typifies the tendency to use History as a dumping ground for learners of lesser ability – 'I chose to do history because there were too many people in Geography and they said I was warming up the seats in Geography'.<sup>303</sup> This streaming tendency, which works to the detriment of History, remains a potent factor at most Mpumalanga secondary schools, despite the fact that few of the surveyed learners mentioned having being streamed to History. At Steelcrest High School, school policy is that learners have to obtain at least 60 per cent in Mathematics in Grade 9 to choose it or Accounting as a FET subject and at least 60 per cent in Mathematics and Natural Science in Grade 9 to qualify to take Science in Grade 10. Restrictions are being considered for admission into Grade 10 Life Science. Tourism, Consumer Science, Geography and History take up the balance of learners who do not qualify for admission into what are termed the 'difficult subjects'. My 2008 research into History education at Mpumalanga

<sup>299</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 148. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Middelburg Combined School]

<sup>300</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 168. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Hoërskool Ermelo]

<sup>301</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 169. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Hoërskool Ermelo]

<sup>302</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 7, 19–20, 22–23, 36, 73, 78, 80, 84, 131, 175, 179, 185, 210.

<sup>303</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 78. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Eastdene Combined School]

black secondary schools revealed that streaming learners considered to be less able into History has been common practice.<sup>304</sup>

Only six learners (2.6 per cent)<sup>305</sup> noted that they had taken History because it was an easy option. Positively, 10 learners (4.4 per cent)<sup>306</sup> expressed the desire to continue with History study at university. A liking for the teacher had convinced seven learners (3.1 per cent)<sup>307</sup> to take History while one learner<sup>308</sup> noted that despite disliking the teacher he had taken the subject anyway.

Question 13 which asked learners to write down the ways in which History studies might help learners with their adult life or future career drew 84 (37.0 per cent)<sup>309</sup> blank responses. This may indicate a degree of uncertainty among respondents as to exactly how their History studies might assist them as adults. This may also indicate the need for career guidance at secondary school. A significant number of respondents (80 learners, 35.2 per cent)<sup>310</sup> felt that History study would equip them with life skills and attitudes which would help them in their future lives or careers. This pleasing statistic indicates that a humanitarian value is perceived of History study. History was seen as a discipline which could help learners become better people with a deeper insight into life. Academic study was in this case not simply equated to bread and butter issues and financial opportunity. Studying History was perceived as assisting learners to make better moral and ethical decisions:

It will help me understand the world around me and to some extent understand the people around me.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>304</sup> Black, pp. 147–149.

<sup>305</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 40, 123, 158, 163, 171.

<sup>306</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 14, 55, 83, 90, 102, 140, 155, 187, 192, 222.

<sup>307</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 21, 49, 135, 158, 189, 202, 204.

<sup>308</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 29. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>309</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 10, 17–18, 22, 27–30, 34–35, 37, 46, 54–57, 61, 63, 67, 73, 75, 78–79, 82, 84–86, 89, 91–93, 95, 100, 102, 107, 109, 115–119, 121–124, 128–130, 142–143, 145–147, 151, 156, 159–161, 164, 171, 174–176, 179–180, 183, 186–188, 192, 198–200, 202, 209, 212–213, 218, 220–221, 224, 227.

<sup>310</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2–3, 5–8, 11–16, 20–21, 23–26, 32–33, 36, 39–43, 48, 50, 52–53, 65–66, 69, 74, 76–77, 81, 87–88, 90, 98, 101, 104–106, 108, 120, 125, 127, 133–135, 137, 144, 148–150, 153–155, 166–167, 170, 173, 177, 182, 184, 193, 195, 197, 201, 204–207, 214, 217, 219, 225, 226.

<sup>311</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 12. [Indigenous African Language

It will help me to think before I talk or do anything. It will help me to respect and treat all people equally.<sup>312</sup>

To react to different situations and handle different heartaches and to study the human mind.<sup>313</sup>

Studying History was perceived by 19 respondents (8.4 per cent)<sup>314</sup> to equip people with academic skills. Aside from two respondents<sup>315</sup> these learners were all from Steelcrest High School or Hoërskool Ermelo.

It was pleasing to note that 68 learners (30.0 per cent)<sup>316</sup> believed that studying History would have a positive impact upon their future careers. The positive benefit of studying History for a future potential legal career was noted by 39 learners (17.2 per cent)<sup>317</sup> while six learners (2.6 per cent)<sup>318</sup> believed that studying History would favourably assist them with future political careers.

When responding to question 10 which asked respondents whether the past could teach people anything meaningful, only one learner (0.4 per cent) felt that the past could not teach anyone anything meaningful.<sup>319</sup> This is hopeful statistic indeed. Eleven learners (4.8 per cent) responded with blank returns which may indicate that they were not sure how the

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- 312 speaker; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]  
2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 155. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Middelburg Combined School]
- 313 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 195. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 11, Hoërskool Ermelo]
- 314 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 5, 9, 15, 32–33, 36, 42–43, 59, 81, 141, 166, 177–178, 181, 184, 214, 217.
- 315 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 81, 141. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Eastdene Combined School and Afrikaans; Grade 11; Middelburg Combined School]
- 316 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 6, 8–9, 16, 19, 21, 25, 31, 33, 38, 41–42, 47–49, 51, 58–60, 62, 64–65, 70–72, 83, 88, 94, 96–97, 99, 104, 110–114, 125–126, 132–133, 135–136, 139–141, 144, 148, 152, 154, 157–158, 162–163, 165, 172–173, 185, 189–191, 196, 201, 210–211, 222–223.
- 317 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 9, 16, 19, 31, 41–42, 47, 51, 58–60, 62, 64, 70–71, 83, 88, 94, 99, 110–111, 113–114, 126, 136, 141, 148, 152, 157–158, 165, 189, 191, 196, 201, 210–211, 222–223.
- 318 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 48, 132, 135, 139, 210–211.
- 319 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 127. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Eastdene Combined School]

past might teach meaningful lessons.<sup>320</sup> Question nine posed a related question, namely ‘To what extent is it necessary to study the past?’ Here only 15 learners (6.6 per cent) responded with blank returns<sup>321</sup> and only three (1.3 per cent) felt that it was not necessary to study the past.<sup>322</sup>

A significant number of learners believed that studying History helped them develop good morals and values and therefore could assist one with one’s personal life. The past teaching people good life values was noted by 49 (21.6 per cent)<sup>323</sup> of respondents to question 10 while 25 learners (11.0 per cent)<sup>324</sup> thought that a study of the past could assist with one’s personal life in the area of good values as they responded to question nine. The responses received were heartening:

Yes. It helps me to see things in a different way and not to judge but to try and understand.<sup>325</sup>

Yes, it does – morals and values. Wisdom from the past helps the present situation. It teaches us good morals from the past and good values. Lessons are learnt from the past and then used in today’s times.<sup>326</sup>

The past teaches us fairness; how to predict; how to judge; how to forgive and how to understand life.<sup>327</sup>

<sup>320</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 27, 41, 57, 67, 78, 132, 173, 175–176, 189, 200.

<sup>321</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 41–42, 56–57, 61, 67, 85, 116–117, 119, 122, 151, 176, 197, 200.

<sup>322</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 28, 43, 62.

<sup>323</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 1, 6, 12, 15, 18, 25, 29, 31, 37, 4, 46, 48, 59, 63, 65, 72, 79, 82, 88, 101, 129, 130, 135, 137, 140, 147, 151–152, 154–155, 157, 161, 164, 169, 171–172, 174, 183, 195, 198–199, 210–211, 214–217, 219, 226.

<sup>324</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 5, 18, 46, 60, 65, 70, 92, 141, 154, 157, 168–169, 174, 194, 198, 201–202, 205–207, 209, 218–219, 224, 226.

<sup>325</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 18. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>326</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 44. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 11; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>327</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 65. [English; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

Hoërskool Ermelo respondents appeared far more aware of the personal and moral value of History education than did the respondents from the other three schools. In responding to question 10, 19 Hoërskool Ermelo learners (26.4 per cent of the school's total)<sup>328</sup> felt that good moral values were what the past could teach us, and in response to question nine, 16 (22.2 per cent of the school's total)<sup>329</sup> felt that studying History could assist with one's personal life in the area of morals and values. Hoërskool Ermelo learners are clearly making studying History more personal than are the learners from the other surveyed schools. They appear to be more personally involved in the subject, a fact confirmed to me in an interview with their History educator. Interestingly, all of the Hoërskool Ermelo Grade 12 respondents who stated that History study could assist with their personal lives and moral values were Afrikaans-speaking learners. The influence of the educator, a woman utterly committed to teaching History, is clear.

Teaching us to appreciate the life we presently enjoy in South Africa was seen by 18 respondents (7.9 per cent) to question 10 to be an important lesson which could be gleaned from studying History.<sup>330</sup> Responses reflected a deep sense of gratitude:

It makes us know how lucky we are to have this opportunity to live in this country at this time.<sup>331</sup>

We can see what inspired people to do what they did and see what things there are today which we can be grateful for.<sup>332</sup>

It reminds us to be thankful and cherish what we have now.<sup>333</sup>

<sup>328</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 157, 161, 164, 169, 171–172, 174, 183, 195, 198–199, 210–211, 214, 215–215, 216–217, 219, 226.

<sup>329</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 157, 168–169, 174, 194, 198, 201–202, 205–207, 209, 218–219, 224, 226.

<sup>330</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 6, 59, 84–86, 88, 105, 108, 128, 137, 146, 150, 152, 185, 188, 190, 195, 197, 221, 227.

<sup>331</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 84. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Eastdene Combined School]

<sup>332</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 185. [English; Grade 11; Hoërskool Ermelo]

<sup>333</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 227. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Hoërskool Ermelo]

History teaches us that the past repeats itself was the belief of seven ( 3.1 per cent)<sup>334</sup> respondents to question 10. History is a discipline which helps us learn from past mistakes was propounded by 35 (15.4 per cent)<sup>335</sup> respondents, a sentiment that was echoed by 19 (8.4 per cent)<sup>336</sup> respondents to question nine who felt that it was necessary to study the past to avoid repeating past mistakes.

In responding to question 10, 33 learners (14.5 per cent)<sup>337</sup> felt that History could meaningfully teach people about the apartheid struggle while in responding to question nine, 18 learners (7.9 per cent)<sup>338</sup> felt that it was necessary to study History in order to learn about apartheid. The combined total number of learners who responded in both questions by stating that studying apartheid was necessary was 44 (19.4 per cent). This certainly contradicts Dryden's finding that particularly indigenous African language speaking learners wished to avoid reflecting on apartheid as it brought back unwanted and painful memories.<sup>339</sup> A shift in attitude is also evident when my own 2009 research findings into the perceptions of indigenous African language speakers toward secondary school History education are compared to my 2012 research.<sup>340</sup> Few contemporary secondary school learners find apartheid a painful topic to explore and many find it helpful to do so.

Awareness of knowing where we come from was considered to be an important teaching of History education by 17 (7.5 per cent)<sup>341</sup> respondents to question 10. This was echoed by the 48 (21.1 per cent)<sup>342</sup> respondents who felt, in response to question nine, that finding out about one's roots made it necessary to study the past.

<sup>334</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 4, 16, 23, 42, 45, 51, 131.

<sup>335</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 7, 9, 14, 19, 21–22, 30, 33, 36–37, 40, 42–43, 50, 56, 66, 95, 109, 142, 149–151, 161, 178, 182, 185, 187, 203–204, 206, 213.

<sup>336</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 9, 15, 23, 29, 33, 36, 39, 45, 48, 87, 135, 137, 141, 147, 149, 154–155, 160, 173.

<sup>337</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 6, 11, 13, 28, 70, 77, 83, 91, 94, 97, 107–108, 110, 114–115, 117, 120, 125–126, 133, 146–149, 152, 158, 162, 188, 190–191, 209, 220, 225, 227.

<sup>338</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 19, 22, 84, 86, 114, 121, 126, 133, 150, 152, 154, 158, 169, 186, 188–189, 220–221.

<sup>339</sup> Dryden, pp. 52–53, 61.

<sup>340</sup> Black, p. 172, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 23, 28, 48, 50, 62, 71, 82, 87.

<sup>341</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaires, Responses 21, 25, 79, 106, 113, 121, 151, 159–160, 181, 201, 206–207, 212, 221, 223, 227.

<sup>342</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaires, Responses 2, 7, 9, 13, 22–23, 35, 46–47, 69, 80, 83, 90, 98, 100, 106, 109, 113–114, 120, 125, 127–128, 130–132, 137, 141, 144–145, 148, 156, 164,



My personal experience as a secondary school educator enables me to understand why so many learners express a desire to know their roots. Over 70 per cent of learners at Steelcrest High School do not live in complete, traditional family units.<sup>343</sup> Many learners have lost their parents, either to divorce or death or live in homes where their parents have left to work elsewhere. It is apparent to educators that the majority of their learners live within a broken social structure. The resilience of these learners in these difficult circumstances is often astounding. It is not surprising that so many learners want to discover their origins. My 2012 results match the responses I obtained in my 2008 research among African language speaking learners, where 94 learners from all three surveyed groups felt that History education could help them discover more about their roots.<sup>344</sup> In all three 2012 surveys I conducted, 28 Afrikaans-speaking learners also expressed a need to find out about their roots.<sup>345</sup> The contentions of Rösen,<sup>346</sup> that having a sense of one's own personal history, or historical consciousness, is an integral component of the human psyche are shown to be valid in my research findings. Rösen contends that historical consciousness, a consciousness of history, entails a relation between past and present and an outlook into the future.<sup>347</sup> Historical memory directs the past to present day situations. A sense of

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180–181, 184, 195–196, 199, 201, 203–204, 208, 210, 212, 215, 223, 227.

<sup>343</sup> I am aware that differing perceptions about what constitutes a 'traditional family unit' exist. For the purposes of the discussion above, I assume that such a family unit entails at least one parent living with their child/children. In my experience as an educator, it is common for indigenous African speaking children to live away from both parents. It is not unusual for children to live only with minor siblings. It must be said that when such children are cared for by relatives such as uncles and grandparents, that this accords with the African cultural emphasis of families existing within the ambit of the extended family. Hence, one may assume such an arrangement to be 'traditional' within African culture. I am referring to children who grow up without any form of solid family foundation and who therefore may experience a strong desire to discover their roots – where they come from – and by implication where they fit into society.

<sup>344</sup> Black, p. 180–181, 2008 Steelcrest learners', Responses 4–5, 7, 12–13, 15, 17, 21–22, 24, 26, 28–29, 31–33, 35–36, 39–40, 43, 45–46, 50–59, 62–68, 70, 72–73, 77–79, 81, 85–86, 88–89; 2008 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 89, 95, 103, 111, 119, 125, 152; 2008 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 7, 9, 15–17, 20, 22–24, 26–27, 30–33, 36, 39, 44–45, 52–54, 56–58, 67, 70–71, 73–78, 81–82.

<sup>345</sup> 2012 Social Sciences learners' questionnaire, Responses 300, 356, 361, 372, 373, 411, 419–421, 424; 2012 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 79, 130, 137, 141, 180–181, 184, 201, 206–207, 212; 2012 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 127, 241–242, 256, 260, 272, 285.

<sup>346</sup> See J. Rösen, 'Historical Consciousness and Historical Education'. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT), Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990 and 'Historical Education in a Multicultural Society'. Papers presented at the Third National SASHT conference, 12–13 July 1990, in M. H. Trümpelmann, *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*. (Johannesburg, 1990). Mazabow's thesis is based on Rösen's work.

<sup>347</sup> Rösen, 'Historical Consciousness and Historical Education', conference papers, in Trümpelmann, p. 135.

historical consciousness is needed by people to 'orientate one's practical life in the course of time'.<sup>348</sup> The strong expression by surveyed learners of a need to know about their origins and ancestry is evidence of the unrecognised sense of historical consciousness operating within them and points strongly to the need for History education at school.

An appreciable number of respondents to question nine (82 learners, 36.1 per cent)<sup>349</sup> stated that studying History had increased their understanding of the world. The intellectual and writing ability of respondents from all surveyed schools was noteworthy. Some of the Steelcrest High School Grade 12 responses are examples of learners' insight into this benefit of History education:

Learning about the past enables us to understand the present with a more in-depth understanding, and also allows us to predict and survey the future from a wider perspective.<sup>350</sup>

To gain deeper insight into the decisions and events that shaped the world we live in today and see the pattern certain decisions made so that the repetition of past mistakes can be avoided, as far as human nature allows.<sup>351</sup>

Few surveyed learners encountered obstacles to their study of History. The large number of blank responses (176 learners, 77.5 per cent)<sup>352</sup> to question 11 is confirmation of this. The most common obstacle encountered by respondents was dealing with ill-disciplined and difficult learners in class (17 learners, 7.5 per cent).<sup>353</sup> Unruly learners were mentioned as a difficulty by learners at all the surveyed schools. The prevailing attitude adopted by most learners in reaction to behaviourally challenged learners was well summed up by a Grade 11

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>349</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–3, 5–8, 11–14, 16, 20, 25, 29–32, 38, 45–47, 52–53, 55, 59–60, 63–65, 69, 71–74, 79, 81, 87, 95, 100, 103–104, 109, 112, 125, 129, 133, 142–143, 146–149, 153–154, 159, 161–162, 165, 170–172, 174–175, 177–179, 184–185, 187, 190–193, 203, 205, 208, 210, 214, 216–217, 219.

<sup>350</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 1. [English; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>351</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 29. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12 Steelcrest High School]

<sup>352</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 4–6, 9, 11–16, 18, 23–25, 29, 31–37, 39, 41, 43–49, 51–57, 60–61, 63–69, 71–72, 74, 76–81, 83–87, 89–97, 99–100, 103–124, 126–127, 131–134, 137–156, 159–160, 162, 164–165, 167–177, 179, 181–187, 189–196, 198–200, 202–208, 211, 215–218, 220–227.

<sup>353</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2–3, 7–8, 20, 40, 70, 82, 88, 98, 101–102, 125, 178, 188, 201, 214.

respondent from Hoërskool Ermelo who noted that ‘... There are a few difficult learners in our class but we learn to live with them and work around them.’<sup>354</sup> Difficulties with the teacher were an obstacle mentioned by six learners (2.6 per cent).<sup>355</sup> Having too little time to study posed a difficulty for seven learners (3.1 per cent).<sup>356</sup> Only one learner mentioned that limited resources at school posed a difficulty to learning History.<sup>357</sup>

Varied responses were received when respondents were asked to outline the things that they liked about studying History (question 14). It was however clear that many learners greatly enjoy the subject:

It’s interesting, it’s fun, it’s adventurous, it’s exciting, it’s entertaining.<sup>358</sup>

I love learning about the past because it is the past that determines our future. The other thing I love about learning History is that I’ve noticed that whatever we have learnt or have today was linked to the past in some way. Lastly, in our History classes, you know when you come in that there is always something new you must expect to learn every day.<sup>359</sup>

It is fun and enjoyable. It influences the world. History repeats itself. Politicians relate to history. It is one of the most fantastic subjects ever.<sup>360</sup>

Few blank responses (14 learners, 6.2 per cent)<sup>361</sup> were received. Positive responses include the idea that History improves understanding and general knowledge (46 learners, 20.3 per

<sup>354</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 178. [Afrikaans; Grade 11; Hoërskool Ermelo]

<sup>355</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 7, 10, 70, 75, 126, 158.

<sup>356</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 26, 73, 90, 123, 130, 188, 219.

<sup>357</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 128. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Eastdene Combined School]

<sup>358</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 3. [Afrikaans; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>359</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 88. [English; Grade 10; Eastdene Combined School]

<sup>360</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 144. [English; Grade 11; Middelburg Combined School]

<sup>361</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 41, 57, 61, 67, 68, 70, 73, 131, 172, 176, 198, 200, 213, 225.

cent);<sup>362</sup> that History includes learning about South Africa (16 responses, 7.0 per cent);<sup>363</sup> that History includes learning about leaders and heroes (16 responses, 7.0 per cent);<sup>364</sup> that History is fun (10 learners, 4.4 per cent);<sup>365</sup> that History encourages debate and discussion (10 learners, 4.4 per cent);<sup>366</sup> that History includes essays/writing (9 learners, 4.0 per cent)<sup>367</sup> and that History teaches one research skills (6 learners, 2.6 per cent).<sup>368</sup> Ten learners (4.4 per cent)<sup>369</sup> felt that they liked History because they found it easy while only one negative response was provided to the question, namely from one Steelcrest Grade 11 learner who stated that 'If we were studying the good stuff it would be knowing the past and being able to argue a topic or do research – if we were doing any of that!'<sup>370</sup>

The many blank responses (52 learners, 22.9 per cent)<sup>371</sup> received to question 15 which asked respondents to outline what they did not like about studying History reveal a high level of contentment with the subject. Eight respondents (3.5 per cent)<sup>372</sup> specifically stated that there was nothing which they did not like about studying History. The most popular response (45 learners, 19.8 per cent)<sup>373</sup> was that respondents disliked long essays or written work generally. This may relate to the fact that History is a discipline which entails writing

<sup>362</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1–2, 4–7, 12–13, 16–19, 21, 24, 25, 29, 38, 40, 43–44, 46, 52–53, 59, 65–66, 69, 71, 74, 81–82, 86–89, 106, 119, 125, 140, 148, 153, 184–185, 191, 199, 205.

<sup>363</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 24, 27, 34, 47, 84, 86, 100, 124, 148–149, 152–153, 155, 188, 221–222.

<sup>364</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 5, 25, 34, 37–38, 50, 84, 91, 115, 130, 148–149, 153, 181, 183, 196.

<sup>365</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 5, 44, 104, 133, 144, 156, 170, 201, 227.

<sup>366</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 62, 110, 116–117, 121, 128, 187, 189, 195, 211.

<sup>367</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 62, 64, 102, 106–107, 113, 117, 128, 141.

<sup>368</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 52, 101, 118–119, 146, 150.

<sup>369</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 32, 97, 112, 126, 143, 156, 158, 171, 197, 201.

<sup>370</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 42. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 11; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>371</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 6, 11, 14–16, 22, 26, 29, 34, 41, 51, 53, 55, 57, 61, 67–69, 73, 76, 80, 82, 85–86, 90, 93, 120, 126–127, 130–133, 135, 145, 151, 170, 172–174, 176, 179, 190, 192, 195–196, 198, 200, 209, 213, 227.

<sup>372</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 13, 17–18, 111, 157, 168, 189, 206.

<sup>373</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 4, 8–9, 19, 21, 43, 49, 87, 94–95, 97, 100, 103, 105, 109, 112–115, 117–118, 122, 128–129, 137, 141–142, 150, 153–154, 165–167, 169, 181, 184, 199, 202, 204–205, 210–211, 220–221, 223.

and many learners do not possess good English writing ability. Surveyed learners expressed their difficulties in writing History essays:

When we get on a new topic and I get lost in between I struggle to write an essay full on during the exams.<sup>374</sup>

Too many essays. You write and write and after that you get a low mark and that's not healthy.<sup>375</sup>

A dislike of available topics in the syllabus was expressed by 37 (16.3 per cent)<sup>376</sup> respondents, while 25 (11.0 per cent)<sup>377</sup> felt that History entailed too much work. It is noteworthy that all but seven of the respondents who complained that History was too much work were from Hoërskool Ermelo, which has by far the best Grade 12 History results of the surveyed schools and indeed within Mpumalanga. Other responses included a dislike of learning dates (8 learners, 3.5 per cent);<sup>378</sup> an unwillingness to learn about other countries (7 learners, 3.1 per cent)<sup>379</sup> and the experience of History as boring (18 learners, 7.9 per cent).<sup>380</sup> Of the 18 learners who found History boring, 14 were Steelcrest High School Grade 10 and Grade 11 learners<sup>381</sup> who struggle with the presentation of the teacher:

It can get monotonous and mind-crushingly boring at times.<sup>382</sup>

When the teacher is tired and we get bored.<sup>383</sup>

<sup>374</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 21. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>375</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 118. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 11; Eastdene Combined School]

<sup>376</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 8, 10, 20, 23–24, 27–28, 39, 42, 44–45, 47–48, 50, 54, 56, 65, 75, 77–78, 84, 89, 92, 123–124, 128, 134, 138, 147–149, 159, 161, 164, 185, 199, 214.

<sup>377</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 35, 74, 107, 113, 142, 153, 156, 165, 180, 183, 186, 188, 193, 197, 201, 203, 207, 210–211, 217, 220, 223, 225–226.

<sup>378</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 12, 33, 37, 124, 152, 160, 166, 175.

<sup>379</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 24, 28, 78, 128, 147–148, 159.

<sup>380</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 30, 31, 36, 38–40, 44–45, 58, 60, 62–63, 70–71, 81, 185, 199, 212, 214, 216.

<sup>381</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 30–31, 36, 38–40, 44–45, 58, 60, 62–63, 70–71.

<sup>382</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 36. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 11; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>383</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 45. [English; Grade 11; Steelcrest High School]

When we talk about the same thing everyday.<sup>384</sup>

Only 22 learners (9.7 per cent)<sup>385</sup> submitted blank responses to question six which elicited suggestions from respondents as to how History lessons could be made more enjoyable. Respondents cited the need to enliven History lessons by travelling beyond the classroom which involved trips to historical sites (58 learners, 25.6 per cent)<sup>386</sup> or museums (32 learners, 14.1 per cent)<sup>387</sup> or to engage in additional classroom activities such as doing historical drama (8 learners, 3.5 per cent),<sup>388</sup> engaging in debate (21 learners, 9.3 per cent),<sup>389</sup> watching historical movies (25 learners, 11.0 per cent)<sup>390</sup> or working in groups (7 learners, 3.1 per cent).<sup>391</sup> Some learners expressed the need to study more South African history (20 learners, 8.8 per cent)<sup>392</sup> while others expressed the view that they were quite content with their History lessons just the way they were (10 learners, 4.4 per cent).<sup>393</sup> Eleven learners (4.8 per cent)<sup>394</sup> expressed the view that the teacher could be blamed for History lessons not being enjoyable.

<sup>384</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 62. [Afrikaans; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>385</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 6, 12, 29, 57, 67, 85, 96, 102, 111, 118, 132, 145, 175–177, 179, 182, 189, 198–199, 200.

<sup>386</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 7, 10–11, 14, 20, 23–25, 30–31, 33, 41–43, 46–48, 56, 63–66, 68, 75, 84, 94, 97, 100, 106, 113–114, 119, 126, 141, 143–144, 147, 149, 155, 157, 163, 166, 170, 174, 178, 184–185, 188, 190–191, 196, 202, 205, 209, 211, 220, 222, 224, 226.

<sup>387</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2, 8, 10, 16–17, 20–21, 24–25, 32–33, 35, 46, 52, 63, 66, 84, 86, 94, 100, 105–106, 113, 119, 139, 150, 153, 178, 183, 191, 222.

<sup>388</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 58, 71, 80, 87, 91–92, 162, 212.

<sup>389</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 18, 30, 52, 62, 76, 78, 83, 88, 107–108, 110, 114–116, 148, 158, 174, 191, 194–195, 209.

<sup>390</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 32–34, 43–48, 54, 58–61, 64, 70, 89, 98–99, 105, 124–125, 128–129, 153, 160, 167, 171, 178, 180–181, 183, 185, 190, 193, 197, 201–202, 204–208, 212, 214, 217, 219, 221, 224, 226.

<sup>391</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 19, 34, 88, 103, 121, 162, 193.

<sup>392</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 15, 27–28, 37, 53, 56, 66, 86, 90, 105, 113, 117, 122, 136, 155, 164, 172, 188, 190, 227.

<sup>393</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 26, 72, 90, 127, 131, 146, 168, 203, 218, 225.

<sup>394</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 22, 49, 64, 69, 77, 81–82, 93, 95, 133, 186.

### 7.5.3 FET (Grade 10–12) non-History-taking learners

**TABLE 7.13**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS												
	STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL			MIDDELBURG MUSLIM SCHOOL		HOËRSKOOL MIDDELBURG			TOTAL BY GRADE			COMBINED TOTAL
GRADE	10	11	12	11	12	10	11	12	10	11	12	
	52	82	59	20	14	20	19	20	72	121	93	286

Table 7.13 above records the numbers of learners who completed the non-History-taking secondary school learners' questionnaire. Three schools took part in the survey, namely Steelcrest High School, Middelburg Muslim School and Hoërskool Middelburg. The spread of learners who completed the questionnaire is broadly representative of the learner population found in Mpumalanga and most parts of South Africa.

**TABLE 7.14**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT RESPONDENTS' HOME LANGUAGE									
	STEELCREST HIGH SCHOOL			MIDDELBURG MUSLIM SCHOOL		HOËRSKOOL MIDDELBURG			TOTAL
LANGUAGE	GD 10	GD 11	GD 12	GD 11	GD 12	GD 10	GD 11	GD 12	
ENGLISH	5	13	7	17	10	5	4	4	65
ZULU	20	32	27	1	1	0	1	0	82
PEDI	7	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	17
SWATI	5	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	14
SOTHO	4	8	5	0	1	0	2	0	20
AFRIKAANS	2	6	2	0	0	15	12	16	53
NDEBELE	5	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	17
OTHER	4	7	3	2	2	0	0	0	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	52	82	59	20	14	20	19	20	286

Table 7.14 above depicts the home languages – and also the cultural affiliations – of the 286 surveyed non-History-taking learners. Learners speaking various African languages accounted for 58.7 per cent of the total number of respondents; Afrikaans-speaking learners accounted for 18.5 per cent and English-speaking respondents accounted for 22.7 per cent. Zulu-speaking learners accounted for 28.7 per cent of the total number of respondents.

**TABLE 7.15**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT					
DO YOU WATCH TELEVISION SHOWS OR DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT HISTORY?					
		Gd 10	Gd 11	Gd 12	TOTAL PER SCHOOL
Steelcrest High School	YES	31 (59.6%)	45 (54.9%)	27 (45.8%)	103 (53.4%)
	NO	21 (40.4%)	37 (45.1%)	32 (54.2%)	90 (46.6%)
Middelburg Muslim School	YES		14 (70.0%)	9 (64.3%)	23 (67.6%)
	NO		6 (30.0%)	5 (35.7%)	11 (32.4%)
Hoërskool Middelburg	YES	14 (70.0%)	11 (57.9%)	14 (70.0%)	39 (66.1%)
	NO	6 (30.0%)	8 (42.1%)	6 (30.0%)	20 (33.9%)

Table 7.15 reflects respondents' answers to the question which queried whether or not they watched television shows or documentaries about history. The purpose of the question was to establish the level of interest which learners had in popular history. The results I obtained pleasantly surprised me – the majority of respondents (165, 57.7 per cent) stated that they did watch history programmes. Middelburg Muslim School (23 learners, 67.6 per cent) and Hoërskool Middelburg (39 learners, 66.1 per cent) learners enjoyed watching popular history programmes the most. The slightly lower percentage of learners at Steelcrest High School who watch television shows about history may be related to the fact that on average these learners live in less affluent homes than learners who attend Middelburg Muslim School and Hoërskool Middelburg. These results illustrate that young people do not lack interest in history.

**TABLE 7.16**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT					
IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA?					
		Gd 10	Gd 11	Gd 12	TOTAL PER SCHOOL
Steelcrest High School	YES	46 (88.5%)	75 (91.5%)	50 (84.7%)	171 (88.6%)
	NO	6 (11.5%)	7 (8.5%)	9 (15.3%)	22 (11.4%)
Middelburg Muslim School	YES		19 (95.0%)	14 (100.0%)	33 (97.1%)
	NO		1 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.9%)
Hoërskool Middelburg	YES	16 (80.0%)	14 (73.7%)	19 (95.0%)	49 (83.1%)



	NO	4 (20.0%)	5 (26.3%)	1 (5.0%)	10 (16.9%)
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Table 7.16 reflects the answers respondents gave to the question of whether or not it was important to know the history of South Africa. The overwhelming majority of respondents (253 learners, 88.5 per cent) felt that it was. Middelburg Muslim School (33 learners, 97.1 per cent) felt most strongly that it was important to know the history of South Africa. This refutes the idea that South African Muslims are as a rule not interested in the history of their own country but more interested in worldwide Islamic history.<sup>395</sup> These results also indicate a high level of interest in history among the surveyed non-History-taking learners.

**TABLE 7.17**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT					
IS HISTORY A VALUABLE SUBJECT?					
		Gd 10	Gd 11	Gd 12	TOTAL PER SCHOOL
Steelcrest High School	YES	32 (61.5%)	60 (73.2%)	41 (69.5%)	133 (68.9%)
	NO	20 (38.5%)	22 (26.8%)	18 (30.5%)	60 (31.1%)
Middelburg Muslim School	YES		17 (85.0%)	13 (92.9%)	30 (88.2%)
	NO		3 (15.0%)	1 (7.1%)	4 (11.8%)
Hoërskool Middelburg	YES	12 (60.0%)	9 (47.4%)	16 (80.0%)	37 (62.7%)
	NO	8 (40.0%)	10 (52.6%)	4 (20.0%)	22 (37.3%)

Table 7.17 above reflects the answers which non-History-taking respondents gave to the question of whether or not History could be seen as a valuable subject. A large majority of respondents (200 learners, 69.9 per cent) felt that History was a valuable subject, an interesting statistic if one considers that these learners do not themselves take History as a FET subject. Learners from the Middelburg Muslim School (30, 88.2 per cent) felt most strongly that History was a subject of value. This again indicates that among learners there is much goodwill toward History and appreciation of the value of History education.

<sup>395</sup> L. Nadvi, 'South African Muslims and Political Engagement in a Globalising Context, *South African Historical Journal*, 60, 4 (2008), pp. 618–636.

Question one required respondents to write down the reasons why they had decided not to take History as a subject in Grade 10. Only four (1.4 per cent)<sup>396</sup> blank responses were received, which established a pattern for the entire survey, indicating that respondents took the questionnaire seriously. That taking History clashed with respondents' career choices (131 learners, 45.8 per cent)<sup>397</sup> and having a dislike for or lack of interest in the subject (111 learners, 38.8 per cent)<sup>398</sup> were the dominant responses. Other responses received were that the secondary school attended by respondents did not offer History as a FET subject (45 learners, 15.7 per cent);<sup>399</sup> that History was perceived as too difficult or not the kind of work enjoyed by respondents (40 learners, 14.0 per cent);<sup>400</sup> that History was experienced by respondents as boring (48 learners, 16.8 per cent)<sup>401</sup> and on a positive note, the expression that respondents enjoyed History and would have taken it as a FET subject if they had had the opportunity to do so (20 learners, 7.0 per cent).<sup>402</sup>

Dislike of the History educator was mentioned by 14 Steelcrest High School learners (7.3 per cent)<sup>403</sup> as being a factor explaining why they did not continue with the subject after Grade 9. No teacher-critical responses were received from Hoërskool Middelburg or Middelburg Muslim School learners. Critical Steelcrest High School learners offered the following comments:

<sup>396</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 60, 74, 148, 149.

<sup>397</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 5, 15, 18–19, 25, 32–33, 35–38, 42–44, 46–52, 54–56, 58, 61, 63, 67, 69, 71–73, 75, 77–78, 85–89, 91, 94–95, 97–107, 109–110, 113–114, 116, 118, 121, 128, 131, 133, 135–136, 140, 142–143, 146, 150–151, 153, 155–156, 159, 162, 164, 166, 170, 173, 175–177, 179–182, 186–187, 191–195, 200, 202–203, 206, 209, 214–217, 219, 222–223, 227–231, 235, 240–241, 246, 251–252, 254, 257, 260–261, 266, 271, 274–276, 278, 283, 285.

<sup>398</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 19–20, 25–26, 36, 38, 40, 45–46, 48, 50, 54, 57, 59, 65–70, 72, 76–77, 79, 85–88, 90, 92, 95–96, 99, 101–103, 108, 111, 115, 117, 119, 122–124, 129–130, 133–134, 136, 138–140, 144–145, 150, 154, 157, 160–161, 163, 165, 169–170, 174–176, 178, 182–183, 185, 189–190, 196–197, 205–208, 212–216, 220, 222, 224, 226–227, 232, 235, 243–246, 248–249, 251, 253, 256–257, 259, 261–262, 264, 269–270, 272, 277, 279–281, 284.

<sup>399</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2–4, 6–14, 16, 20–25, 28–32, 34, 112, 126, 233, 236, 238–242, 247, 250, 253, 255, 263, 267–268, 280, 282, 285–286.

<sup>400</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 3, 16, 39, 62, 66, 91, 97, 105, 107, 127, 133, 137, 142, 152, 158, 168, 171, 173–174, 184, 197, 204, 211, 215–216, 221, 225–227, 229–230, 232, 234, 237, 241, 243, 245, 256, 277, 283.

<sup>401</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 9, 12, 18, 42, 50, 53, 56–57, 59, 63, 67–68, 80–85, 87, 91–92, 95–96, 103–104, 129, 132–133, 140, 144, 146, 151–152, 171, 183–184, 194, 204, 206, 212, 220, 222, 224, 243, 248–249, 258, 227.

<sup>402</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 5, 6, 10, 16, 33–34, 63, 120, 125–126, 141, 155, 170, 172, 188, 201, 230, 238, 241, 247, 265, 286.

<sup>403</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 59, 65, 68, 81–85, 104, 124, 198, 222, 224.

I didn't like the teacher, so that to me is not liking the subject.<sup>404</sup>

Because History and the teacher is boring.<sup>405</sup>

The teachers are often sleeping tablets.<sup>406</sup>

Of the 48 learners who had noted finding the subject boring, 40 (83.3 per cent)<sup>407</sup> were from Steelcrest High School. Of all Steelcrest High School non-History-taking respondents, 20.7 per cent found History boring, compared to only 8.8 per cent of surveyed Hoërskool Middelburg respondents who had experienced History up to Grade 9 as boring.<sup>408</sup> This directly points to the powerful influence of the teacher.

**TABLE 7.18**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT				
SHOULD HISTORY BE OFFERED AS A SUBJECT AT HIGH SCHOOL?				
		Gd 10	Gd 11	Gd 12
<b>Steelcrest High School</b>	YES	44 (84.6%)	72 (87.8%)	50 (84.7%)
	NO	6 (11.5%)	7 (8.5%)	7 (11.9%)
	MAYBE	0 (0%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.4%)
	BLANK RESPONSE	2 (3.8%)	2 (2.4%)	0 (0%)
<b>Middelburg Muslim School</b>	YES	No learners Surveyed	17 (85.0%)	14 (100.0%)
	NO	No learners Surveyed	2 (10.0%)	0 (0%)
	MAYBE	No learners Surveyed	1 (5.0%)	0 (0%)
	BLANK RESPONSE	No learners Surveyed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Hoërskool Middelburg</b>	YES	16 (80.0%)	13 (68.4%)	18 (90.0%)
	NO	3 (15.0%)	4 (21.1%)	1 (5.0%)
	MAYBE	1 (5.0%)	2 (10.5%)	1 (5.0%)

<sup>404</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 198. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 12; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>405</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 84. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>406</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 81. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>407</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 42, 50, 53, 56–57, 59, 63, 67–68, 80–85, 87, 91–92, 95–96, 103–104, 129, 132–133, 140, 144, 146, 151–152, 171, 183–184, 194, 204, 206, 212, 220, 222, 224.

<sup>408</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 243, 248–249, 258, 227.

	BLANK RESPONSE	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
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Table 7.18 above illustrates that when answering question two, 'Should History be offered as a subject in high school?', the overwhelming majority of respondents at all three surveyed schools responded by affirming that it should be. Although these learners do not take History as an elective FET subject it is clear that the vast majority of them appreciate its value.<sup>409</sup> These results indicate that the non-History-taking secondary school learners I surveyed have a much higher appreciation for History education that do the secondary school educators I surveyed.

Non-History-taking respondents responded very positively to question three which asked them to identify ways in which they believed that studying History might help learners in their future lives or careers. Only 25 learners (8.7 per cent)<sup>410</sup> returned blank responses which would suggest that they did not know how History could help those learners who took the subject with their future lives or careers. Only six learners (2.1 per cent)<sup>411</sup> stated that learning History would not help learners in their future lives at all. The majority of respondents were divided between the idea that taking History would help learners in their future lives practically, especially when it came to job opportunities (167 learners, 58.4 per cent)<sup>412</sup> and those who believed that taking History at school would advantage them as their personal skills and values were improved (105 learners, 36.7 per cent).<sup>413</sup> Significantly more

<sup>409</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire. The following respondents indicated that History should be offered as a high schools subject: 1–2, 4–8, 10–16, 18–34, 35–47, 49–53, 55–59, 61–62, 64–73, 75–80, 83, 85–99, 101–102, 104–122, 124–132, 135–147, 150, 152–157, 159, 161–182, 184–188, 190–203, 205, 208–219, 221–223, 225, 228–231, 233–234, 236–242, 244–245, 247, 249–254, 256–257, 259, 263–280, 282–283, 285–286.

The following respondents indicated that History should not be offered as a high school subject: 9, 17, 48, 60, 63, 81–82, 84, 100, 103, 123, 133, 151, 158, 160, 183, 204, 206–207, 220, 224, 226, 232, 235, 243, 255, 258, 260, 262, 281.

The following respondents were unsure whether History should be offered as a high school subject: 3, 134, 189, 227, 246, 248, 261, 284.

The following respondents submitted blank responses: 54, 74, 148, 149.

<sup>410</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 42, 60, 65, 74, 80–82, 100, 106, 148–149, 162, 164, 166, 171, 173, 182, 187, 196, 224, 228, 231, 23–236, 252.

<sup>411</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 84, 123, 183, 243, 281, 284.

<sup>412</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 1, 3, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18–21, 25–28, 35–41, 43–50, 52–57, 59, 61–64, 66–71, 73, 75–76, 78–79, 83, 85–88, 92, 95–99, 101–102, 104, 108–110, 112–113, 116, 118–119, 126–142, 150, 152–156, 158–161, 165, 167–169, 174–181, 185–186, 192–193, 195, 197–203, 205–206, 210–212, 214, 216, 218–221, 223, 225–226, 229, 233–234, 237, 240, 245–247, 250–251, 253–257, 260–261, 266–268, 270, 273–275, 278, 280, 282–283, 285.

<sup>413</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 2–9, 11, 13, 17–19, 21–24,

Steelcrest High School learners (124, 64.2 per cent of Steelcrest High School respondents) than Hoërskool Middelburg (29 learners, 49.2 per cent of Hoërskool Middelburg respondents) or Middelburg Muslim School learners (14, 41.2 per cent of Middelburg Muslim School respondents) saw the value of History in practical, career-oriented terms, while Hoërskool Middelburg respondents (25 learners, 42.4 per cent of Hoërskool Middelburg respondents) and Middelburg Muslim School respondents (23 learners, 67.6 per cent of Middelburg Muslim School respondents) saw more value in the ability of History to encourage the development of positive life skills and values than did Steelcrest High School learners (57, 29.5 per cent of Steelcrest High School respondents). Sophisticated and thoughtful views about the ability of History study to benefit learners in personal ways were expressed by respondents. They highlight the fact that there is indeed a great deal of goodwill toward the subject on the part of secondary school learners.

Responses to question seven, which asked respondents to consider why it was necessary to study the past, attracted positive responses from learners, with only 21 respondents (7.3 per cent)<sup>414</sup> returning blank responses, which would imply that they were unsure of why it might be necessary to study the past. Only 22 respondents (7.7 per cent)<sup>415</sup> proposed that the past did not need to be studied. The intellectual quality of the responses to this question both surprised and encouraged me although it is, I believe, a pity that none of these learners take History as a FET subject. Some of the outstanding responses follow:

To see how people viewed the world then, how they made their decisions, what their mistakes were. Whether man thinks the same way now than how he did in the past, for example Genghis Khan a well-known leader wanted power. Hitler not so long ago wanted the same thing – world domination. Yet the two leaders are centuries apart.<sup>416</sup>

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29–34, 37, 51, 58, 72, 77–78, 89–91, 93–94, 103–105, 107, 111–112, 114–115, 117, 120, 122, 124–127, 137, 141, 143–144, 146, 157, 163, 172, 184–185, 188–192, 194–195, 198, 204, 207–209, 213, 215–219, 222, 225, 227, 232, 234, 237–239, 241, 242, 244, 246, 248–251, 259, 262, 265, 269, 271–272, 276–279, 283, 286.

<sup>414</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 51, 60, 64, 66, 74, 78, 80–82, 89, 100, 106, 148–149, 155, 163, 171, 173, 224, 226, 235.

<sup>415</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Responses 31, 35, 40, 57, 60, 77, 103, 123, 147, 174, 183, 204, 206–207, 212, 230, 243, 255, 259, 261, 284.

<sup>416</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 5. [Indian English speaker; Grade 11; Middelburg Muslim School]

To learn about the different characters people have and their personality traits which could help us understand people and the way they think. To learn from them, for example not to make the same mistakes as they did or to follow their example. We could take many lessons from the past.<sup>417</sup>

So that we know what our country and the world has gone through to get where it is. It teaches us to appreciate what we have and to value and contribute to better our lives. We learn to pity those who went through such hardships and to understand why a country or people are the way they are.<sup>418</sup>

Other responses received to question seven included the idea that studying the past enables people to learn about their roots (67 learners, 23.4 per cent);<sup>419</sup> to learn from past mistakes (49 learners, 17.1 per cent);<sup>420</sup> to know the history of South Africa better (31 learners, 10.8 per cent);<sup>421</sup> to learn personal lessons and values (25 learners, 8.7 per cent)<sup>422</sup> and to realise that the past influences the future (35 learners, 12.2 per cent).<sup>423</sup>

I was surprised to discover sophisticated ideas about the relationship between the past and the future among the surveyed FET non-History-taking learners. Responses included the idea that ‘The past leads to the future so we need to know our past to face the future’;<sup>424</sup> ‘It

<sup>417</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 18. [Indian English speaker; Grade 11; Middelburg Muslim School ]

<sup>418</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 34. [Indian English speaker; Grade 12; Middelburg Muslim School]

<sup>419</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 11, 15–16, 19, 36, 38, 41–42, 44, 49–50, 54, 61–63, 65, 67, 69, 75, 88, 90–91, 93, 97, 99, 101–102, 127–129, 132–136, 138–139, 141, 144, 146, 154, 157, 164–165, 175–176, 179, 184, 191–192, 195, 203, 205, 208, 213, 219, 221–222, 227, 241–242, 245, 248, 256, 260, 272, 285.

<sup>420</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 1, 7, 13, 15, 18, 22, 24, 28, 33, 48, 53, 55, 81, 92–94, 96–98, 104, 110, 126, 140–141, 172, 182, 188–189, 191, 194, 197, 199–200, 210, 213, 215, 217–218, 221, 225, 231, 237–238, 249, 252, 254, 257, 262, 274, 280.

<sup>421</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 12, 14, 16, 27, 29, 34, 36, 41–42, 69, 85, 109, 112–114, 122, 129–131, 134, 151, 156, 180, 182, 202, 214–215, 245, 251, 278, 285.

<sup>422</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 1–2, 8, 10, 18, 23, 28, 30, 34, 52, 107, 110, 117, 135–137, 198–199, 219–220, 239, 241, 246, 249.

<sup>423</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Responses 1, 4, 17, 30, 39, 71–73, 74, 86, 98, 104–105, 121, 124, 126, 136, 158, 162, 168, 172, 181, 185, 191, 199–201, 210, 215, 223, 225, 234, 238, 240, 254, 257, 283, 280.

<sup>424</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners’ questionnaire, Response 72. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

is important [to study the past] because the past helps us to interpret the future'<sup>425</sup> and 'The past is how the future exists so why would anyone want to forget about the past? The past is who and what we are today. The past is the present and future of tomorrow.'<sup>426</sup> A well developed sense of historical consciousness is evident among these learners who have no formal History education after Grade 9.

Question eight, which asked respondents whether the past could teach us anything meaningful, drew similar responses to those obtained for question seven. It was pleasing to note that the great majority of respondents felt that the past did have something meaningful to teach people, as revealed by table 7.19 below:

**TABLE 7.19**

GRADE 10 – 12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT				
DOES THE PAST TEACH US ANYTHING MEANINGFUL?				
		Gd 10	Gd 11	Gd 12
Steelcrest High School	YES	38 (73.1%)	60 (73.2%)	41 (69.5%)
	NO	5 (9.6%)	11 (13.4%)	8 (13.6%)
	SOMETIMES	0 (0%)	1 (1.2%)	4 (6.8%)
	BLANK RESPONSE	9 (17.3%)	10 (12.2%)	6 (10.2%)
Middelburg Muslim School	YES	No learners surveyed	19 (95.0%)	13 (92.9%)
	NO	No learners surveyed	0 (0%)	1 (7.1%)
	SOMETIMES	No learners surveyed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	BLANK RESPONSE	No learners surveyed	1 (5.0%)	0 (0%)
Hoërskool Middelburg	YES	18 (90.0%)	15 (78.9%)	17 (85.0%)
	NO	2 (10.0%)	3 (15.8%)	1 (5.0%)
	SOMETIMES	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.0%)
	BLANK RESPONSE	0 (0%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (5.0%)

<sup>425</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 73. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>426</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 234. [English; Grade 10; Hoërskool Middelburg]

Hoërskool Middelburg and Middelburg Muslim School respondents felt most strongly that the past could teach meaningful lessons. Ironically, these schools do not offer History as a FET subject. Table 7.19 above illustrates that there is much goodwill toward and appreciation of History as a secondary school subject among the surveyed learners.

Question seven revealed that one of the perceptions held by non-History-taking learners toward History education is that history is able to teach life lessons and impart good values. Many responses show evidence of deep thought and emotional maturity:

Yes, it could teach us how to go about dealing with different people. It teaches us to stand up for what we believe in. It also teaches us that violence is not always the answer to every problem and it could teach us solutions to different problems.<sup>427</sup>

Yes, it most certainly does. It gives us hope and insight in our own lives as well as other people's lives. By learning the history of the world we learn how something has come about, what brought them there and we learn to value, appreciate and cherish what we have.<sup>428</sup>

Yes, it teaches us love, respect and ubuntu.<sup>429</sup>

Yes. That life is not about yourself.<sup>430</sup>

## 7.6 Conclusion

Perceptions of learners toward History education have changed significantly since 1994.

The personal hurt learners feel about the apartheid era is diminishing. Apartheid is no longer a topic learners wish to avoid. Many learners in the Social Sciences and History-taking learners' surveys I conducted in 2012 wish to find out more about apartheid. South Africa's

<sup>427</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 18. [Indian English speaker; Grade 11; Middelburg Muslim School]

<sup>428</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 34. [Indian English speaker; Grade 12; Middelburg Muslim School]

<sup>429</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-taking learners' questionnaire, Response 72. [Indigenous African Language speaker; Grade 10; Steelcrest High School]

<sup>430</sup> 2012 Grade 10–12 non-History-takers learners' questionnaire, Response 286. [English; Grade 12; Hoërskool Middelburg]



troubled history is today less personal to young people. In 1999, at the time of Dryden's survey, apartheid was a fresh memory and indeed almost a reality for many of the learners, especially the black learners she encountered.

There is no doubt that present day learners feel more positive about History education than was the case in 1999 and for that matter, the learners I surveyed in my 2008 survey of Mpumalanga black secondary school learners. Even non-History-taking learners felt positively about the benefits of History education. My research reveals that there is a large reservoir of goodwill toward History as a school subject among present day learners and an appreciation of its value.

The perceptions of learners from different cultural groups seem to be becoming more and more similar. Few differences in the perceptions of various cultural groups emerged in my 2012 survey. Dryden, on the other hand, found learners' views to be very polarised in 1999 – a huge gulf appeared to exist between the perceptions of white, black and coloured learners toward History education.

The perceptions of white, Afrikaans-speaking learners toward History education appears to have undergone a sea-change. By implication, this change in perception applies to a wider change in the way young Afrikaans people see the world. The liberalism (broad-mindedness) of the Afrikaans speakers' responses surprised me. This was in stark contrast to the attitudes of the Afrikaans-speaking Mpumalanga educators who had received their secondary school education between 1994 and 2006 and who completed the educators' questionnaire.

Although relatively few white English-speaking learners were surveyed, it is apparent that the attitude of distancing oneself from the reality of life in South Africa, which Dryden uncovered in 1999 among Cape Town English-speaking respondents to her survey has dramatically changed. I did not discover this disposition among any of the surveyed 2012 learners. Learners from all the cultural groups I surveyed see the importance of South African history and are keen to study it.

Learners' perceptions of the value of History education appear to have become generally more sophisticated. Examples are their perception that studying History is not simply for the purpose of facilitating legal studies. Here I noticed a big difference between my 2008 and 2012 surveys. Many learners in all the 2012 surveys see real moral and ethical value in History education.

History-taking learners' perceptions of the skills which they acquire through History education have changed greatly since the introduction of Outcomes-based education and the jettisoning of the content-based approach to History teaching. The emphasis of the skills-based approach to History teaching has positively influenced the perception that learners hold toward History – that History study is no longer simply an exercise in the memorisation and repetition of facts but is an accumulation of important academic skills.

Sadly, many learners have fallen victim to poor History teaching or, in the case of Social Sciences, where History should be taught as an equal component to Geography, to no History teaching at all. In expressing their perceptions of the subject, inadequate teaching was commented upon by many learners from all three 2012 learners' surveys I conducted and was also apparent in Dryden's 1999 research.

This chapter began with the assertion that all has not been well with History teaching in Mpumalanga. My research reveals that the cause of the problem does not lie with negative perceptions harboured by secondary school learners toward the subject, but rather in the poor teaching of it and in the negative attitude toward History adopted by secondary school administrations.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# PRESENT STATE OF HISTORY EDUCATION IN MPUMALANGA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter will seek to examine and understand how History as both an optional FET subject and as a component of the Social Sciences course offered in the GET phase at Mpumalanga's secondary schools has fared since 1994.

In order to examine the present and recent state of secondary school History education in Mpumalanga, school principals and educators from a diverse variety of FET-offering and non-FET-offering secondary schools were interviewed. History Curriculum Implementers and Chief Examiners were interviewed and surveyed. Present and past History educators were interviewed. A large selection of educators currently employed by the Mpumalanga Department of Education were surveyed in the form of a detailed questionnaire.

Barnard, writing in 1995 notes that '... the subject of History at school level, especially in white schools is in danger ... from everywhere comes the disturbing news that History as a school subject is being phased out in certain schools and that the numbers taking the subject have dropped to the point that it is hardly worth the effort to present History as an examination subject'. Barnard points out that while 80 per cent of all matriculants in white schools presented History as an examination subject during the 1940s, by 1994 less than 20 per cent of matriculants took history.<sup>1</sup> This trend is apparent within Mpumalanga's secondary schools.

By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, History was a struggling Further Education and Training (FET) subject within Mpumalanga's secondary schools. Few learners have chosen to take History as an optional FET subject. Of 12 928 learners who registered

<sup>1</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het Geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms? Enkele Perspektiewe', *The Free State Teacher*, April/May 1995, pp. 13–14. '... die vak geskiedenis op skoolvlak in veral blanke skole in die branding staan ... Van oral rondom ons kom ontstellende nuus dat geskiedenis as skoolvak reeds by sekere skole uitgefaseer is of dat getalle sodanig gedaal het dat dit byna nie meer die moeite werd is om die vak in eksamenverband aan te bied nie'. Note that Barnard's concern that secondary school History, particularly as taught within Afrikaans medium secondary schools toward the end of the apartheid era has been referred to in chapter 2 (p. 41), chapter 5 (pp. 185–186) and chapter 6 (p. 240) of this thesis.

for the Grade 12 examinations in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga in 2009, only 916 (7,1 per cent) offered History; 793 (11,1 per cent) of 7 115 Grade 11s took History and 724 (7,9 per cent) of 9 149 Grade 10 learners took the subject. In comparison, 2 997 learners in Nkangala took Geography in Grade 10; 2 820 took Geography in Grade 11 and 4 312 learners took Geography in 2009.<sup>2</sup>

Recent Grade 12 History examination results have been very poor in Mpumalanga. The following tables represent Grade 12 examination results for Higher and Standard Grade History between 2001 and 2010:<sup>3</sup>

**TABLE 8.1 REPORT: 2001–2006 EXAMINATION RESULTS: HISTORY STANDARD GRADE**

YEAR	AVERAGE %	NO. OF CENTRES	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF DISTINCTIONS
2001	23.69	-	-	-
2002	26.40	-	-	-
2003	31.93	209	3600	21
2004	31.38	195	3364	03
2005	31.06	195	3166	05
2006	30.57	192	3260	12
2007	No statistics available			
Standard grade History ceased to exist after the introduction of the NCS in Grade 12 in 2008				

**TABLE 8.2 REPORT: 2001–2006 EXAMINATION RESULTS: HISTORY HIGHER GRADE AND NCS RESULTS (AFTER 2008)**

YEAR	AVERAGE %	NO. OF CENTRES	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF DISTINCTIONS
2001	18.70	-	-	-
2002	23.64	-	-	-
2003	32.43	150	1139	64
2004	31.89	157	1241	26
2005	37.06	166	1496	51
2006	31.52	167	1388	43
2007	No statistics available			

<sup>2</sup> Mpumalanga Education Department, 'Regional Summary of Results – June 2009', undated document, from D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', pp. 1–2.

<sup>3</sup> Mpumalanga Department of Education, History Intervention Guide 2006, Part 1, 'Report: 2001–2005 Examination Results, History HG. Document undated, pages unnumbered. Figures from 2006 from Mpumalanga Department of Education, History Intervention Guide 2007. Document undated, pages Unnumbered and Mpumalanga Department of Education, History Intervention Guide 2006, Part 1, Report: 2001–2005 Examination Results, History SG. Document undated, pages unnumbered. Figures from 2006 from Mpumalanga Department of Education, History Intervention Guide 2007. Document undated, pages unnumbered. Results for 2008–2010 from Mpumalanga Department of Education, History Intervention Guide 2011, Document undated, pages unnumbered.

2008	35.18			
2009	49.80			
2010	49.20			

The average pass percentages obtained by Grade 12 History candidates in Mpumalanga between 2001 and 2006 were very low indeed. A slight improvement is noticeable between 2001 and 2005. The number of candidates who performed well is very low. The best year for distinctions was 2003 when 5,6 per cent of the Higher Grade candidates obtained over 80 per cent, and the worst year was 2004 when only 2,0 per cent of Higher Grade candidates obtained a distinction in History.

The table below illustrates that by 2008 the situation in the province's Grade 12 History results had not greatly improved, with a pass rate of 35.3 per cent.<sup>4</sup> The region with the highest pass rate was Ehlanzeni (Nelspruit) with 49,8 per cent and the region with the lowest pass rate was Bushbuck Ridge with a pass rate of only 24,3 per cent. The Ehlanzeni region is the most urbanised of the four educational districts in Mpumalanga, while Bushbuck Ridge is underdeveloped and rural with an extremely poor infrastructure.

**TABLE 8.3 HISTORY RESULTS ACCORDING TO REGIONS (2008)**

REGION	NO. WROTE	NO. PASSED 30% MIN	NO. PASSED 40% MIN
EHL	1773	883	420
GS	1537	591	255
BBR	3849	938	277
NKA	1195	544	201
<b>TOTAL</b>	8354	2956	1153
<b>Prov %</b>		35.3	13.8

The table below representing the overall performance of Grade 12 History candidates in 2008, shows that only 18 candidates (0,22 per cent) obtained a distinction, while no less than 5 397 candidates (64,6 per cent) failed the subject by obtaining less than 30 per cent.<sup>5</sup> These are shocking statistics.

**TABLE 8.4 OVERALL PERFORMANCE (2008)**

0-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%	TOTAL
5 397	1 803	692	278	122	44	18	8 354

<sup>4</sup> Mpumalanga Education Department, 'Results According to Regions (2008)', undated document.

<sup>5</sup> Mpumalanga Education Department, 'Overall Performance (2008)', undated document.

While few learners in traditionally black secondary schools in Mpumalanga opt to take History from Grade 10, even fewer Afrikaans-speaking learners in the province chose to take the subject. The tables below illustrate both the results and numbers of learners in ex-model C Afrikaans-medium schools in Mpumalanga who entered the Grade 12 History examinations in 2006 and 2007.<sup>6</sup>

**TABLE 8.5 RESULTS: HISTORY HIGHER GRADE (2006)**

NAME OF SCHOOL	RANK	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF DISTINCTIONS	AVERAGE %
Hoërskool Ermelo	1	16	12	86.56
Hoërskool Nelspruit	2	1	1	86.25
Belfast Akademie	3	2	2	84.50
Hoërskool Generaal Hertzog	4	7	4	80.39
Hoërskool Ben Viljoen	7	11	5	76.18
Hoërskool Middelburg	33	2	0	45.38
<b>TOTAL</b>		39	24	

**TABLE 8.6 RESULTS: HISTORY STANDARD GRADE (2006)**

NAME OF SCHOOL	RANK	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF DISTINCTIONS	AVERAGE %
Belfast Akademie	1	4	4	85.0
Hoërskool Generaal Hertzog	2	9	1	57.1
Hoërskool Ermelo	12	5	0	47.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		18	5	

**TABLE 8.7 RESULTS: HISTORY HIGHER GRADE (2007)**

NAME OF SCHOOL	RANK	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF DISTINCTIONS	AVERAGE %
Hoërskool Generaal Hertzog	1	5	4	82.20
Hoërskool Ermelo	2	34	21	81.65
Belfast Akademie	3	11	6	80.20
Hoërskool Middelburg	11	2	0	63.13
<b>TOTAL</b>		52	31	

**TABLE 8.8 RESULTS: HISTORY STANDARD GRADE (2007)**

NAME OF SCHOOL	RANK	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF DISTINCTIONS	AVERAGE %
Belfast Akademie	1	1	0	75.67
Hoërskool Generaal Hertzog	2	8	1	63.96
<b>TOTAL</b>		9	1	

<sup>6</sup> Mpumalanga Education Department, 'Results History HG and SG Grade 12 – 2006', 11 January 2007, pages unnumbered and 'Results History HG and SG Grade 12 – 2007', document undated, pages unnumbered.

It is clear that in the twenty-first century very few white Afrikaans-speaking learners took History as a choice FET subject in Mpumalanga. In 2006 and 2007, only six Afrikaans-medium high schools, out of a potential 33 such schools entered candidates for the Grade 12 History examination. By this time, most Afrikaans-medium ex-model C schools were beginning to integrate black learners into their schools, so it can be safely assumed that the paltry totals of candidates enrolled for the History examination also represented black learners. Only 57 Grade 12 History candidates were entered by Afrikaans-medium secondary schools in both higher and standard grade in 2006 and 61 in 2007. This indicates that by this time formal History education at school level amongst the white Afrikaans community had almost died out.

The above tables reveal that when Afrikaans-medium schools did enter candidates for the Grade 12 History examinations, they did very well. In 2006, 167 centres entered Grade 12 History candidates, representing 1388 candidates who amassed 43 distinctions; observing the rankings, it is clear that Afrikaans-medium secondary schools performed best, the first four schools averaging over 80 per cent and accumulating 19 distinctions from only 26 candidates. The same pattern is evident in 2007 when no less than 59,6 per cent of candidates entered into the Grade 12 higher grade History examination by Afrikaans-medium secondary schools attained distinctions. The provincial average for the 2007 standard grade History examination was 28.93 per cent, while the average for the nine candidates from the Afrikaans-medium secondary schools was 65.26 per cent. Yet despite these spectacular results the subject continues to die at these schools. By 2011, only Hoërskool Ermelo offered History as a FET subject.

**TABLE 8.9 HISTORY PROVINCIAL PASS PERCENTAGE 2010–2012<sup>7</sup>**

	EASTERN CAPE	FREE STATE	GAUTENG	KWAZULU- NATAL	LIMPOPO	MPUMALANGA	NORTHERN CAPE	NORTH WEST	WESTERN CAPE
<b>2010</b>	73.2	71.2	93.3	84.0	56.4	49.2	79.7	95.8	75.7
<b>2011</b>	64.3	62.8	93.3	80.9	58.9	58.5	68.7	85.5	83.6
<b>2012</b>	77.8	86.2	92.7	89.6	78.0	71.3	84.6	89.8	91.3

<sup>7</sup> Department of Basic Education *NSC 2012 History Results* (Department of Basic Education, 2012), pages unnumbered. Provided by K. Mosala.

Table 8.9 above represents the provincial pass rate for History for all nine of South Africa's provinces between 2010 and 2012. Although Mpumalanga has consistently ranked last in terms of pass rate, it must be noted that the 2012 pass rate is a credible 71.3 per cent. Some figures in the table are difficult to account for, such as the fact that the relatively under-resourced North West province obtained a 95.8 per cent pass rate in History in 2010 as compared to the 75.7 pass rate attained by the well-resourced Western Cape in the same year. It is further difficult to understand how Mpumalanga's pass rate could manage to increase by 22.1 per cent in the two years between 2010 and 2012. These questions, however, are not within the scope of this thesis.

**TABLE 8.10 HISTORY PROVINCIAL RANKING 2010–2012<sup>8</sup>**

	2010	2011	2012
<b>EASTERN CAPE</b>	6	6	8
<b>FREE STATE</b>	7	7	5
<b>GAUTENG</b>	2	1	1
<b>KWAZULU- NATAL</b>	3	4	4
<b>LIMPOPO</b>	8	8	7
<b>MPUMALANGA</b>	9	9	9
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	1	6	3
<b>NORTHERN CAPE</b>	4	5	6
<b>WESTERN CAPE</b>	5	3	2

Table 8.10 demonstrates that Mpumalanga has consistently been ranked as the worst performing province when it comes to Grade 12 History results.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



**TABLE 8.11 NUMBER OF HISTORY-TAKING SCHOOLS PER PROVINCE 2010–2012<sup>9</sup>**

	EASTERN CAPE	FREE STATE	GAUTENG	KWAZULU- NATAL	LIMPOPO	MPUMALANGA	NORTHERN CAPE	NORTH WEST	WESTERN CAPE	TOTAL
<b>2010</b>	602	164	456	918	696	237	89	205	301	3668
<b>2011</b>	579	164	481	897	660	225	93	205	296	3600
<b>2012</b>	622	157	512	863	634	208	95	205	302	3598

Table 8.11 reveals that there has been a slight drop in the overall number of History-taking schools in South Africa between 2010 and 2012. The popularity of the subject has waned in some provinces, namely Mpumalanga, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo while the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Northern Cape and the Western Cape showed slight increases in the number of History-taking schools during this period. The North West province's History-taking school numbers did not change during this period.

**TABLE 8.12 NUMBER OF SOUTH AFRICAN GRADE 12 LEARNERS WRITING HISTORY  
2009–2012<sup>10</sup>**

<b>2009</b>	90 054
<b>2010</b>	87 676
<b>2011</b>	85 928
<b>2012</b>	94 489

A review of the numbers of Grade 12 learners presenting History as a matriculation subject between 2009 and 2012 reveals that the number of Grade 12 History-taking learners has remained stable in South Africa during recent years.

## 8.2 Ex-model C 'white' schools

By 2011 History education was only provided in one of 33 traditionally white Afrikaans-medium government secondary schools in Mpumalanga. Afrikaans-medium secondary schools appear to have rejected History education more than any other kind of secondary

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Department of Basic Education *National Senior Certificate Examination: National Diagnostic Report on Learner Performance 2012* (Department of Basic Education, 2012), p. 93. Provided by K. Mosala.

school subject. This phenomenon begs explanation. Education Department officials, school principals, History educators, ex-History educators and other educators from eight Afrikaans-medium government secondary schools were interviewed in an effort to discover why History is faring so badly within them. The schools represented by the interviewed school principals and educators are located throughout Mpumalanga, in Emalaheni, Middelburg, Sabie, Volksrust, Piet Retief, Evander and Ermelo. In addition, 87 white Mpumalanga educators filled in questionnaires which explored their own perceptions of the History education which they received at school and their perceptions of the lack of History education presently offered within the schools they presently teach at. In addition to presently teaching within Mpumalanga government secondary schools, many of the surveyed educators (41 or 47.1 per cent) attended government secondary schools within the province.<sup>11</sup> The present status of History education at these schools will be described and analysed in an effort to discern the reasons why history education is faring so well at one Afrikaans-medium government secondary school in Mpumalanga and so badly at the rest.

Since its inception Hoërskool Middelburg has been the bastion of Afrikaans-medium education in the town, at one stage even refusing to accept white, English-speaking learners. Traditionally it has achieved excellent academic results and in 2011 was able to boast the best Grade 12 examination results in the province. The school has also acquired a reputation for producing sports teams of excellence. It has undergone the demographic change which has impacted upon all ex-model C South African secondary schools after 1994, having to admit black learners. The school has controlled this process carefully. The small number of black and coloured learners who have been admitted to the school in recent years have almost all been outstanding sportspeople, most of whom receive educational bursaries. Success in sport is critically important to the school. The ethos of the school has remained steadfastly Afrikaans, despite a recent influx of white, English-speaking learners who attend the school mainly for its reputation in sport and academics and in order to avoid attending the English secondary school in town, which is now almost exclusively attended by black learners.

<sup>11</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Responses 4–5, 10, 12–13, 15, 22–23, 24, 26, 28–38, 40, 42, 44–45, 47–49, 58, 64–66, 69, 72–73, 75–76, 83, 85, 87.

History has not been offered at the school for many years, in fact for so many years that neither the school principal nor any other interviewed educator could remember when the subject had last been offered. Occasionally Grade 12 learners have taken History as an extra matriculation subject. In 2007 two learners took History on the higher grade level and averaged a final result of 63.13 per cent.<sup>12</sup> I happened to conduct the local Grade 12 History moderation that year, thus examining the tasks these learners had done during the year. As is usually the case with extra-subject learners, these learners had clearly enjoyed little tuition or guidance and were tackling the subject on their own. In context, the marks they obtained were commendable.

There appeared to be a discrepancy between the attitude of the school principal and the deputy principal toward the issue of History education at Hoërskool Middelburg. Mr Stronkhorst, the school principal was very willing to undergo being interviewed and to assist my research in any way possible. He pointed out that he understood the value of History education, which according to him developed broad-mindedness and a fuller world view. The main reason why he felt that History was not studied at Hoërskool Middelburg was political in nature. All the myths which Afrikaans people had grown up with had been ‘completely turned on their head.’ Afrikaners had reacted against this. History education had been biased during apartheid times but was just as biased now. Were History ever to be taught at Hoërskool Middelburg, ‘middle ground would have to be found between the Afrikaners and blacks’. The battle of Blood River, for example, was a great Afrikaans victory, but what of the courage of the Zulu warriors?

According to Mr Stronkhorst, learners at Hoërskool Middelburg wanted to take Maths and Science. They do not see any career options resulting from studying History. Mr Stronkhorst did concede that were there to be interest shown in History education by Grade 9s, that he would consider reintroducing the subject to the school.<sup>13</sup> The deputy principal displayed a more antagonistic disposition toward present-day secondary school History education. This may in part have been because he relayed not having had a worthwhile experience of History education while a learner at Hoërskool Middelburg. Of nine Hoërskool Middelburg

<sup>12</sup> Mpumalanga Education Department, ‘Results History HG and SG Grade 12 – 2007’, document undated, pages unnumbered.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, J. Stronkhorst, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

educators surveyed, eight had been learners at the school before 1994. The one respondent who had attended the school between 1998 and 2002 related that she was not interested in History and that most learners at the school had felt negatively about the subject. She felt that there had been 'too much political material' in the textbooks and that the 'real history of the country should be learned' rather than people being 'brainwashed in a particular ideology'.<sup>14</sup>

The 2012 learners' survey which I conducted among 263 learners at the school indicated that present day learners were far more open-minded than their educators.<sup>15</sup> Few surveyed learners displayed any antagonism toward the teaching of History, even if they themselves were not taking or planning to take the subject.

Hoërskool Kanonkop is the newest Afrikaans-medium government secondary school in Middelburg, having been founded in 1991. About 400 learners attend the school. At the present time and for a number of years the school has felt threatened as the numbers of white Afrikaans learners has fallen, at times threatening the closure of the school. The school has been forced to compensate for this loss by admitting 'English' (black) learners, not as is usually the case in Afrikaans-medium secondary schools to bolster sports teams, but as a matter of survival. This has not been well-received by most educators. All educators are white and Afrikaans-speaking. In the present school climate it is no surprise that the staff feel antagonistic toward the current History syllabus. The black learners who have entered the school appear to have been socialised into an Afrikaans approach to school life. It could be that teaching History might be perceived as detracting them from that process.

The negative perception of History education at Hoërskool Kanonkop begins with the school principal, who experienced his own secondary school History education at the Middelburg Technical High School (Tegniese Hoërskool Middelburg) very negatively. He found the subject 'boring ... uninspiring ... with one or two exceptions the presentation was boring – bits of reading and self study.' According to him, learners today are more interested in obtaining technical or scientific qualifications. He felt that History limited a learner's options when applying at tertiary institutions. Asked about the general attitude toward History

<sup>14</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, response 73. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Middelburg]

<sup>15</sup> The results of these surveys were examined in detail in Chapter 7.

education among the traditional 'white' schools of Middelburg, he replied that History was not popular because it 'does not contribute to obtaining university entrance in sciences.' This is, in reality, not true as History contributes as much to university entrance as any matriculation subject and having History as a Grade 12 subject would certainly not hinder any learner in gaining admission to a science course at university. Nevertheless, true or not, this is a perception of secondary school History education. The Social Sciences course in Grades 8 and 9 emphasised Geography education rather than History since Geography is offered as a FET subject. No parent, learner or governing body member had ever requested History education at the school. The Mpumalanga Education Department had never visited the school to promote History or ever tried to involve the school in any historical project or activity.<sup>16</sup>

These negative perceptions of History education were reflected in the responses to the educators' questionnaire which was completed by eight past learners from Hoërskool Kanonkop. All of the respondents are now (non-History) educators at government secondary schools in Mpumalanga and attended school at Kanonkop between 1994 and 2006. Seven of the respondents were female. Five respondents expressed some positive perceptions about History while three had nothing positive to say about the subject.<sup>17</sup> Six respondents expressed the view that their Grade 8 and 9 History lessons were boring and uninteresting.<sup>18</sup> Four explicitly noted that the teacher had made the subject uninteresting.<sup>19</sup> 'most learners did not like History at all, because the teacher did not make it interesting ... it all depends on the presentation in class'<sup>20</sup>; 'Didn't like History at all ... didn't like the teacher'.<sup>21</sup> One respondent noted that the teacher was seldom present during History lessons. The learners were left to read textbooks on their own.<sup>22</sup>

While two respondents felt that History education did not suit the future careers of learners and had no place within a scientific and technological worldview,<sup>23</sup> seven of the eight

<sup>16</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Fourie, Middelburg, 26 January 2011.

<sup>17</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaires, number 6, 10, 12, 24, 75 expressed some positive perceptions about History education, while 29, 30, 26, expressed entirely negative perceptions about History education.

<sup>18</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaires, Response 6, 10, 12, 29, 30, 75.

<sup>19</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaires, Response 6, 12, 30, 75.

<sup>20</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 12. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>21</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 30. [Afrikaans; 1998–2002; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6, 10.

respondents commented negatively about the political connotations of History education.<sup>24</sup> 'Today the [Afrikaans] community still feels that History is a useless subject, but also think that white history and the role they played in the country has been ignored.'<sup>25</sup> Other comments reflected similar sentiment: 'One culture should not get preference, all cultures should be represented in history';<sup>26</sup> 'The [Afrikaans] community does not feel strongly about History anymore, because it has changed'<sup>27</sup> and 'the community is disappointed at [an] out of proportion syllabus.'<sup>28</sup> One respondent was very clear about the place of History education, writing that 'History is now breaking down the unity which we have in South Africa. The past should be put where it belongs'.<sup>29</sup> This sadly seems the predominant perception of History education at Hoërskool Kanonkop. Wherever else History education is to be put, it is certainly not likely to feature on this school's curriculum.

The thoughtful views of one of the ex-Kanonkop learners who filled in the educators' questionnaire deserve special mention. Brian Sutton attended the school between 1994 and 1998.<sup>30</sup> As with most Afrikaans respondents, Brian believes that History has become unpopular because it is perceived as not assisting learners to find lucrative careers and because 'there still remains a question mark behind the objectivity of historical and political agendas ... our history is used as a political tool to stir emotions. History is not seen as a subject studying past events and making assumptions to prevent similar incidences'.

These views reflect those of the past Hoërskool Kanonkop learners who filled in the educators' questionnaire and those of the present principal and staff. As well as the common factors (career unsuitability and political bias) perceived to have led to the demise of History education it is clear that negative attitudes toward History and poor teaching on the part of educators is largely responsible for the subject's failure at the school. So far as I could ascertain, any interest in the subject has *never* been encouraged by staff members.

Hoërskool Volksrust is an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium government secondary school located in the small town of Volksrust on the southern border of Mpumalanga. In 2011

<sup>24</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6, 10, 12, 24, 29, 30, 75.

<sup>25</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 6. [Afrikaans; 1995–1999; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>26</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 10. [Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>27</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 12. [Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>28</sup> 2012 Educators' questionnaire, Response 75. [Afrikaans; 2000–2005; Hoërskool Kanonkop]

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> The views of Brian Sutton have been presented in chapter seven, pp. 255–257.

there were 570 learners enrolled at the school, about 450 of whom were white, Afrikaans-speaking learners. A few Indian learners also attend the school. The school principal, as is the case with many Afrikaans-medium schools in Mpumalanga is an ex-History educator. One black learner took History as a matriculation subject in 2010 and was tutored by the principal. Jaco Stevens, a non-practising History educator at the school noted that the educators at the school are 'scared of the new syllabus' which they perceive as one-sided and biased against white, Afrikaans history. He pointed out that many learners are interested in history and at times ask why History is not offered at the school. He perceived the learners to have a serious lack of general and historical knowledge – 'Even the black learners have no knowledge of who Steve Biko was – they just don't know.' In the Social Sciences (taken in Grade 8 and 9) Geography is emphasised over History since it is offered as a FET subject. Surprisingly, since he himself is a History educator, Mr Stevens felt that the biggest problem was that there was a shortage of teachers available to teach History at the school.<sup>31</sup>

The school maintains a comprehensive historical museum which houses magnificent busts of previous apartheid Prime Ministers and State Presidents, old flags and photographs and other memorabilia. Mr Stevens is the curator. He mentioned that the Mpumalanga Education Department had expressed unhappiness when visiting the museum because it contained photographs of mainly white people. He notes that it had to be pointed out that from its inception in 1894 until 1995 the school had been exclusively white. 'I think these people have the idea that history only begins in 1995' was his comment.<sup>32</sup>

The current lack of History education at Hoërskool Volkrust can largely be attributed to a lack of interest on the part of the school administration and teaching staff. A constraining factor is the fact that there are perceived to be too few educators to spare anybody for History education. The fact that a historical museum is kept by the school indicates that there still remains some degree of appreciation for the subject.

<sup>31</sup> Interview, J. Stevens, Middelburg, 28 March 2011.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Hoërskool Piet Retief is an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium school situated in the small southern Mpumalanga town of the same name. In 2011 this former all-white government secondary school was attended by about 700 learners, half of whom were white, Afrikaans-speaking learners. No FET History education is currently offered at the school. Some years ago a choice was made whether to teach Geography or History at FET level. According to Hadri Bouwer, an educator who has taught at the school for over twenty years, at the time the choice was made that the Geography educators 'were the better teachers' and so History was dropped from the school curriculum. Ms Bouwer noted that the present learners show little interest in History and see few career opportunities availed by the subject.<sup>33</sup>

Hoërskool Piet Retief illustrates the importance of the role of History educators in promoting their subject as well as the fact that learners do not attach a high utility to History studies.

Hoërskool Reynopark is an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium government secondary school located in the industrial city of Emalahleni in western Mpumalanga. The school, which used to be an all-white Afrikaans-medium school currently has about 700 learners, about 10 per cent of whom are white Afrikaans-speakers. The principal is an ex-History educator who has a deep concern about the fate of Afrikaans language and culture. History is not offered beyond the GET level (Social Sciences) at the school.

The principal is most concerned that young Afrikaans people are presently directionless in life. He perceived young Afrikaners as being ashamed of their history. 'They want no part of it. They hear hearsay, not real history. Their general knowledge of South African history is very low. This is a big concern to me ... Afrikaans children have no pride in their identity. If they have no pride in their identity, how will they ever take an interest in their history?' The principal mentioned to me that in 2006 he had decided to test the historical knowledge of learners in Grade 9. 'I gave them each a single sheet with various pictures of South African buildings. Buildings such as the Voortrekker Monument. Not a single learner could identify a single monument.' In 2006 a similar survey was conducted among Grade 11 learners at the school. 'I presented them with a series of about 10 photographs of historical personalities.

<sup>33</sup> Interview, Ms H. Bouwer, Middelburg, 28 March 2011.



People like Hitler, Stalin, Al Capone, PW Botha and Nelson Mandela. Most of the learners pointed to the picture of the Lion King, which I included only for fun, as being the only historical figure they knew about!’ The principal bemoaned the fact that learners at his school did not even know about the local history of their own city, let alone other history on a wider scale. ‘How can we expect them to know about the country’s history if they don’t even know their own local history?’<sup>34</sup>

Despite the interest of the principal and despite the presence of ex-History educators among the teaching staff, there is no talk of reintroducing History into the school curriculum. There is no demand for the subject from the learners or their parents. Young staff members I conversed with in 2010 saw no point in teaching History or purpose in the subject.<sup>35</sup>

Hoërskool Sybrand van Niekerk is an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium government secondary school situated in the small forestry town of Sabie. In 2011 the school was attended by about 700 learners. The school has experienced substantial demographic change in recent years. From an all white, Afrikaans-medium school during the apartheid era, in 2011 only about 350 Afrikaans-speaking learners were enrolled. There has been no FET History teaching at the school for seven years. There is a qualified History educator but he prefers teaching Geography, so no History is offered. Currently there is no interest in History education on the part of learners. The History educator does do some History teaching with Grade 12 English learners when they need to know the historical background to their prescribed novels. Learners are offered Geography and Tourism as choice FET subjects.<sup>36</sup>

Hoërskool Sybrand van Niekerk again demonstrates the fact that History education within Mpumalanga’s secondary schools depends greatly upon the willingness of History educators to promote the subject. Tourism, although not a subject recognised for purposes of obtaining university entrance, is growing in popularity within Mpumalanga’s secondary schools. In many cases it is preferred to History because it is perceived as being easier and therefore more suitable for learners of perceived lesser ability.

<sup>34</sup> Interview, Mr W. Ras, Emalahleni, 1 March 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Conversations with various Hoërskool Reynopark staff members, Middelburg, 21 July, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Interview, Ms T. Coetzer, Middelburg, 29 March 2011.

Hoërskool Evander is an ex-model C Afrikaans-medium government secondary school situated in the small south-eastern Mpumalanga town of the same name. The school is attended by 736 learners (2011), about 30 per cent of whom are Afrikaans-speaking. By 2011 there was one Grade 12 History class at Hoërskool Evander with 15 learners, but there were no Grade 10 or 11 classes nor were there plans to begin another FET History class. Eight learners were from Evander while the other members of the class were from local black secondary schools. All of the Evander History learners were black. According to Mossie Ourique, the deputy principal at the school, there is currently no interest in History education at Hoërskool Evander. There is no qualified History educator at the school and the subject is not promoted in any way. History's companion Social Sciences subject, Geography, is still offered at the school. The teaching staff is mainly negative toward History and see it as ANC oriented with the changed syllabus. The previous deputy principal taught History, but after he left the school, History was stopped.

History education at Hoërskool Evander again demonstrates that History education is unpopular at Afrikaans-medium government schools because it is perceived by staff members as being biased against Afrikaans history and because the subject is not being driven by a committed educator.<sup>37</sup>

Hoërskool Ermelo was the only Afrikaans-medium government secondary school which offered History as a FET subject by 2011. This is quite remarkable considering the recent history and ethos of the school and requires explanation. The school, with 690 registered learners in 2011, is the largest secondary school in the rural town of Ermelo, situated in the south-east of Mpumalanga. Until recently, the school was exclusively white, the epitome of a conservative Afrikaans-medium school. Two events conspired to irrevocably change the school. The first concerned the suspension and subsequent resignation of the school principal, a traumatic event in the life of the school which was linked to the well publicised 2009 court case over the admittance of 'English-speaking' learners to the school.

<sup>37</sup> Interview, Mr M. Ourique, Middelburg, 28 March 2011.

The term 'English-speaking' is placed in inverted commas since the 'English speakers' in question were a group of black learners, who, unable to acquire accommodation in already full, traditionally black secondary schools, applied for admission to Ermelo Hoërskool. The term 'English speakers' was adopted by the school to describe these learners but was, I believe, used in a euphemistic sense by the school in the subsequent dealings with the Mpumalanga Education Department and the courts which dealt with the case. The admission issue was turned into one of language rights by the school. The end result of this protracted and unfortunate legal battle was that the black learners were admitted to the school.

Despite these events, the school has remained a conservative Afrikaner institution, reflecting the conservative nature of the white community of Ermelo. The question must be asked as to why History is so successfully taught as a FET subject at this school when it is so distrusted and rejected by other traditionally Afrikaans-medium schools in the province of Mpumalanga? The annual Grade 12 History results at the school far outstrip the results of any other History-taking school in Mpumalanga, with averages always above 80 per cent, for classes with an average size of 30 learners or more. In 2011, 40 learners registered for History in Grade 10; 35 in Grade 11 and 39 in Grade 12. During the past seven years, no fewer than six Grade 12 learners obtained 100 per cent in their matriculation History examinations.<sup>38</sup> The answer is found in the person of the school's History educator, Ms Naomi Uys.<sup>39</sup>

Ms Uys relates that until recently, there was considerable opposition to History teaching within the school from other staff members who perceived the subject to be biased against Afrikaner history and as promoting ANC viewpoints. The subject was first introduced by Ms Uys in 2003 amid considerable opposition. In the beginning it was a battle to keep History alive at the school. The excellent academic results which Ms Uys managed to achieve with her learners eventually softened the opposition to the subject.<sup>40</sup> The History experience at Hoërskool Ermelo again confirms the point made by Prof. Leo Barnard in his 1995 study,

<sup>38</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms N. Uys, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Ms Uys' teaching philosophy and methods have been discussed in detail in chapter six, pp. 241–245.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

that the biggest single factor in determining the success of History teaching at secondary schools is in fact the ability and dedication of the History educator.<sup>41</sup>

Ms Uys has strong views as to why History appears to be a dying subject in Mpumalanga's secondary schools. The main reason, she feels, is Social Science which is taught to learners from Grade 7 to 9. The content of the Social Sciences syllabus kills any interest in History, which from Grade 10 is an entirely different subject. The appointment of enthusiastic subject advisors who love the subject and who are passionate about it to promote it within secondary schools would go a long way to reviving school History education in Mpumalanga.<sup>42</sup> The presence of a passionate and skilled History educator accounts for the popularity of History at Hoërskool Ermelo.

Steelcrest High School is an ex-model C English-medium government secondary school situated in Middelburg.<sup>43</sup> It is the only former model C English medium school in the town. It was founded in 1985 to cater for English-speaking learners who were previously accommodated at Hoërskool Middelburg. After 1994 it began to admit black learners. By 2011, over 700 of the 770 learners at the school were black, most of the remainder being of Indian and coloured extraction. In 2011 there were 30 white learners attending the school. Matriculation pass rates have ranged between 93 to 100 per cent, consistently placing the school in Mpumalanga's top ten secondary schools in terms of matriculation results. The ethos of the school is however Afrikaans, as the vast majority of the teaching staff are white Afrikaners. The principal has been in his post ever since the school began (in 2012 for 27 years) and although it must be said that the school has dealt with its demographic transition successfully, the conservative philosophies of Christian National Education still colour the daily life of the school.

History education is doing well at Steelcrest High School but perhaps for the wrong reasons. History is not highly thought of by the School Management Team (SMT).<sup>44</sup> The SMT and the

<sup>41</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het Geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms?: Enkele Perspektiewe', *The Free State Teacher*, 85, 4 (1995), pp. 13–17.

<sup>42</sup> Conversation, Ms N. Uys, 8 December 2010.

<sup>43</sup> As of 2011 I had taught at Steelcrest High School for 15 years.

<sup>44</sup> The School Management Team (SMT) is a committee made up of the school principal, his deputy and the various school heads of department. Its function is to administer the daily life of the school. It is the supreme decision-making body in all government secondary schools.

school principal, himself an ex-History educator, place a high premium on Mathematics. Learners are streamed according to the mathematics marks they obtain. Learners who do not take FET Mathematics are not allowed to take Accounting or Science and so are streamed into other elective subjects of which History is one. Learners who do not perform well in elective subjects such as Geography or Life Sciences are placed into the History class. The History classes typically consist of a few learners who are genuinely interested in the subject and who chose to take the subject from Grade 10 and a majority of learners who are unable to perform in other subjects. The mandate given to History educators at Steelcrest High School is simply to get learners to attain the minimum of 30 per cent needed to pass history at FET level.

Classes in the History component of the Social Sciences are often given to the most junior, unqualified educators. This is reflective of the attitude of school management toward History and also has the effect of not attracting able learners to take the subject after Grade 10. Typically only five or six Grade 9 learners indicate a wish to take History in Grade 10. Also typical is that the Grade 10 class usually ends up with at least 30 learners by the end of the Grade 10 year as academically weak learners are transferred from other subjects. Sadly, History is known as a 'dumping subject' among the staff at the school. One of the History educators explained the negative attitude toward History at the school in terms of the school's steaming policy:

Because we at Steelcrest route the more weak learners to take History as a subject, it has become a known fact that the weak, lazy learners would be found in the History classes – therefore a negative attitude toward History education exists ... We unfortunately get the lower end of the academic products of Steelcrest. Brighter, intelligent learners should be encouraged to take History as a course at our school.<sup>45</sup>

Matriculation History results at Steelcrest High School vary between an average of 45 to 60 per cent which is similar to those attained by other subjects on offer at the school. History education at Steelcrest High School provides a good example of a subject struggling to

<sup>45</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Badat, Middelburg, 29 October 2010.

survive in the face of negative perceptions among the school management and other staff members.

Greendale High School situated in Emalahleni is an ex-model C English-medium government combined school which in 2011 had 900 learners enrolled. The school used to have an entirely white, English-speaking composition but is now almost entirely made up of black learners. History is not offered at the school beyond the historical component of the Social Sciences (Grades 8 and 9). There has been no History teaching at Greendale since the early 2000s, when like all Mpumalanga primary and secondary schools, it was made to choose to specialise in certain subject groupings, such as humanities, scientific or commercial areas of study. This was part of a wider plan to rationalise and streamline school education provision in Mpumalanga. All secondary schools had to choose to become GET or FET institutions. FET institutions had to also choose what kind of institution to become. This rather intense process came to nothing and was never implemented. Nonetheless, during this time the Greendale school administration consulted with parents and polled learners in an effort to decide which subjects to drop or retain. No interest was shown in the humanities at all. At the time when History was dropped as a subject from the school curriculum, the History classes were already very small, perhaps '15 or so.'<sup>46</sup>

The school principal told me that there was still no interest in History education at the school as learners did not see the subject fitting into their career plans.<sup>47</sup>

### 8.3 Private schools

#### 8.3.1 English-medium private schools

History education enjoys a mixed reception at Mpumalanga's exclusive, English-medium private schools. At Uplands College, near White River, History is enthusiastically offered at the school. There are four designated History educators, one designated Social Sciences educator<sup>48</sup> and a flourishing History department.<sup>49</sup> Penryn College, also near White River also offers History under the guidance of a dedicated History educator.<sup>50</sup> Cambridge

<sup>46</sup> Interview, Ms H. Kruger, Middelburg, 29 March 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Conversation, Ms E. Van Heerden, Emalahleni, 1 March 2011.

<sup>48</sup> [www.uplands.co.za](http://www.uplands.co.za), accessed 17 June 2013.

<sup>49</sup> Telephone conversation with school administrator, 28 February 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Telephone conversation with school administrator, 28 February 2011.

Academy is a small, exclusive private school in Emalahleni which offers learners O and A level examinations. History was taught at Cambridge until recently but it has been dropped from the school curriculum as there is little demand for the subject.<sup>51</sup> History has not been offered for many years at St. Thomas Aquinas, more simply known as the 'Convent', situated in Emalahleni. There is no demand for the subject. Home Economics or Consumer Studies are more in demand as they are seen as practical subjects. History used to be offered at the school but the subject died when the History educator 'moved to Port Elizabeth to get married.'<sup>52</sup> Without a motivated History educator, History is no longer taught. All the above private schools offer the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) matriculation qualification.

#### **8.4 Middelburg Muslim School**

The Middelburg Muslim School, one of two Muslim schools in Mpumalanga, provides primary and secondary school education to the sizable Muslim community of Middelburg.<sup>53</sup> The school has about 300 learners, 80 per cent of whom are Muslim. The learners are of African and Indian extraction. The fees are R900.00 per month. Learners whose parents cannot afford the fees are subsidised by the local Muslim community. The beautifully kept grounds and immaculately clean classrooms reflect the relaxed yet disciplined atmosphere of the school. School begins at 7:30 and learners and educators simply arrive and proceed straight to classes without any formal meetings or congregations. Learners wear simple, traditional Muslim attire.

I was impressed with the liberal disposition of the school. Non-Muslim learners are welcome to enrol at the school if they are able to pass an academic admissions test and are excused from attending traditional religious classes. This is in contrast to many former model C schools where non-Christian learners are often pressurised into attending Christian religious practices. Many staff members are non-Muslim, the only requirement being that female educators dress in a modest fashion. I was told that the school management does not take a deliberate pro-Muslim emphasis and generally leaves educators alone to get on with their teaching.

<sup>51</sup> Telephone conversation with school administrator, 28 February 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Interview, Ms Varnes (School Administrator), Emalahleni, 1 February 2011.

<sup>53</sup> The other Muslim school is situated at Kinross. It is small and financially poor, according to Mr Pilodia, present educator and ex-History educator at the Middelburg Muslim School. He told me that he believed that about 75 per cent of Muslim learners in South Africa attend a Muslim school.

The school does not offer FET History education to its learners, despite having achieved excellent matriculation History results as recently as 2008. Ex-History educator at the school, Mr Imraan Pilodia attributed this situation to the personal perceptions of the school principal who has a very negative perception of History:

This is a very personal issue with him ... He won't submit to parental demands for the subject. He killed it. One year, eight learners petitioned to do History and he refused to budge. This despite excellent matric results in the past. He congratulated us on the excellent results – he had to eat humble pie – but nothing changed. He found ways of killing the subject. For example, he loaded my timetable with other subjects, so that I couldn't teach History. He knew that the school certainly couldn't afford to hire another teacher to take History.<sup>54</sup>

The emphasis at the school is on commercial subjects. Accounting is a compulsory subject. This perception was confirmed by the English educator at the school who noted that History was not considered important at the Middelburg Muslim School as the management favoured commercial subjects. Mr Pilodia's contention that there was a level of learner interest in History was confirmed: 'However, in the course of my interaction with learners, it seems to me that there are a handful who would like to choose History as a subject.'<sup>55</sup>

All Muslim learners at the school must study Islamic history. According to Mr Pilodia, 'they don't really care about regular history.' Young boys attend Madrassa which provides a basic history education, but which 'is not comparable ... it's not academic. There are no references. Basic books are used. No intricate historical details are dealt with.'<sup>56</sup> Ibrahim Jooma, a Grade 12 Muslim learner at Steelcrest High School and Madrassa attender, also felt that Madrassa history did not replace regular school History study:

We learn about the Islamic struggle from the beginning. We learn about the history of the Prophet [SAW] and his own struggle to start the faith. Madrassa history education does not replace school history. It's a different thing. It's like black and white. We don't do

<sup>54</sup> Interview, Mr I. Pilodia, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Ms Rajakumar, Middelburg, 6 December 2010.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*



political history as such ... it's more theological and religious history. We don't study South African history of any sort.<sup>57</sup>

Mr Pilodia maintains that in the Mosque, global rather than local issues are discussed. The Mosque fashions the ideas of the local community. There is, according to Pilodia, little interest in local news. Even black Muslims are more interested in global Muslim issues rather than local ones. He conceded that 'It may be different in Jo'burg where the people are more sophisticated ... these are 'farm people' ... their vision is limited.'<sup>58</sup> This view is confirmed by L. Nadvi in his journal article titled 'South African Muslims and Political Engagement in A Globalising Context' in which he argues that South African Muslims have increasingly become politically conscientised to and acclimatised to global concerns but whose focus is fixed upon Muslim regions and issues.<sup>59</sup> The article argues that 'most South African Muslims identify strongly with Islam, which tends to inform most of their political, economic and social activity<sup>60</sup> ... they have a selective approach.'<sup>61</sup> It is clear that the religious environment to which young Muslim people are exposed does not (generally) nurture an interest in 'traditional' history in general and local South African history in particular.

I asked Mr Pilodia how as a Muslim adherent he taught difficult Muslim issues like the holocaust and the Middle East situation in Grade 9 Social Science classes. His response was refreshingly open-minded:

This all depends on the individual. Some Muslim teachers may be neutral or not even care. Some would probably just take the information which is in the textbook and just be happy with that. I would try to present all points of view. For example, the fact that there are different views on the holocaust ... I would present the different views and allow the learners to make up their own minds.

<sup>57</sup> Interview, Mr I. Jooma, Middelburg, 16 February 2011.

<sup>58</sup> Interview, Mr I. Pilodia, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

<sup>59</sup> L. Nadvi, 'South African Muslims and Political Engagement in a Globalising Context', *South African Historical Journal*, 60, 4 (2008), p. 633.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. 634.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 635.

Some teachers would present the religious background to various issues. Some would just present the history.<sup>62</sup>

Mr Badat, History educator at Steelcrest High School, pointed to a distinct difference in both culture and resultant degree of historical appreciation between different South African Muslim communities. He perceived that Muslims in Kwazulu Natal were generally business oriented and preferred the study of subjects like Economics and that the Cape Muslim community had a greater awareness of history than their Mpumalanga counterparts: 'They were in South Africa long before 1860 therefore they had a strong affinity toward the history of the Cape...'<sup>63</sup>

'Regular' secondary school History is not popular among Muslim young people. Mr Pilodia noted that learners struggle to see the benefit of History or its value. 'They can't see immediate results coming out of History. Learners can't see the long-term benefits of History, that it is a formative subject.'<sup>64</sup> Mr Badat noted that young Muslim people feel 'quite negative' toward school History education: 'They feel it's more worthwhile filling the curriculum doing subjects that will help them in the economic world we live in'.<sup>65</sup>

Having a sense of their own cultural and spiritual history is however important to Muslims. Islam is a historical religion:

Like I always describe ... The Qur'an is essentially a collection of historical stories and events. We can understand our present by knowing our past – that will enable us to plan for a brighter future. Thus history is integral to us as Muslims as we study the life and times – known as the "traditions" – of our Prophet Muhammed [SAW] in order to try and live life the same!<sup>66</sup>

Mr Pilodia believes that the only thing that could change the fortunes of History education at the Middelburg Muslim School is a change of leadership. He believes that learners would

<sup>62</sup> Interview, Mr I. Pilodia, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M. Badat, Middelburg, 29 November 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Interview, Mr I Pilodia, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Personalised questionnaire, Mr M Badat, Middelburg, 29 November 2011.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

react positively to a strong case being made for History education at the school.<sup>67</sup> The fact that Muslim learners at the school have to take Islamic history as part of their Madrassa education may result in the perception that enough history education is being presented. There is no doubt that the focus of Islamic history study is not South Africa but rather the life of the Prophet Muhammed [SAW] and wider contemporary Muslim issues. Most Muslim learners, certainly at the Middelburg Muslim School are more concerned with commercial rather than History education.

### 8.5 Traditionally black schools

Sozama High School, with its proud record of History teaching presently relegates less successful Mathematics and Science learners to its History class.<sup>68</sup> The History educator related that the School Management Team (SMT) 'look down on it [History] as a subject for poor achievers. They do not see any value to History with regards to career pathing'.<sup>69</sup> The unfortunate result of this was the response of learners, who according to their educator:

... share the same sentiment with the SMT (School Management Team) because when they are channeled to History they are told that it is because they cannot make it in Maths and Science. Thus learners take History already having the sense of failure...<sup>70</sup>

The negative perception of the History educator was that in general the numbers of learners doing History were shrinking and that learners and educators were no longer motivated to study or teach the subject.<sup>71</sup>

History education at Tswenyane Combined School is headed by Mr Joe Nkosi, who also serves as Cluster leader for the subject in the Middelburg area. Tshwenyane is a poor school, where the minimum school fee of R300 per annum is levied although many learners cannot afford to pay. The school has run a feeding scheme, an indication of the poverty in which many learners live. Black educators have informed me that at schools with feeding

<sup>67</sup> Interview, Mr I Pilodia, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

<sup>68</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, p. 148.

<sup>69</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, pp. 149–149.

<sup>70</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, p. 148.

<sup>71</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 2, as quoted by Black, p. 146.

schemes, much of their energy is spent on preparing and providing food to learners to the detriment of teaching. The alternative of teaching hungry learners seems (quite rightly) pointless to them. The school complains of suffering from a lack of classrooms and audio-visual equipment.<sup>72</sup>

History is successfully taught at Middelburg Combined School, until 2010 by Ms Rachel Maroos and afterward by Mr Gregory Sharp. Various strategies are employed by a hard-working staff, including the use of debates, case studies, research assignments, oral history projects, data analysis, cartoons, critical thinking, music, poetry and presentations.<sup>73</sup> Educators complained of a lack of resources including classrooms and audio-visual equipment.<sup>74</sup> As is the case at Tshwenyane, class sizes of 50 are not uncommon. History matriculation results have always exceeded a 90 per cent pass rate.

Valencia Combined School is a highly respected secondary school in Mbombela. Ms Alice Mwaura, a senior educator who began her teaching career in her home country of Kenya, noted that History is offered to the less able learners of the school:

We do offer History at Valencia. There is one class, or stream which does History. There are 50 learners in Grade 10, 30 in Grade 11 and 18 in Grade 12 who take History. The History learners are channeled to the subject. The A and B streams take Maths and Science. The C stream takes Computer Studies. The D stream takes History along with Consumer Studies and Tourism. The children who can't cope are sent to History.<sup>75</sup>

A very sombre perception of the present-day value of History as a secondary school subject emerged from the Tsiki-Naledi school in Hendrina, where the History educator felt that the dire socio-economic circumstances in which learners lived almost removed the point of education altogether. This educator expressed feelings of despair as he related the debilitating effects of poverty in the surrounding community. During 2010, learner numbers at Tsiki-Naledi rapidly declined as parents redirected their children to surrounding rural

<sup>72</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 4, as quoted by Black, p.151.

<sup>73</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8, as quoted by Black, p. 156–157.

<sup>74</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 8, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>75</sup> Interview, Ms A. Mwaura, Middelburg, 30 March 2011.

schools where fees were as low as R20 per annum, significantly less than those charged at Tsiki-Naledi. In a school with already poor matriculation results this drain of learners to schools with even lower results was difficult for educators to deal with. The History educator expressed a feeling that his own perception of himself as an educator was a negative one.<sup>76</sup> He noted that poor parents were reluctant to pay for any extras such as historical trips which may make the experience of History education more interesting<sup>77</sup>, preferring instead to spend what little money they had upon ritual matters.

As with most other government schools in Mpumalanga, the school administration did not look favourably upon History. The History educator noted that '... Most History learners, unable to cope with commercial subjects or Science, 'are forced out from the two streams by educators'.<sup>78</sup> History was regarded as a 'redundant subject' and the school was thinking of repacing it with Afrikaans or Tourism.<sup>79</sup> In fact, by 2012, History had been phased out of the school curriculum. It is doubtful whether the lack of History at the school was deeply missed as the History educator summed up his learners' attitude toward the subject by noting that '... they only study the subject for the sake of passing, finish and klaar! They have lost interest and motivation'.<sup>80</sup>

## 8.6 Conclusion

The position of History education within the selection of secondary schools above is not a happy one. School managements of ex-model C secondary schools, traditional black secondary schools, and the Middelburg Muslim School are not kindly disposed toward the subject. Grade 12 examination results have not been good – while an improvement in pass rates has been recorded in recent times – the large majority of learners pass History with marks between 30 and 50 per cent. Calvin Buthelezi mentioned to me that he was extremely worried about the decreasing popularity of History in Mpumalanga's secondary schools, particularly in two of the four educational districts of the province, namely the Nkangala (Middelburg/Emalahleni/Delmas area) and the Gert Sibande (Ermelo area) districts. A common factor in the subject's decline within many schools appears not to be a

<sup>76</sup> Interview, Mr D. Lukhele, Middelburg, 20 August 2008.

<sup>77</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 151.

<sup>78</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 148.

<sup>79</sup> 2008 Educators' questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 149.

<sup>80</sup> 2008 Educator's questionnaire, Response 5, as quoted by Black, p. 147.

lack of History educators – there are in fact many – but that these educators are being used to teach other subjects, which may be the result of poor teaching, or their unwillingness to promote History or the result of unfavourable dispositions toward the subject on the part of school administrations.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSIONS

Uncovering the perceptions involved with the study of History education at South African secondary schools since the 1960s to the present day reveals a story of remarkable and inspiring change and hope. When I began gathering material for this thesis, the thesis was at least in my mind as good as written and I believed that my research would confirm what I already knew. As I engaged with the data I had collected I realised how rash many of my rather well-worn assumptions were. What I knew were the traditional perceptions surrounding both apartheid and post-apartheid History education which have been around since at least the beginning of the apartheid era. These were the perceptions around pragmatic materialism – that History as a school subject was bound to fall victim to the materialistic desires of South Africans which dictated secondary school curriculum directions in favour of scientific, technical and commercial subjects; the perception that History does little to equip learners for post-school careers; that the subject has been bedeviled by poor teaching; that it is too factually and examination oriented and hated by black learners and educators during the apartheid era and by white, Afrikaans-speaking learners and educators during the post-apartheid era. I believed, along with most of my History-teaching colleagues that History was seriously on the decline and that it was only a matter of time before it became extinct in secondary schools. While the current position of History education is undeniably not a happy one at South African secondary schools the future outlook for the subject is not as bleak as has been imagined and at least in terms of popular history, there is a considerable degree of appreciation for the subject among the young people I surveyed.

The foremost perception of South African secondary school History education during the apartheid era is that the subject was used as a propaganda tool by the Nationalist Party government. Grundlingh notes that ‘... the Afrikaans-speaking view of the past was greatly aided by the Nationalist party coming to power in 1948. Greater control over education contributed to the entrenchment of a specific Afrikaans interpretation in school textbooks’.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Grundlingh, ‘Politics, Principles and Problems of a Profession: Afrikaner Historians and their Discipline, c.1920–c.1965’, *Perspectives in Education*, 12, 1 (1991), p. 14.

The fact that the philosophy of Christian National Education, through syllabuses, textbooks and the instruction of either supportive or disempowered educators, infused secondary school History education in apartheid-era South Africa cannot be refuted. What can however be questioned is how influential this philosophy was upon the learners who were subjected to it. It is my contention that the hoped-for indoctrination provided by school History on the part of government and education authorities was less complete and successful than generally believed. Grundlingh points out that by the 1950s and 1960s, political and economic developments in South Africa 'saw to it that public interest in history gradually waned'. After establishing themselves in power in 1948 and securing the ideal of a republic in 1961 an 'upsurge in economic growth in the sixties' rendered interest in the past (at least among whites) less compelling. 'An increasingly confident Afrikanerdom could afford to be less dependent on the past'.<sup>2</sup> W. A. de Klerk noted that the Afrikaner consciousness about history in general was not, in the 1960s, as strong as people supposed. His article describes an apathy for and lack of interest even in the history of their own people on the part of Afrikaners.<sup>3</sup> J. J. van Tonder, also writing in the 1960s felt that the foundations of the Afrikaner people were under attack, largely because of a lack of interest in history and inadequate History teaching at Afrikaans-medium secondary schools.<sup>4</sup> Giliomee notes that by the 1970s apartheid ideology was beginning to collapse and the Nationalist interpretation of history was being challenged.<sup>5</sup> My own research among currently employed white English and Afrikaans-speaking Mpumalanga educators revealed that the content of the apartheid-era History syllabus had little permanent effect upon the perceptions and values of white learners of that time.

Within apartheid-era black secondary schools History syllabuses, textbooks and teaching did not succeed in indoctrinating learners with an appreciation of the apartheid system. Apartheid era school boycotts during the 1970s and 1980s effectively meant that black secondary school learners received little instruction in History or any other subject. Up until the 1980s, many apartheid-era black secondary school History educators displayed a

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. de Klerk, 'Ons Volksgesiedenis as Lewende Erfenis', *Historia*, 12, 4 (1967), pp. 242–249. Presentation to the *Historiese Genootskap van Suid-Afrika*, Kaaplandse Afdeling te Stellenbosch, November 1966.

<sup>4</sup> J. J. van Tonder, 'Gesiedenis: Knelpunte en Gevaartekens', *Historia*, 10, 4 (1965), pp. 257–264.

<sup>5</sup> H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p. 620.



reluctant conservatism in their History teaching, instruction which made little impact upon their learners. Other black History educators made an effort to use the subject as counter propaganda to apartheid ideals. This was clearly apparent in the Witbank and Middelburg areas of Mpumalanga from the 1960s through to the 1980s. Although History, particularly toward the end of the apartheid era was a more popular secondary school subject in black rather than white secondary schools, this was because the subject was perceived to be a pragmatic academic vehicle, useful in assisting learners to obtain school leaving certificates, rather than for any perceived political impact the subject may have had.

Another traditional perception held about South African secondary school History education has been that English-speaking white learners and educators were more socially and politically liberal than their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts. My personal experience and research findings indicate that this was not the case. Mulholland's assertion that '... The history held dear to the Afrikaner is in a certain sense not the same history as that for many English speakers'<sup>6</sup> may be challenged. Mazabow, quoting Boyce, noted that the 'vast majority' of English-speaking educators found the Afrikaner emphasis on patriotism repugnant, in the same way that they found the idea that 'the racial arrogance of nations which claim to have a God-given mission to fulfill' to be arrogant.<sup>7</sup> Evans' view that the paradigm of South African history taught in English-medium schools in fact corresponded closely with the interpretation of history propagated by the ruling Afrikaner elite, is far closer to the truth.<sup>8</sup> My research findings indicate that although English-speaking learners and History educators did not on the whole oppose the propaganda inherent in apartheid-era History syllabuses and textbooks they were, as with many of their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts, indifferent to them. Mulholland's suggestion that '... in the South African history sections of primary and high schools so much that is interesting and informative is ignored, so much that is of limited appeal and of limited value, is repeated and very little is truly questioned, with the result that not only does school History hold no excitement, but

<sup>6</sup> R. B. Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa. Vol. I and II' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981), p. 262.

<sup>7</sup> G. Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the teaching of History in South African Schools' (D.Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2003), p. 89, quoting A. N. Boyce, 'The Teaching of History in South African Schools with Special Reference to methods of Evaluation and Syllabuses' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1966), p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness', p. 89, quoting G. Evans, 'Textbooks and the Reproduction of Knowledge' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990), p. 137.

far from laying the foundations for a pursuit of historical knowledge, it becomes a discipline to be ignored later in life' <sup>9</sup> were echoed in my own research, which found that at least among the white community the perception that History was boring and of little practical use was the predominant one. The prevailing perception among the white, apartheid-era educated educators I surveyed was that History lessons had been marketplaces of dates and facts rather than marketplaces of ideas and discourse.

A perception common to all cultural groups was that during the apartheid era and beyond, History teaching, with few exceptions has not been of a high quality. As early as 1949, Nel<sup>10</sup> complained of poorly educated ineffectual History educators operating in Afrikaans-medium secondary schools within the Orange Free State province. Barnard (1995)<sup>11</sup> noted that poor teaching, poor teacher training and little personal motivation were major reasons why History was struggling to hold its own as a secondary school subject within white secondary schools in the immediate post-apartheid period in South Africa's history. Present day Mpumalanga employed white educators whom I interviewed as part of my 2012 research had few positive memories of the History teaching which they had received at secondary school. The findings of scholars such as Tabata (1959),<sup>12</sup> Horrel (1964 and 1968),<sup>13</sup> Malie (1967),<sup>14</sup> Zwane (1991),<sup>15</sup> Hartshorne (1992),<sup>16</sup> Ndlovu (1993 and 1996),<sup>17</sup> Lekgoathi

<sup>9</sup> Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching', p. 326.

<sup>10</sup> J. J. Nel, 'Gesiedenis in die Middelbare Skool onder die O. V. S. Departement van Onderwys (1933–1947)' (Dissertation in part fulfilment of M. A., University College of the Orange Free State/University of South Africa, 1949).

<sup>11</sup> L. Barnard, 'Het geskiedenis op Skoolvlak 'n Toekoms?: Enkele Perspektiewe', *The Free State Teacher*, 85, 4 (1995), pp. 13–17.

<sup>12</sup> J. B. Tabata, *Education for Barbarism* (Durban, 1959).

<sup>13</sup> M. Horrel, *A Decade of Bantu Education* (Johannesburg, 1964) and *Bantu Education to 1968* (Johannesburg, 1968).

<sup>14</sup> E. Malie, 'The Teaching of History in the Bantu Secondary Schools of the Southern Transvaal Region' (M.Ed. Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> I. E. Zwane, 'An Examination of the Position and Role of History in Black Secondary Schools, with Particular Reference to the period since the Introduction of Bantu Education' (Research Report in partial fulfilment of M.Ed., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> K. B. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910–1990* (Cape Town, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> S. M. Ndlovu, 'Perceptions of History and Experiences of Learning among African Students in the early 1990s, in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Pietermaritzburg' (M. A. mini-dissertation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1993) and 'Conceptions, Perceptions of History and Experiences of learning among African Students in the Department of Historical Studies [DHS], in the Early 1990s – University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg'. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa and the South African Society for History Teaching, Potchefstroom 10–12 January 1996.

(2007)<sup>18</sup> and Dryden (1999)<sup>19</sup> as well as my own 2008 investigation<sup>20</sup> indicate that History teaching within black secondary schools was performed by poorly educated or poorly motivated teachers when, within the setting of apartheid-era school boycotts and educational unrest, teaching of any kind was performed at all. Of course it is not possible to generalise about poor teaching during the apartheid era or afterward. Many shining examples of dedicated, exceptional History teaching in all kinds of South African secondary schools are to be found. Respondents I interviewed from all cultural groups who received secondary school education during the apartheid era relate that they encountered inspiring History teachers. I interviewed exceptional History educators while conducting both my 2008 and 2012 research in Mpumalanga. Nevertheless, there are simply too many examples of poorly qualified and demotivated educators to avoid the conclusion that poor teaching has greatly damaged the popularity of History as a secondary school subject and has created negative perceptions of it among countless learners.

It is also clear that the perceptions which school managements during and beyond the apartheid era, representing every cultural group and kind of school, have held of History have led to the subject being relegated to the status of a 'dustbin subject', to a place of diminished importance within the school curriculum and to the practice of utilising the weakest educators to teach the subject, all of which have done little to encourage good history teaching. The negative perceptions of school managements toward History is strengthened by the design of the present day curriculum which in itself does little to help it become a popular subject at secondary school level. Rob Siebörger notes with concern that the introduction of the new curriculum for the FET phase of secondary school from 2006 forced many secondary schools to make fresh choices in the subjects which they offer to learners. Siebörger adds that where in the past Grade 12 learners did six subjects, including two compulsory languages, they now have seven subjects of which four are compulsory – two languages, Life Orientation, and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy. The effect of this is that there is only space for three further subjects. This more limited choice of subjects

<sup>18</sup> S. P. Lekgoathi, 'Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994', *South African Historical Journal*, 58 (2007), pp. 226–252.

<sup>19</sup> S. Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation in Transition: Case Studies of History Teachers and Students in Cape Town Schools' (M.Ed. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> D. A. Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008' (M. A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 2009).

for schools and learners alike greatly affects History.<sup>21</sup> This observation was confirmed by Louis Smith who also noted that because few learners take History, school principals have the perception that History teachers carry a lighter load compared to other teachers in the school and believe that it is not fair that an educator teaches only a few children while other educators have to deal with classes of forty learners or more.<sup>22</sup> Learners whom I surveyed in 2012 noted that they would have liked to have taken History, had they had the opportunity to add a further subject choice to the selection of subjects which they presently had.<sup>23</sup>

A popular idea which I believed would be confirmed by my research into the perceptions of young people toward History education was that at least in the minds of white South Africans, apartheid ideology was alive and well. In the words of Engelbrecht (2006) ‘... in traditionally white schools, the Afrikaner nationalist narrative has not died easily. Since 1994, white South Africans have become increasingly apolitical, and this trend has resulted in the historical ignorance of young whites’.<sup>24</sup> Lyotard speaks of the totalitarianism of grand narratives.<sup>25</sup> Although my research questions the extent to which the apartheid grand narrative was truly able to indoctrinate apartheid-era learners successfully, there is no doubt that the young South Africans I surveyed as part of my 2012 research are engaged in the task of reinterpreting the past and developing a new perspective of the future with new values and new ideas. It would clearly be naïve to believe that the apartheid grand narrative which so governed the perceptions of all South Africans simply died a dramatic death in 1994 upon the advent of the democratic era. These perceptions have taken time to erode and change. My research surprised me as I perceived a new, common youth culture emerging in South Africa. The staggering transformation of the social perceptions of Afrikaans-speaking white young people surprised me the most. Their broad-mindedness which I discovered, so apparent in their interest in history in general and South African

<sup>21</sup> R. Siebörger, ‘Don’t Deprive Pupils of Chance to Study History’, newspaper article, *Cape Times*, 12 June 2008. No page numbers.

<sup>22</sup> Interview, Mr L. Smith, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>24</sup> A. Engelbrecht, ‘Textbooks in South Africa from Apartheid to Post-apartheid: Ideological change revealed by Racial Stereotyping’, pp. 4–5, in *Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for using Textbooks and Curricula*, ed. E. Roberts-Schweitzer in consultation with V. Greaney and K. Duer (Washington D. C, 2006), pp. 71–80.

<sup>25</sup> J-F Lyotard, ‘The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge’ from *The Postmodern Condition* (Manchester, 1984), <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/lyotard.htm> Accessed, 28 October 2010.

historical topics in particular indicate that a sea-change in their perceptions of life and their place in a democratic South Africa has indeed taken place. Afrikaans-speaking respondents who completed my questionnaires expressed views which would have been incomprehensible to their apartheid-era forefathers. Writing in 2003, Anton Ehlers noted that the majority of Afrikaners were undecided about their commitment to South Africa and acceptance of the process of reconciliation.<sup>26</sup> My 2012 research indicates that this indecision is gone. The vast majority of Afrikaans-speaking young people whom I surveyed are deeply committed to a democratic South Africa and the process of reconciliation. Little evidence of the 'master symbols' identified by Du Preez<sup>27</sup> and which many believe so governed the perceptions of apartheid-era Afrikaners were apparent in the thinking of the young people I surveyed in 2012.

It was equally apparent to me that for the black learners I surveyed in 2012, apartheid is becoming more of a historical reality and less a memory of personal pain and suffering. Among all respondents whom I surveyed and especially black respondents, I detected a willingness and interest in learning about the South African history which a relatively short time ago proved too painful for South African secondary school learners to delve into. Dryden found in her 1999 research that white Cape Town learners tended to avoid South African history in favour of European history while black learners wished to avoid it because they found it evoked feelings of bitterness and pain.<sup>28</sup> My own 2008 research revealed a strong feeling among black Mpumalanga secondary school learners to avoid engagement with South African history because it brought back memories of their parents' and grandparents' sufferings under apartheid. Happily my 2012 research indicated that these painful perceptions which learners hold toward History study are diminishing and are being replaced with a genuine interest in the South African past.

<sup>26</sup> A. Ehlers, 'Apartheid Mythology and Symbolism. Desegregated and Reinvented in the Service of Nation Building in South Africa: The Covenant and the Battle of Blood River/Ncome', *Revue Alizes* 24 (2003), p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> R. E. Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present: A Study of South African School History Syllabuses and Textbooks, 1839–1990' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990), p. 57, quoting J. M. du Preez, *Africana Afrikaner: Meetesimbole in Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolhandboeke* (Alberton: Librarius Felicitas, 1983), p. 70.

<sup>28</sup> Dryden, 'Mirror of a Nation', especially pp. 37–38, 40 for white learners having a preference for overseas rather than South African history and pp. 52–53, 62 for black learners experiencing feelings of pain as a result of History instruction.

The range of historical interests of the black and white secondary school learners whom I surveyed have to a large degree coalesced, something unthinkable to the political architects of apartheid. I saw this clearly in the way their interest in historical topics and preferences for historical figures showed little significant cultural or racial differences. My research indicated to me that a new (and happier) South African society is indeed emerging. Writing in 1990, Chernis called for an open debate to make South Africa's History syllabus acceptable to all cultural groups and not simply to whites. 'The challenge ... is to make the divergent political spectrum as intelligible as possible through an approach involving a variety of perspectives'.<sup>29</sup> This debate, while important and no doubt needing to be an ongoing one, has, I believe, been overtaken by an emerging South African youth culture which is increasingly sharing the same ideals – and increasingly, similar historical interests.

My 2012 research among secondary school learners has made me rethink one of the findings I had made as a result of my 2008 research among black secondary school learners in Mpumalanga and a finding that has been shared by many scholars – namely that the pernicious philosophy of pragmatic materialism had overcome South Africans in general and young South African people in particular – one of the powerful factors leading to a decline of popular interest in History education.<sup>30</sup> In my 2009 dissertation I quoted scholars like Mulholland, Mazabow,<sup>31</sup> Siebörger and Kallaway in support of the idea that career advancement and the financial rewards associated with successful careers dominated the ideals of young South Africans. Mulholland (1981) noted that in an age increasingly becoming oriented toward utilitarianism, History had become unpopular. 'Will my knowledge enable me to manipulate the world of things and people' and 'How much monetary value will it have?' are questions asked by utilitarians. Sadly Mulholland came to the conclusion that History was perceived as best left to propagandists or enthusiasts to follow.<sup>32</sup> Kallaway suggested that 'History has been uncritically abandoned, along with much else in a ruthless economic and social transformation'.<sup>33</sup> I still believe that the South African obsession for personal wealth and status is powerful and can create damaging perceptions

<sup>29</sup> Chernis, 'The Past in Service of the Present', p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Black, 'Changing Perceptions of History Education', pp. 190–191.

<sup>31</sup> Mazabow, 'The Development of Historical Consciousness', pp. 25–26.

<sup>32</sup> Mulholland, 'The Evolution of History Teaching', p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Kallaway, 'History Education as a Popular Version of the TRC' *Notes for the Values in Education History Panel* (2000), p. 1, as quoted by Siebörger, 'History and the Emerging Nation', pages unnumbered.

of any study field which is not immediately related to the career prospects of secondary school learners. As early as 1979, Lyotard referred to ‘the commercialisation of knowledge’, a trend which is surely only more acute today.<sup>34</sup> However, in my 2012 research I did discern positive signs that this materialistic mindset may be changing, perhaps as South African society becomes more mature. The learners I surveyed – and the non-History-taking learners in particular – displayed a surprising and pleasing appreciation of the personal values and moral lessons which could be acquired through History study as much as they displayed an enthusiasm to learn about the past.<sup>35</sup> The pragmatic, soulless philosophy of Henry Ford, the early twentieth century American industrialist who stated that ‘... History is more or less bunk. It’s tradition. We don’t want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that’s worth a tinker’s damn is the history we make today’<sup>36</sup> was pleasingly absent from the responses I received from the secondary school learners I surveyed in 2012.

Henry Ford may not have wanted ‘tradition’ but my research among Mpumalanga secondary school learners indicates that they harbour a deep desire to know more about their personal family and community traditions as well as the history of South Africa and history in general.<sup>37</sup> This is not surprising if we accept the assertions of Rüsen who believes that a deep-seated sense of historical consciousness is an integral part of the human psyche.<sup>38</sup> Mazabow, in his school-related study of the concept of historical consciousness, quotes numerous scholars who believe that a sense of historical consciousness – inwardly knowing that as a person your self-understanding has to fit into a chronological context – is undeniably part of human nature which can only be repressed with dire psychological consequences.<sup>39</sup> Southgate believes that people are uncomfortable with the chaos implied by a meaningless past and therefore impose a meaningful pattern upon it.<sup>40</sup> Referring to the

<sup>34</sup> J-F Lyotard, ‘The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge’, p. 3, from *The Postmodern Condition* (Manchester, 1984), <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/lyotard.htm> Accessed, 28 October 2010.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>36</sup> Henry Ford, 25 May, 1916, as quoted in *On This Day: The History of the World in 366 Days*, ed., S. Facer (London, 1992), pages unnumbered.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>38</sup> J. Rüsen, ‘Historical Consciousness and Historical Education’. Paper presented at the Third National Conference of the South African Society for History Teaching, Rand Afrikaans University, 12–13 July 1990, in M. H. Trümpelmann, ed., *History Teaching in a Multi-Cultural Society* (Johannesburg, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> Mazabow, ‘The Development of Historical Consciousness’, pp. 50–51; 192–193.

<sup>40</sup> B. Southgate, *History: What and Why?* (London, 1996), p. 53, quoted by Mazabow, p. 50.

human need to discover personal 'roots' (so apparent in the responses which I received from my 2008 and 2012 surveyed learners) Reeves believes that this need is testimony to the human instinct for saving the past and preserving an individual's self-identity.<sup>41</sup> Marwick holds that '... There exists in the human imagination an instinctive wish to break down the barriers of time and mortality and to extend the limits of human consciousness beyond the span of a single life'.<sup>42</sup> In other words, we have to reduce and organise chaotic particular knowledge to something that fits into a manageable general scheme.<sup>43</sup> We cannot understand life without some idea of it as a continuing process.<sup>44</sup> 'Our identity lies in our ceaseless changing'.<sup>45</sup> Given the importance (unacknowledged or not) of knowing the past – and more specifically – one's *own* past I should not have been surprised at the high level of interest which all my respondents displayed in history. While the merits of History as a school subject may be debated, the significance of a sense of history as a part of peoples' lives cannot.

While many of my white adult respondents appeared somewhat bitter and resentful about their place in post-apartheid South Africa and both the History education which they had received at school and that being currently offered in South African schools, I encountered a decided lack of bitterness about these issues from the secondary school learners I surveyed in 2008 and particularly in 2012. The vast majority of surveyed learners unknowingly emulated the attitude of Max Du Preez, who in relating his own experience of formal school and informal adult History education explained that:

My attitude toward history is that we should stop looking for villains, for people and groups to blame and hate. Instead we should try to understand who the characters really were, what motivated them and what their legacies are <sup>46</sup> ... it's about seeing the characters who populate our past as human beings first, and as members of racial, ethnic or class groups second. Try to understand what the actors of our past were like as people and to judge their actions in terms of

<sup>41</sup> M. Reeves, 'The Uses of History in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *The Historian*, 74 (2002), pp. 6–10, quoted by Mazabow, p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> A. Marwick, *The Nature of History* (London, 1970), p. 14, quoted by Mazabow, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup> K. Egan, *Educational Development* (New York, 1979), p. 52–53, quoted by Mazabow, p. 192.

<sup>44</sup> J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (Essex, 1991), p. 1, quoted by Mazabow, p. 192.

<sup>45</sup> J. Rüsen, in P. Duvenhage, ed., *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria, 1993), p. 75, quoted by Mazabow, p. 193.

<sup>46</sup> M. du Preez, *Of Warriors, Lovers and Prophets: Unusual Stories from South Africa's Past* (Cape Town, 2004), p. x.



ordinary human behaviour. Most of all, to read history with an open mind rather than with a view to justify our prejudices or narrow nationalism<sup>47</sup> ... it is time to let go of the notion of separate histories. It is time to start thinking of the past as the time that forged us into the nation that we are now at last becoming.<sup>48</sup>

As the apartheid era came to an end and a new democratic society was envisioned for South Africa, it was obvious that school education would be widely regarded as a vehicle for soothing the bitterness of the past and re-educating young South Africans in terms of nation-building. It was believed by many that History should be made a compulsory subject in secondary schools, almost like a remedial life orientation programme with dates and facts, to facilitate the changing of perceptions people so needed to cope with the transition to democracy and an open society. If this was the main reason to promote History as a compulsory school subject in South Africa's post-apartheid era, my research informs me that it is no longer valid. The perceptions of young people in South Africa have undergone a sea-change during the twenty years of democracy. South Africa is still a country deeply in need of healing in many aspects – not least among them forgiveness and reconciliation, but the welcome changes in perception which young people have undergone in the years following the demise of apartheid render the offering of History as a remedial, compulsory subject at secondary schools unnecessary.

When I began researching for this thesis, I believed that my work would show that the indoctrination ability of History education at schools during the apartheid era was potent. Instead, I discovered that the indoctrinating ability of secondary school History was never as complete as many have supposed in either the white or black communities of the apartheid era. I also expected to discover a total sense of indifference toward History in the present time, especially among young people as they turned their backs on an uninspiring and unwanted past or focused their energies on activities which they perceived to lead toward the accumulation of status and money. To my great surprise, I found a greater level of indifference toward the subject among the older people I surveyed and a high level of interest in and appreciation of the subject among the secondary school learners I surveyed.

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 233.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 327.

This fills me with a sense of confidence in the long term well-being of History education at secondary school level in South Africa as well as the long term well-being of the country itself.

# APPENDICES

## 2012 QUESTIONNAIRES

### APPENDIX 1

#### EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Thanks for completing this questionnaire. Please do so completely honestly – do not be afraid to be critical of History education if you feel you need to be so. Do not answer questions if you feel uncomfortable with them. The purpose of this questionnaire is to try and get an idea of how people felt about the History education they received at school. If you did not take History after Standard 8, please try to answer the questions you can about how you felt about History.

Name (optional):

Home language:

When did you attend high school? (e.g. 1974–1978):

High School attended:

Location of school (e.g. Johannesburg):

1. Describe how you felt about the History syllabus you studied. If you can't remember, please say so:
2. Describe how you felt about the History textbooks you used. Again, if you can't remember, please say so:
3. How did most learners at your school feel about History education?
4. How do you think your community as a whole felt about History education at school?
5. How do you think your community feels about History education today?
6. Why do you believe that History has become an unpopular subject at most high schools today?
7. What topics do you believe should be taught during History lessons today?
8. Is there anything else which you would like to add about how you feel about History education, past or present?

Lastly ... please be so kind as to sign this consent section. Thanks for your help, it is graciously appreciated.

I am happy that any insights or opinions I have here expressed may be used/published in any work that results from this research.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADE 8 AND 9 SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNERS

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. By doing so you will assist research which hopes to explain why secondary school learners in Mpumalanga choose to take (or not to take) History as a subject from Grade 10. It is important to find out what learners such as yourself feel about the History education which you may or may not receive at school. Please answer the questions honestly. The questionnaires are confidential and there is no need to write down your name. Thank you so much for your help.

What school do you attend?

Write down the grade you are presently in:

Write down your home language:

1. Do you study History as part of your Social Sciences course? Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.
2. Do you think you would like to study History as one of your FET (Grade 10–12) subjects? It does not matter whether your school offers History or not, this question asks you if you would like to take History. Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.
3. Write down the reasons why you would like to take History as a FET (Grade 10–12) subject if you answered 'yes' to the last question. If you answered 'no', leave these lines blank and move on to the next question.
4. Write down the reasons why you would not like to take History as a FET (Grade 10–12) subject if you answered 'no' to question 2. If you answered 'yes', leave these lines blank and move on to the next question.
5. Do you watch television shows or documentaries about History? Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.
6. Why do you think many learners do not choose to take History after Grade 9? Write down your reasons below.
7. Write down the topics which you would like to learn more about in the History section of your Social Sciences course. Write down your ideas even if your SS course does not include History.

8. Write down the names of impressive people about whom you learnt in the History section of your SS course. If you do not do History as part of your SS course, leave this question blank.
9. Write down the names of impressive people about whom you would like to learn more in the History section of your SS course. Even if you do not do History as part of your SS course, write down your ideas.
10. Why do we need to study the past? Write down your views.
11. Does the past teach us anything meaningful? Write down your views.
12. What textbook/s do you presently use in Social Science? If you do not use a textbook but receive notes instead, please say so.
13. Write down your own impressions (good or bad) of the Social Sciences textbook you use.
14. Is History a valuable subject? Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.

Thank you for sharing your ideas. Please date and sign the consent section below.

I am happy that any ideas or opinions I have here expressed may be used/published in any work that results from this research.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADE 10–12 LEARNERS WHO TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HISTORY-TAKING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. By doing so you will assist research which hopes to explain why secondary school learners in Mpumalanga choose to take (or not to take) History as a subject from Grade 10. It is important to find out what learners such as yourself, who are the consumers of the subject, feel about the History education which you receive at school. Please answer the questions honestly. The questionnaires are confidential and there is no need to write down your name. Thank you so much for your help.

What school do you attend?

Write down the grade you are presently in

Write down your home language:

## 1. Reasons for choosing History as a subject

Why did you choose to take history in Grade 10? Please tick a response that best suits your opinion.

REASONS	YES	NO
History requires little insight		
Few other subjects available		
To study History at a tertiary level		
Gives better understanding of politics		
Like teacher who teaches History		
Will be of help in the world of work		
Persuaded by teacher		
Persuaded by parents		
My friends chose History		
Was made to change subject choice		
Achieve high marks in History		

## 2. Value of history as a subject

Various skills are acquired through the study of History. Please tick the response that best suits your opinion.

QUESTIONS	YES	TO A LESSER EXTENT	NO
To distinguish between true and slanted facts			
To examine historical documents critically			

To remember facts well			
To realise that different people see the same thing differently			
To distinguish between the different ways in which different people look at the same situation			
To answer essay-type questions			
To analyse historical documents			
To gather information and arrange it logically			

3. Topics which you would like to learn more about in the History class.

Write down any topics which you feel you would like to learn more about in History. You do not have to fill all the blocks.

4. Impressive people about whom you learnt in the History class

Write down the names of people you learnt about in History who have made an impression on you. Start with the people who impressed you the most. You do not have to fill all the blocks.

5. Impressive people about whom you would like to learn more in the History class

Write down the names of people you would like to learn more about in History. Start with the people you would most like to learn more about. You do not have to fill all the blocks.

6. Suggestions for making History more enjoyable

Are there ways in which History could be made a more enjoyable subject for you? Write down your ideas in the blocks. You do not have to fill all the blocks.

7. What textbook/s do you presently use in History?

8. Describe your own impressions (good or bad) of the History textbook/s you use.

9. To what extent is it necessary to study the past? Write down your views.

10. Does the past teach us anything meaningful? Write down your views.

11. Write down what you think the obstacles are in your study of History. This could be anything from having no electricity at home, to having to cope with difficult learners in your class. If there are no real obstacles which hinder your History studies, do not write anything.

12. List the reasons why you chose to study History after Grade 9. Be completely honest in your answers.

13. Write down the ways in which you think that your History studies might help you in your adult life or future career. If you can't think of any, do not write anything.

14. Outline the things which you like about studying History.

15. Outline the things which you do not like about studying History.

Thank you for your input. It is greatly appreciated. Please date and sign the consent section below.

I am happy that any insights or opinions I have here expressed may be used/published in any work that results from this research.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX 4****QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADE 10–12 LEARNERS WHO DO NOT TAKE HISTORY AS A FET SUBJECT**

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. By doing so you will assist research which hopes to explain why secondary school learners in Mpumalanga choose to take (or not to take) History as a subject from Grade 10. It is important to find out what learners such as yourself feel about the History education which you may or may not receive at school. Please answer the questions honestly. The questionnaires are confidential and there is no need to write down your name. Thank you so much for your help.

What school do you attend?

Write down the grade you are presently in:

Write down your home language:

1. Write down the reasons why you did not take History as a subject in Grade 10.
2. Should History be offered as a subject at high school? Write down your views.
3. In what ways might History help those who take it in their future lives or careers? Write down your ideas.
4. Do you watch television shows or documentaries about History? Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.
5. Is it important to know about the History of South Africa? Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.
6. Is History a valuable subject? Tick 'yes' or 'no' in the box below.
7. Why do we need to study the past? Write down your views.
8. Does the past teach us anything meaningful? Write down your views.
9. Please write down any other views you may have about the value, or otherwise, of History as a high school subject in South Africa.

Thank you for sharing your ideas. Please date and sign the consent section below.

I am happy that any ideas or opinions I have here expressed may be used/published in any work that results from this research.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Trümpelmann, M. H., 'Die Vormingsaad van Geskiedenis as Skoolvak' (M.Ed. dissertation, Rand Afrikaans University, 1980).

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## **Responses to Questionnaires**

### **Educator Questionnaires**

#### **2008 Educator questionnaires**

The school which the surveyed educator was teaching at and its location are stated.

Anonymous, Empucukweni Secondary School, Emalahleni

Anonymous, Kanhym Agricultural Secondary School, Nazareth township, Middelburg

Anonymous, Leonard Ntshuntshe Secondary School, Emalahleni  
 Anonymous, Middelburg Combined School, Nazareth township, Middelburg  
 Anonymous, P. Ndimande Secondary School, Emalahleni  
 Anonymous, Sozama Secondary School, Mhluzi township, Middelburg  
 Anonymous, Tshwenyane Combined School, Mhluzi township, Middelburg  
 Anonymous, Tsiki-Naledi Secondary School, Hendrina

## 2012 Educator questionnaires

The language spoken by the surveyed educator; the years during which he/she attended secondary school; the secondary school and the province in which the school is located are stated.

1. Afrikaans; 1978–1982; H/S F. H. Odendaal; Gauteng
2. Afrikaans; 1996–2000; H/S Sannieshof; North West Province
3. Afrikaans; 1978–1982; H/S Piet Potgieter; Limpopo
4. Afrikaans; 1970–1974; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
5. English; 1987–1992; Greendale H/S; Mpumalanga
6. Afrikaans; 1995–1999; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
7. English; 1964–1969; St Stithian's College; Gauteng
8. Afrikaans; 1977–1981; H/S Amajuba; Kwa-Zulu Natal
9. Afrikaans; 1982–1987; H/S Hentie Cilliers; Free State
10. Afrikaans; 2002–2006; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
11. Afrikaans; 1975–1979; H/S Hendrik Verwoerd; Gauteng
12. Afrikaans; 2001–2005; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
13. English; 1978–1982; Witbank H/S; Mpumalanga
14. Afrikaans; 1961–1965; Eunice H/S; Free State
15. Afrikaans; 1977–1982; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
16. Afrikaans; 1970–1974; H/S Alberton; Gauteng
17. Afrikaans; 1970–1974; H/S Alberton; Gauteng
18. Afrikaans; 1971–1975; H/S Vanderbylpark; Gauteng
19. Afrikaans; 1959–1963; Technical H/S Bloemfontein; Free State
20. English; 1982–1986; Jeppe Girls H/S; Gauteng
21. Afrikaans; 1966–1970; H/S Westonaria; Gauteng
22. Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Steelcrest H/S; Mpumalanga
23. Afrikaans; 1981–1986; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
24. Afrikaans; 1994–1998; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
25. English; 1999–2001; Pretoria Girls H/S; Gauteng
26. Afrikaans; 1999–2003; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
27. Afrikaans; 1970–1974; Jagersfontein Sekondêre Skool; Free State
28. Afrikaans; 1974–1978; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
29. Afrikaans; 1975–1979; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
30. Afrikaans; 1998–2002; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga

31. Afrikaans; 1996–2000; Technical H/S; Mpumalanga
32. Afrikaans; 1960–1964; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
33. Afrikaans; 1972–1976; H/S Nelspruit; Mpumalanga
34. English; 1990–1995; H/S Kriel; Mpumalanga
35. Afrikaans; 1980–1985; H/S Lydenburg; Mpumalanga
36. Afrikaans; 1967–1971; H/S Standerton; Mpumalanga
37. English; 1979–1983; H/S Lydenburg; Mpumalanga
38. Afrikaans; 1974–1978; H/S Piet Retief; Mpumalanga
39. Afrikaans; 1980–1985; H/S Centurion; Gauteng
40. Afrikaans; 1990–1994; H/S Lydenburg; Mpumalanga
41. Afrikaans; 2001–2005; H/S Vryheid; Kwa-Zulu Natal
42. English; 1978–1982; Witbank Convent; Mpumalanga
43. Afrikaans; 1980–1984; Ladysmith H/S; Kwa-Zulu Natal
44. English; 1968–1972; H/S Ermelo; Mpumalanga
45. Afrikaans; 1975–1979; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
46. Afrikaans; 1981–1985; Witbank High School; Mpumalanga
47. Afrikaans; 1990–1994; H/S Secunda; Mpumalanga
48. Afrikaans; 1973–1977; H/S Belfast; Mpumalanga
49. Afrikaans; 1994–1998; H/S Secunda; Mpumalanga
50. Afrikaans; 1969–1973; H/S Vryheid; Kwa-Zulu Natal
51. Afrikaans; 1970–1974; H/S Mafeking; North West Province
52. Afrikaans; 1988–1992; Potchefstroom Gymnasium; North West Province
53. English; 1969–1973; St Paul's Convent; Unstated
54. Afrikaans; 1990–1994; H/S Nylstroom; Limpopo
55. English; 1970–1974; H/S Langenhoven; Gauteng
56. Afrikaans; 1969–1973; H/S D. F. Malan; Western Cape
57. Afrikaans; 1994–1999; H/S Brits; North West Province
58. Afrikaans; 1977–1981; H/S Evander; Mpumalanga
59. Afrikaans; 1977–1981; H/S Utrecht; Kwa-Zulu Natal
60. Afrikaans; 1960–1965; H/S D. F. Malan; Western Cape
61. English; 1972–1976; Scottsburgh H/S; Kwa-Zulu Natal
62. Afrikaans; 1982–1986; H/S F. H. Odendaal; Gauteng
63. English; 1977–1981; CBC Bloemfontein; Free State
64. Afrikaans; 1975–1979; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
65. Afrikaans; 2000–2004; H/S Lydenburg; Mpumalanga
66. Afrikaans; 1964–1968; Potchefstroom Girls H/S; North West Province
67. Afrikaans; 1980–1984; H/S Oos Moot; Gauteng
68. English; 1976–1980; Potchefstroom Girls H/S; North West Province
69. Afrikaans; 1975–1979; H/S Nelspruit; Mpumalanga
70. Afrikaans; 1962–1966; Clapham H/S; Gauteng
71. Afrikaans; 1971–1975; H/S Voortrekkerhoogte; Gauteng

72. Afrikaans; 2000–2005; Middelburg CVO Skool; Mpumalanga
73. Afrikaans; 1998–2002; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
74. Afrikaans; 2002–2006; Potchefstroom Gymnasium; North West Province
75. Afrikaans; 2000–2005; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
76. Afrikaans; 1974–1978; H/S Middelburg; Mpumalanga
77. Afrikaans; 2001–2005; Harrismith H/S; Free State
78. Afrikaans; 1978–1982; H/S Edenvale; Gauteng
79. Afrikaans; 1997–2001; Potchefstroom Gymnasium; North West Province
80. Afrikaans; 1974–1978; H/S Louis Trichard; Limpopo
81. Afrikaans; 1989–1993; H/S Langenhoven; Gauteng
82. Afrikaans; 1967–1971; Afrikaans Hoër Meisieskool; Gauteng
83. English; 1968–1972; Lowveld H/S; Mpumalanga
84. English; 1984–1988; Tom Naude Technical H/S; Limpopo
85. Afrikaans; 1998–2002; H/S Kanonkop; Mpumalanga
86. Afrikaans; 1972–1976; H/S Stilfontein; North West Province
87. Afrikaans; 1982–1986; H/S Nelspruit; Mpumalanga.

## Learner Questionnaires

### 2008 Learner questionnaires

#### History-taking learners

##### Steelcrest High School

Grade 10 learners: 30 responses (Numbered 1–30)

Grade 11 learners: 7 responses (Numbered 31–37)

Grade 12 learners: 15 responses (Numbered 38–52)

##### Tshwenyane Combined School

Grade 11 learners: 3 responses (Numbered 53–55)

Grade 12 learners: 5 responses (Numbered 56–60)

##### Tsiki-Naledi Secondary School

Grade 12 learners: 6 responses (Numbered 61–66)

##### Middelburg Combined School

Grade 11 learners: 6 responses (Numbered 67–72)

Grade 12 learners: 12 responses (Numbered 73–84)

#### Non-History-taking learners

##### Steelcrest High School

Grade 11 learners: 25 responses (Numbered 85–109)

##### Tshwenyane Combined School

Grade 12 learners: 10 responses (Numbered 110–119)

##### Tsiki-Naledi Secondary School

Grade 11 learners: 10 responses (Numbered 120–129)

Grade 12 learners: 1 response (Numbered 130)

Middelburg Combined School

Grade 11 learners: 25 responses (Numbered 131–155)

Grade 12 learners: 7 responses (Numbered 156–162)

**2012 Learner questionnaires****Social Sciences learners**Steelcrest High School

Grade 8 learners: 149 responses (Numbered 1–149)

Grade 9 learners: 134 responses (Numbered 150–283)

Hoërskool Middelburg

Grade 8 learners: 118 responses (Numbered 284–401)

Grade 9 learners: 86 responses (Numbered 402–487)

Middelburg Muslim School

Grade 8 learners: 9 responses (Numbered 488–496)

Grade 9 learners: 9 responses (Numbered 497–505)

**History-taking learners**Steelcrest High School

Grade 12 learners: 29 responses (Numbered 1–29)

Grade 11 learners: 19 responses (Numbered 30–48)

Grade 10 learners: 28 responses (Numbered 49–76)

Eastdene Combined School

Grade 10 learners: 23 responses (Numbered 77–99)

Grade 11 learners: 23 responses (Numbered 100–122)

Grade 12 learners: 10 responses (Numbered 123–132)

Middelburg Combined School

Grade 10 learners: 8 responses (Numbered 133–140)

Grade 11 learners: 6 responses (Numbered 141–146)

Grade 12 learners: 9 responses (Numbered 147–155)

Hoërskool Ermelo

Grade 10 learners: 14 responses (Numbered 156–169)

Grade 11 learners: 31 responses (Numbered 170–200)

Grade 12 learners: 27 responses (Numbered 201–227)

**Non-History-taking learners**Middelburg Muslim School

Grade 11 learners: 20 responses (Numbered 1–20)

Grade 12 learners: 14 responses (Numbered 21–34)

Steelcrest High School

Grade 10 learners: 52 responses (Numbered 35–86)

Grade 11 learners: 82 responses (Numbered 87–168)

Grade 12 learners: 59 responses (Numbered 169–227)



Hoërskool Middelburg

Grade 10 learners: 20 responses (Numbered 228–247)

Grade 11 learners: 19 responses (Numbered 248–266)

Grade 12 learners: 20 responses (Numbered 267–286)

**Personalised questionnaires**

Mr Moosa Badat, History educator, Steelcrest High School, Middelburg, 29 November 2010.

Mr Werner Coetzer, History Curriculum Implementer, Ehlanzeni region, and Chief Marker for Mpumalanga Education Department History Paper I, Middelburg, 7 December 2010.

Mr Martin Fourie, Principal, Hoërskool Kanonkop, Middelburg, 26 January 2011.

Mrs Arouna Rajakumar, educator, Middelburg Muslim School, Middelburg, 6 December 2011.

Mr Gys Romijn, Principal, Steelcrest High School, Middelburg, 2 December 2008; 29 November 2010.

Mr Louis Smith, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Mpumalanga Department of Education, Middelburg, 30 November 2010.

Ms Naomi Uys, History educator, Hoërskool Ermelo, Middelburg, 5 December 2010.

**Interviews/Oral Evidence**

Mr Piet Bothma, Deputy Principal, Hoërskool Middelburg, Middelburg, 19 November 2010.

Ms Hadri Bouwer, educator, Hoërskool Piet Retief, Middelburg 28 March 2011.

Ms Talita Coetzer, educator, Hoërskool Sybrand van Niekerk, Middelburg, 29 March 2011.

Mr Werner Coetzer, History Curriculum Implementer, Ehlanzeni region, and Chief Marker for Mpumalanga Education Department History Paper I, Middelburg, 2 December 2010; 8 December 2010.

Ms Elmien de Clerc, ex-History educator, Middelburg CVO Skool, Middelburg, 6 June 2011.

Mrs Denys Collins, ex-educator, Middelburg Christian School, Middelburg, 6 June 2011.

Mr Johan Duvenage, ex-educator, Middelburg CVO school and Middelburg Christian School, Middelburg, 8 February 2011.

Ms Elmarie Engelbrecht, ex-learner Middelburg CVO Skool, Middelburg, 6 June 2011.

Ms Hanalie Kruger; Deputy Principal, Greendale High School, Middelburg, 29 March 2011.

Mr Diliza Lukhele, History Educator, Middelburg, 20 August 2008.

Ms Rachel Maroos, History Educator, Middelburg, 2 December 2008.

Mr Job Mathunyane, retired Deputy Principal, Emalahleni, 28 April 2008.

Ms Daphne Mngomazulu, History Educator, Middelburg, 6 March 2008.

Ms Kenielwe Mosala, History Curriculum Implementer, Middelburg, 7 May 2008; 15 July 2010.

Ms Irene Muller, ex educator, Middelburg CVO school, Middelburg, 5 February 2011.

Mr Moses Nkhlemo, Principal, Middelburg, 2 May 2008.

Mr Mossie Ourique, Deputy Principal, Hoërskool Evander, Middelburg, 28 March 2011.

Mr Imraan Pilodia, History educator, Middelburg Muslim School, Middelburg, 15 February 2011.

Mr Wolla Ras, Principal, Hoërskool Reynopark, Emalahleni, 1 March 2011.

Mr Ian Steenkamp, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (GET phase), Mbombela, 12 January 2012.

Mr Jaco Stevens, ex-History educator, Hoërskool Volksrust, Middelburg, 28 March 2011.

Ms Maralize Stoltz, ex educator, Middelburg CVO school, Middelburg, 7 February 2011.

Mr Johan Stronkhorst, Principal, Hoërskool Middelburg, Middelburg, 2 December 2010.

Ms Naomi Uys, History educator, Hoërskool Ermelo, Middelburg, 2 December 2010; 6 December 2010; 8 December 2010.

Mr Johan van der Merwe, ex learner, Middelburg CVO school, Middelburg, 24 January 2011; 5 February 2011; 8 February 2011; 6 June 2011.

Ms Madeleine van Lingen, ex educator, Middelburg Christian School, Middelburg, 6 June 2011.

Ms Elize van Heerden. Principal, Greendale High School, Emalahleni, 1 March 2011.

Ms Varnes, school administrator, Witbank Convent, Emalahleni, 1 February 2011.

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Wilschüt, A., 'Historical Consciousness as an Objective in Dutch History Education', English summary of the proposals of the De Rooy Commission. <http://home.planet.nl/-wilschut/consciousness.htm>. Quoted in Mazabow, G., 'The Development of Historical Consciousness in the Teaching of History in South African Schools', (D.Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 2003). No access date provided.

## **E-Mail correspondence**

Buthelezi, C., e-mail correspondence, 28 May 2009.

Siebörger, R., e-mail correspondence, 25 August 2009.