

**The struggle for quality education in South Africa: The  
dynamics of integrating learner drifters from rural and  
township contexts into suburban schools**

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## **Supervisors' authorisation**

As the candidate's supervisor this thesis is submitted with my approval.

Signed: .....

## Declaration

I, Perumal Naicker, declare that

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my eldest daughter whom we lost tragically. I miss her terribly. It is also dedicated to my parents who lovingly nurtured me in my youth to realise my potential as an adult.

## **Acknowledgements**

The power of the Lord is that He allows you to believe in yourself. I see this achievement in the context of the mighty power that He controls.

My thanks go to the following:

My wife Charmaine for her unflinching belief in my endeavours. My two daughters who are my reflection plates that keep my feet on the ground. My son-in-law for his support.

Professor Vitallis Chikoko for the guidance and support but more especially for the flexibility offered me in pursuing my doctorate.

The school principals that allowed access to the respondents and facilitated interviews. The participants who availed themselves to participate in this study and provided a wealth of information.

## **Abstract**

The year 1994, heralded as a watershed year that would ring changes in the lives of all South Africans has come and gone but poor quality education has remained stubbornly rooted mainly in the majority of rural and township schools. Twenty years into democracy the exodus from rural and township schools has gathered momentum as new problems arise to compound those that have been prevalent these past years. Rural and township based parents who patiently awaited change in the form of quality education became despondent and started the trek to suburban schools in their struggle to find better quality education for their children to give them a better chance in life. The study investigated what it took for integration of drifters to happen in suburban schools. Integration entails areas such as maintaining learner attainment, bringing parents on board and utilising social, intellectual and cultural capital that drifters bring with them. A two-pronged theoretical framework made up of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and the student integration model posited by Tinto (1987) is used as the lens through which the phenomenon is studied. In this regard the theoretical framework purposefully combines the development phases of the child as it interacts with the various environments and the phases of separation, transition and incorporation that drifters would undergo when engaging with their changed circumstances at the suburban school. This is a qualitative study located within the interpretative paradigm. It was a multiple- site case study that gathered data from principals, teachers, learners and parents in three suburban schools. Semi- structured interviews supported by observation were the data collection instruments employed. The study explored whether suburban schools sought to understand and integrate drifters instead of assimilating them. The study found that while learner attainment was prioritised, the three suburban schools chose acculturalisation and acclimatisation ahead of embracing diversity in their efforts to integrate drifters. My thesis is that the dynamic of integration of drifters at suburban schools is dependent on self-developed mechanisms at each of the confluences that draw on and develop the diversity of cultural, social and intellectual capital that all stakeholders have to offer which embraces the broad transformation agenda.

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## Abbreviations

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CRSA	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASA	South African Schools Act, Number 84 of 1996
SMT	School Management Team

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **A VIEW OF THE JOURNEY AHEAD**

### **1.1 A reflective glance before the journey**

This is a qualitative study couched in the interpretivist paradigm. It is based on a multi-site case study that utilised semi-structured interviews to gather data for the study. The study set out to investigate how suburban schools seek to cope with integrating learners drifting from rural and township areas. This chapter presents a background to the study beginning with the doors of education being thrown open by the advent of democracy in South Africa and then moving on to trace how the mainly rural and township parents, frustrated by the slow pace of change in their schools, began the drift to suburban schools in their struggle for quality education. It therefore sets the scene for exploration of the processes and experiences of the stakeholders at the confluence of the drifters and their counterparts at the suburban schools. Also contained in the chapter are the statement of the problem, the research questions and the significance of the study. In closing, the chapter outlines the way the entire report is organised.

I have spent a large part of my life involved with disadvantaged communities, working with governing bodies, civic and development committees, child welfare organisations and even council work. When democracy provided the opportunity, I took up a principal's post at a deep rural, disadvantaged, dysfunctional school that we lovingly nurtured back to life and moved the matriculation results from 4% to 80% within three years and kept it above that for the nine years I served there. Driving into the area each morning during those years I would see buses, taxis and private vehicles laden with learners heading out of the rural and township areas towards the suburban areas. While schools around me were losing learners to suburban schools, my school showed an increased demand for admission because of the turnaround. Having previously taught in the former House of Delegates or so called 'Indian Schools' I had on occasion gone to former Model C Schools and had a fair idea of what went on there. Later, as a circuit manager I was privileged to visit some of these former Model C Schools and get a better feel of their operational side although my interactions with the schools would be mainly for management purposes. It revealed the two very different

worlds that existed in South African education: control at rural and township schools was generally lax, teaching and learning was out of focus and discipline, punctuality and attendance of both teachers and learners not tidy, whereas the suburban schools, having inherited their bureaucratic past were still rigidly controlled and highly disciplined in all their activities. I would always wonder how these drifting learners would be received and how the suburban schools were coping with their integration. Whether support was forthcoming from any other quarter in place of the absent Department of Basic Education (DBE) was another question. The fascination with what actually happens at the confluence of the drifters and the suburban schools gave birth to the idea for this study. Playing out likely scenarios in my mind such as what happens within the classroom, how do learners socialise on the school grounds and how their sporting and cultural preferences are catered for was part of the process of developing the concept for the study. The ultimate vision was to determine what integration of learners from such disparate contexts would entail. I thought that the crux of my thesis would lie here.

## **1.2 Studying the terrain**

Come democracy and the shift away from apartheid, the space created by freedom allowed South Africans to widen their search for better education as a salvation for their own children. Though South Africa has successfully improved access to education post 1994, it has been unable to provide quality teaching and learning to the largest sector of its learners who are mainly in the rural and township areas (Delport & Mangwaya, 2008; Fleisch, 2007; Jansen, 2013; Ramphela, 2014; Van der Berg, Wood, & Le Roux, 2002). The drift from rural and township areas to suburban areas in search of better schools with better infrastructure and better education (Davids, 2012; Louw, 2014b; Masombuka, 2012) is also in line with historical trends that showed people move to where they saw opportunities to improve their quality of life (Bhattacharya, 1998; Dotson-Blake, 2010; Mitra, Dangwal, & Thadani, 2008).

The ideal situation is one in which the education is improved in rural and township schools to make them centres of excellence and retain learner enrolment (DoE, 2010, 2012b). But this is not happening fast enough as the infrastructure backlog here continues to have a profound negative effect on teaching and learning and is causing serious concern in all

circles (Delpont & Mangwaya, 2008). Mud schools, estimated at 510 across the country, will only be eliminated by 2023 and are due to remain on the rural landscape as the DBE battles to keep pace with its programme to replace them (Child, 2014a). In addition the DBE's post provisioning model disadvantages rural schools that lose teachers each time their learner enrolment falls by an average of forty learners, forcing many of them to resort to multi-grade teaching. Teaching and learning is being hampered by poor teacher discipline, low levels of curriculum delivery and teacher unions that have a large support base in rural and township areas (Malala, 2014). Parents with children going to high school know that they have five years to give the child a decent chance in life. Rural and township schools are not producing the quality product the parent wants. A 2005 report by Statistics South Africa stated that black learners, especially in rural areas progressed at a slower rate than other learners around the country (Delpont & Mangwaya, 2008). A report released by statistician-general Lehola in 2014 showed that black youth acquired the least amount of skills in the twenty years of democracy (Masombuka, 2014a). Failure to leverage education was the main reason put forward by the statistician-general for black youth unable to access the job market (Masombuka, 2014a). Almost 16000 learners, 469 of whom are Grade 12 have not attended school since June 2014 with the Grade 12 being deregistered from the final examinations because of disruptions in their areas (Govender, 2014b). "South Africa is failing its children and putting the future of its young people at risk" (Ramphela, 2014, p. 18).

Research shows that "There is a significant negative correlation between the quality of education and the distance of a school from the nearest urban centre"(Mitra, *et al.*, 2008, p. 168). The suggestion is that as one moves away from urban areas into rural and township areas the quality of education drops (Mitra, *et al.*, 2008). Current trends reveal a scramble for better education outside rural and township areas and an exodus to former white, Indian and coloured schools in the suburban areas as parents become increasingly concerned about poor quality teaching and learning in rural and township schools (DoE, 2012b; Govender, 2013). This accelerated movement to schools in suburban areas is part of the disadvantaged families' new struggle- a struggle for quality education (Malala, 2012; Oppelt, 2012). "More than 2388 rural schools have closed down since 2000- and the government plans to have the gates of hundreds more permanently sealed before the end



of 2012” (Savides, Makwabe, & Mthethwa, 2012, p. 4). This is a direct result of drifting taking place in ever increasing numbers. The trend has become increasingly accentuated in recent years as rural and township parents hop from one school to another, far away from where they work or live to find better facilities, smaller class sizes, and enhanced quality teaching for their children (Govender, 2013). The drift, which some have termed ‘migration’ (Savides, *et al.*, 2012) is accompanied by a multitude of challenges for the rural and township parents and their children that attend the suburban schools (Boyle, 2012; Ngalwa, 2012).

As rural and township schools drain and even shut down, suburban schools are beginning to burst at the seams with rural and township learners now forming a significant portion of the learner population there (Fengu, 2012). They are now forced to forge a new beginning with the suburban schools that exhibit a different set of dynamics compared to those back ‘home’. How the drifters’ development is shaped by the movement from one environment to another prompted the selection of the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as one of the two theories that forms the theoretical framework that is utilised in this study. The theory focuses on the development of the learner as he or she drifts from one microsystem to another, changing environments and being socialized differently (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Drifting parents and learners are prepared to endure separation from the old home and school background and make the transition to the suburban school in their struggle for the quality education they want even though it can prove quite traumatic for the drifter (Tinto, 1993). Separation, transition and integration which are processes that the drifter would have to undergo provided the reason to utilise Tinto’s (1987) Model of Integration as the other part that makes up the theoretical framework for the study. These two theories are combined to form the theoretical framework to study the phenomenon. Suburban schools, now faced with the task of integrating the drifters, suddenly find themselves held accountable for integrating the rural and township learners’ without clear direction and guidance in establishing, maintaining and evaluating such a partnership (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Drifters arriving at the confluence, place themselves in the hands of the suburban school hoping that their admission and integration would go smoothly.

While government struggles to develop strategies to combat this drift (DoE, 2010), in the meantime suburban schools are either responding to the drift, continuing with business as normal or caught napping. The drifters are entering a new terrain. There are attendant challenges and associated problems on both sides of the drift. Coming into contact with new communities, new cultures and demographics (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Tinto 1993) brings a new dynamic to the struggle for a better quality education. In a democratic country that supports integration and school choice (Msila, 2009) there are no visible support structures that are available to the rural and township drifters and the suburban recipients to facilitate integration at this confluence. Government seems to be of the assumption that bringing different groups together who grew up, lived and schooled in isolation will integrate when brought together provided the policy is in place (Alexander, 2011). Policies alone do not necessarily improve racial tolerance, reduce negative cultural perceptions nor do they create appropriate learning spaces that can be mediated by stakeholders to improve integration in suburban schools (Alexander, 2011). In short, policy documents do not enter the classroom - someone needs to make things happen. In the absence of departmental initiatives to facilitate this integration, it falls upon suburban schools, who would want to embrace diversity, seek transformation and maintain standards in areas such as learner attainment, discipline and the culture of learning and teaching to drive the process of integration of the drifters. They, however, seem rudderless in that area resulting in suburban schools across the country becoming flashpoints where various types of conflicts occur that are stifling progress in bringing normality to education (Wagner, 2014). Our education system seems to be in what Tinto (1987) regards as state of normlessness, waiting to transform but not knowing how to proceed.

The research will show that the phenomenon is multi-faceted and therefore needs a multi-pronged approach by stakeholders at the confluence to support a process that forms part of the educational transformation agenda in South Africa. The study sought to find out what it takes for integration to take place at suburban schools. When one considers the practicality of the integration process, the expectation will be that leadership for the process will come from the SMT. Although the SMT is central to decision making, all the answers are not expected from them. Leadership must necessarily permeate the fabric of the school going to the parents and down to the learners. Research also places a heavy emphasis on the

collaboration between schools and their communities efforts to ensure that drifters be successfully integrated into suburban schools (Epstein, 2010; Meador, 2005; Sanders, 2005). In terms of integration, the question is what the typical South African school is seeking to do to fit into the broad transformational agenda? Secondly, the confluence is about learning-how is learning broken down and how are the contexts of drifters and their suburban counterparts mitigated to level the playing fields?

Through this study I have endeavoured to illustrate how the suburban school could possibly provide the leadership necessary to successfully negotiate the constitutional mandate to facilitate the smooth integration of drifters. School leadership is touted by researchers as the factor that tops the pile in the challenge to integrate drifters (Carrim, 2013; Jansen, 2013; Naicker, 2013). In examining the matrix of factors that interact in the integration process it is hoped that the study would unearth tools that would be useful to all components to successfully tackle the integration of drifters into suburban schools. In pursuance of this investigation the study wanted to discover how the various stakeholders at the confluence were impacted by seeking to integrate drifters.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The year 1994 was a watershed year in South Africa when the country joined the international ranks by legislating that all schools open their doors to their communities. Worldwide, a trend had already begun in the decade before, encouraging schools to bring on board parents and the wider community as well as to market themselves (Bush, 1999; Sanders, 2006). The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa and SASA (DoE, 1996) ensured that there was no going back to segregated education systems and selective admission policies by white schools in particular. With the legislation in place, drifting from rural and township areas began in earnest. Drifting is a challenge to the transformational agenda of this nation. It is a challenge in that every school has to open its doors to everyone and people can now go and learn where they want. Schools are therefore challenged to integrate everyone. If they are not doing that, the problem will be that there will be schools with people in a sterile relationship that do not know each other. While the CRSA and SASA clearly state that schools should be integrating learners from all races and all walks of life the question is how do schools seek to cope with integration. Integration itself is ongoing

and a journey that has not ended as yet because the people have still not reached their destination.

Despite the watershed legislative moments in South African history that saw government accelerate the movement of resources to rural and township schools, the education landscape did not change overnight and left dysfunctional rural and township schools exactly where they were prior to promulgation of these Acts. Poor quality education, underqualified teachers, absenteeism and increased union strength especially in rural and township areas painted a bleak picture for parents and grandparents who had voted for the first time in their lives in 1994 and were hoping for a better future for their children. Fearing that change would arrive long after their children grew up, these rural and township-based parents turned their gaze towards the suburban schools, prepared to make further sacrifices to secure a better future for their children. Their perception was that education offered at suburban schools was of a better quality than both rural and township schools. Thus was born a new struggle - a struggle for quality education which gave effect to the process of drifting.

Meanwhile, suburban schools who were better resourced had been studying the implications of the various legislation and policy offerings and watching developments keenly. They knew that there would be a gradual flow of learners of colour to their schools but they had no clue as to how they would respond. Government had rightly been focussing its attention on the masses in an effort to get them to understand their rights in the wake of democracy. In so doing suburban schools were left to their own resources to plan for the eventuality. In the absence of District and Circuit support mechanisms as well as adequately trained personnel, suburban schools got together with their governing bodies and prepared as they saw fit for drifting admission seekers. This was the start of unequal and sometimes unlawful admission policies, rigid internal policies that served the dominant groupings leaving drifters feeling alienated that inevitably led to flashpoints across the country as conflicts arose between drifters and their suburban counterparts (Wagner, 2014). Such stories, usually learnt through newspaper reports, were treated symptomatically by the DBE and soon forgotten when the 'heat' was off.

While the drift is based on rural and township parents' perception of quality in suburban schools, we may not be aware of knowledge of how suburban schools and their stakeholders are responding to issues of diversity and integration of converging drifters of differing cultures or, even if they are, to what extent they have shown success or failure. Barriers such as monolingual English-speaking teachers, possible gaps in content knowledge on the part of rural and township learners, social and cultural dynamics, demographics and diversity are significant threats to integration of drifters into suburban schools (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). On face value the drift is a liability because the perception is that the drifters will negatively influence the programmes in the school and lower standards; that parents, while they might come up with the money to pay for the schooling, are not able to contribute to the development of the school; that they cannot enrich the school-community partnership. But rural and township drifters do not necessarily arrive as liabilities; they could become valuable assets to the school-community partnership bringing with them latent social, cultural and intellectual capital (Naicker, 2011) that could strengthen suburban schools' handling of integration. Suburban schools that adopt an asset based stance and embrace this as an opportunity are likely to be more successful at transforming themselves into model schools that reflect the multicultural, high learner attainment community embracing centres of excellence (Meador, 2005). Integration will be difficult for suburban schools who see the new dispensation as a political burden.

What is clear is that there is a lack of literature on how suburban schools are responding. We do not know in detail what exactly is taking place at the confluence of the drifters and the suburban school. This study investigated what it took for integration to happen in suburban schools in areas such as maintaining learner attainment, bringing parents on board and utilising social and cultural capital that drifters bring with them. While this was uncharted territory for me, the literature review only provided glimpses of what actually occurs at the confluence of the drifters and their suburban counterparts. The crux of the issue is what exactly happens when various stakeholders interact within the precincts of the suburban school fence. What tools or mechanisms are employed to tackle drifter integration? How are such tools put to use? This report is presented in the hope that dissecting the confluence would provide an insightful window into how suburban schools

grapple with the integration of drifters. Strategies they employ or attempts they make is a reflection on their leadership or what management is doing. How they link with parents is part and parcel of seeking to cope with integration. One cannot ignore the curriculum and the hidden curriculum. Sport to some degree defines racial groupings in this country. For example, if a school says it does not offer soccer, one has to question whether that is their notion of integration. The question is whether suburban schools are providing access to the extent that there are opportunities for success for everyone. Does the school adopt the attitude that when drifters arrive, it seeks to understand them and integrate them instead of assimilating them? The study therefore sought to contribute knowledge to the efficacy of this trend and its influence on the drifters and the school. In doing this, it focused on how suburban schools respond to the drifting and their attempts to integrate drifters.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Research of this type is cross-cutting and must benefit all the core players within the study (Murray & Beglar, 2009) by contributing literature to the education debate, in this case to the field of integration of drifters into suburban schools. It has the potential to create social awareness, to facilitate the integration of drifters into suburban schools, to improve drifter attainment in suburban schools and to help normalise South African schooling. This will hopefully be achieved through the process of dissecting the phenomena at the confluence of the drifters and the suburban school. The study endeavours to reveal what was discovered, illuminate the process of integration that suburban schools seek to cope with and possibly confirm that rural and township learners are not drifting to suburban schools merely to access quality offered there but to exploit their own intellect in their quest for quality education. By examining traditional practices at suburban schools and comparing those with information revealed by literature and policy directives, the results of the study will hopefully, also positively impact on practice in these schools. Meador (2005) posits that the susceptibility of the suburban school to adapt its traditional practices is important to the successful integration of drifters. Whether suburban schools are interfacing their traditional practices with new policy initiatives successfully will be their challenge. However, policy alone is not the panacea for the change since it is easier to institute policy change rather than to get schools to change (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). The argument though is that

schools have a responsibility to achieve integration as directed by policy in the CRSA and SASA. Integration is necessary because it not only becomes a springboard to drifter achievement but acts as a springboard to society (Tinto, 1985). It necessarily should go further and facilitate the integration of adults too which schools have the potential to do. Policy alone cannot enter classrooms and in many cases remains largely symbolic (Jansen, 2002) therefore a further possibility exists for the study to influence the DBE to energise implementation of integration directives in suburban schools.

The caveat however, is for the researcher to be mindful not to overstate the contribution that the study will make (Murray & Beglar, 2009) but to be driven by the urge to unlock the phenomenon and provide information useful to those it will influence by enriching the knowledge base in the field (Smith, 1995). The gap identified in literature reviewed on what is necessary for integration of drifters to happen at suburban schools is indicative of a deeper problem within South African society that warrants a study at this level: Regular newspaper reports on attempts to block admission of drifters, conflicts in suburban schools, lack of leadership in transformation and the absence of support from the DBE in synergising the process of integration show how the problem could worsen and derail the transformation agenda (Child, 2014b; Jansen, 2014). It is anticipated that this study would contribute to the knowledge necessary to close the gap identified and help in some way to resolve some of the problems that may be hampering the transformation agenda.

The theoretical framework which is made up of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and Tinto's (1987) student integration model is the lens through which the literature is tested within the context of this study and through which the phenomenon is examined in detail. These theories were carefully selected because they complement each other in tracking the development of learners as they move from one context to another as well as how they respond to the challenges of integration into a new environment. Findings will help to either disconfirm or confirm what has been unravelled within the framework or may reveal a new context or a new angle from which to understand the phenomenon (Murray & Beglar, 2009). A spin off will be the improved understanding the reader gains of the theory. The most important contribution that the study will make is the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. These findings will be useful to all stakeholders that have

an interest in the education transformation agenda. Areas for further research and recommendations that will benefit the suburban school, the drifters and the DBE have been identified and highlighted. It is hoped that the findings will be used by the DBE to galvanise the policy implementation process in the area of integration of drifters into suburban schools.

## **1.5 Research questions**

Research questions this study specifically set out to answer are:

**1.5.1 How have the principals, teachers, learners and parents of the selected schools experienced the dynamics of the drift?**

**1.5.2 What can be learnt from these schools regarding the integration or failure thereof of integration at suburban schools?**

## **1.6 Clarification of terminology**

Terminology that is important to the understanding of the study is dealt with in detail in the literature chapter. This chapter presents a brief explanation of the terms to facilitate the introduction to the study and to ease the understanding of the terminology in the literature chapter to follow.

### **1.6.1 Migrating**

Departure from a place that has been home, relocating, and resettling in another area are terms that are sometimes used to capture the meaning of the movement that the term migration tries to express. The concept will be seen against the context of people movement in search of better opportunities, especially education within this study.

### **1.6.2 Drifting**

Collins Dictionary (1987) describes drifting as wandering or moving away gradually from a particular point or fixed direction. Drifting, in the context of this study would therefore describe the gradual movement away of learners from rural and township schools to suburban schools brought on by the current of continuous poor quality education.



### **1.6.3 Differentiating between urban and township**

Urban refers to something that is characteristic or pertaining to a city (Oxford, 2002). In the South African context during apartheid, townships were not regarded as urban although they sometimes existed on the periphery of the city limits. However the situation was normalised after democracy with townships now incorporated into the metropolitan boundaries.

### **1.6.4 Suburban schools**

During the time of apartheid schools within the precincts of the cities or metropolitan areas which were mainly white former Model C Schools were generally referred to as urban schools. With the return of normality, former Model C Schools are thus correctly referred to as suburban schools.

### **1.6.5 Confluence**

In a general definition, confluence would be described as the coming together of people or things (Collins, 1987). Described as a concourse or assemblage, the confluence is that playing field where the suburban school has received drifters while moving in the same direction but showing that things are not the same anymore.

### **1.6.6 Integration**

To integrate is to combine to form part of a whole Integration (Oxford, 2002). Integration would occur when the constituent elements of the drifter and those of the suburban school form a coordinated, harmonious whole enabling both the school and the drifter to regard themselves as part of each other.

## **1.7 Overview of the study**

A useful guide for the reader is to have an overview of what this study entails. This section signposts the route I have walked in the compilation of this report. Seven chapters make up this report.

Chapter One sets the scene and the tone by providing a background to the study and insight into the idea for the research. Subsequent sections deal with its focus, the statement of the problem, the research questions and the significance of the study. The chapter closes with a

summary of pertinent terminology that contributes substantially to the understanding of the report and the overview of the rest chapters to come.

Literature review is presented in chapter two which begins by unpacking key concepts used in the study. These concepts form the thread that weave the chapters together as reference is made to facts and arguments unearthed in the literature at different points in the study. The literature moves on to review global drifting patterns and their consequences, some intra-country drifting tendencies as well as key driving forces behind drifting. National and international policy responses are also examined as well as factors that enable or inhibit drifting. The closing section deals with the implications of the literature review. Drawing on the literature throughout the report will hopefully add to its coherence and throughput.

A presentation of the theoretical framework is made in Chapter Three. The theoretical framework is made up of the ecological systems theory as posited by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and the student integration model presented by Tinto (1987). The theories are unpacked and then brought together as a two-pronged framework that provides the lenses through which the phenomenon was viewed. The relevance of the framework to the other chapters is made appropriately.

Chapter Four explains the research design and methodology of this qualitative study which is located within the interpretive paradigm. It takes the reader through the purposive sampling strategy used to select the research site and participants as well as a description and justification for the data collection instrument used. Data analysis procedures are justified and the issues of trustworthiness clarified in their ethical implications for the study. An account of the analytical framework used to work towards answering the research questions round off the chapter.

The first of a two- part presentation and discussion begins in Chapter Five. It begins with a background to the research sites that places the study in context and then moves on to cover the nature of the drift, challenges faced by both drifters and the suburban schools as they confronted new beginnings and old barriers and closes with their attempts to grapple with the separation from the old environment and the transition to the new.

In Chapter Six the second part of the presentation and discussion moves on from the transition phase to incorporation phase which involves drifters' interaction with the suburban schools' cultural, sport and co-curricular activities. Challenges with the learning gap and classroom interaction are unpacked and an examination of the progress with integration up to this point brings the chapter to a close.

Chapter Seven brings the report to a close with a summation of the main findings in relation to the research questions posed at the outset of the study. It includes a critical reflection on the study and acknowledges some limitations before bringing closure with what is considered my thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on how suburban schools cope with learner drift from rural and township areas. To contextualise the study, the chapter explores the nature of the drift, how suburban schools respond to this drift, what their efforts at integration of drifters are and what influence, if any, it has on the stakeholders at the confluence of the drifting learners and the suburban school. The chapter first explains the term drifting and then works through the major themes that emerged in the course of interrogating the literature. Migration and migration tendencies which form the basis of drifting are therefore concepts that are also discussed in some detail. Some factors found to be influencing the drift in the literature reviewed are the socio economic need to drift, the struggle to find better quality education and the battle for identity (Jialing, 2012; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). In the process of engaging with these factors and others, the nature of the drifting is explored. This will include examining factors influencing drifting such as the environmental influence of the rural and township schools on drifting, the impact of the suburban environment on drifting learners and environmental changes and effects. These will be viewed through the theoretical framework made up of the theories posited by Tinto (1987) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) to contextualise the report on the field work that follows in a later chapter.

Secondly, the chapter moves on to interrogate suburban schools' response to this drift including their preparedness for integration of drifters. The process of integration at the confluence which is central to this study is mitigated by many factors affecting the drifters as well as those at the suburban schools. These factors are analysed in detail to get a clear understanding of what is expected of stakeholders at the confluence against what is actually happening. Factors inhibiting or enabling integration are therefore interrogated and explained in detail.

To this end the chapter seeks to engage with various forms of literature, looking at studies that were conducted in this and related fields and attempting to unravel what is currently known about this topic. In so doing it will look at what other studies have to say: what was

studied, how the studies were done, the findings and the implications thereof to this study. Every effort was made to develop a deep understanding of key concepts, interrogate relevant theories and examine empirical evidence to elicit a broad and deep understanding of the phenomenon as well as its defining characteristics in preparation for the fieldwork.

## **2.2 Understanding key concepts**

There are many concepts associated with this topic. Those that are key to facilitating an understanding of the phenomenon are unpacked below.

### **2.2.1 Migrating**

Publications consulted on related subjects commonly use migration as the term to describe learners and their parents who move from one place to another in search of a better quality education (Ma & Lian, 2011; Meador, 2005; Perez-Milans, 2011). Relocation, exodus and resettlement are some of the terms that are commonly used as synonyms to refer to the movement that the term migration tries to capture. A concise English dictionary definition describes migration as the process or act of people, animals or birds moving from one country, region or area to another (Collins, 1987). In human terms migration is usually employed to describe relocation and relocation patterns of groups of people across the world. Today the term migration has been upgraded to even fit in with modern technology referring to such acts as ‘migrating from one cellular network to another’ or even to describe the process of ‘migrating hardware or software from one computer system to another’. It is thus common for researchers to speak of learners from a migrant background when referring to those who have made their home in a certain part of the world but have actually moved there from somewhere else some time ago (Mount-Cors, 2012). Msila (2009) uses the term migration to describe the movement of black South African learners from one township school to another as well as those moving out of the township to schools in suburban areas. In comparison to drifting which is explained below, migration could be seen as a macro term that encompasses movement patterns across the globe and across and within countries.

### **2.2.2 Drifting**

Drifting is commonly referred to as migrating in various studies (Corbett, 2005; Li, Stanton, Fang, & Lin, 2008). Drifting is explained in the dictionary as a driving movement or force,

impetus or pressure whereas migrating is described as moving, travelling to another place, resettling or relocating (Collins, 1987). Hence drifting carries with it a sense of urgency, the need to change location to achieve a certain goal whereas migration is usually to a pre-determined destination similar to how Red Indian tribes in the North American plains would move to a pre-selected winter location to escape the harsh snow conditions, returning once again in the summer to a chosen place. In the same context, American drifters would move west from the eastern seaboard of North America eventually settling down on a piece of ground they thought satisfied what they were looking for (Wilder, 1935). Migration is sometimes not permanent with persons such as migrant workers moving to a place for the employment opportunities and returning to their homes at some future point. Drifting on the other hand is usually a one way movement with a slim chance of returning to the point of departure.

My choice of the term drifting to describe the migration of learners from rural and township schools to suburban schools is associated with a deeper meaning of movement in this context. In the 1800s rapid urbanization in countries like Britain described the large migration of rural youth to towns as a movement of roaming or drifting youth (Theobald, 2005). They were driven by various needs, such as to find a better living in urban areas as rural areas slowed down their demand for labour. Closer examination of drifting suggests, however, that it refers to an intentional deviation from a set course or the gradual movement away from a fixed position. Far from being directionless, as a driving technique, drifting is an intentional act of over steering by racing drivers causing loss of traction in the rear wheels while maintaining control of the vehicle when negotiating a fast bend. The application here comes from its deeper meaning of a driving movement or force, an impetus or pressure to alter course (Collins, 1987). So, the drifting I speak of here is of the movement of these learners out of the township and rural schools whose parents are driven by the realisation that the environment they find themselves in is not suitable for the development they desire for their children. Democratisation and the freeing up of opportunities across the country has placed their communities in a state of flux which acts as a constant reminder of how their situation can maybe improve by moving. Their call to drift comes from a change of state of their minds. Prompted by poor schooling conditions and a lack of quality education, their minds shift focus to moving to suburban schools which

they perceive as something better outside the rural or township school. Therefore, unlike migration, drifting would be a more apt term to describe the movement especially because in most cases these are first generation drifters who seek out a school in the suburban area not really knowing if that is in fact the answer to their quest for quality education. Some begin school hopping once they drift to the first suburban school to find the school that suits them better (Govender, 2013). The theoretical framework utilised in this research is meant to bring into focus the interplay between the changing environments and the effect of the separation and movement on the development of the drifters.

While there are broad similarities in the drift in countries across the world, there are features of the drift that are peculiar to certain countries. This review looks at the work of various researchers across the world in this field and tries to contextualise the South African situation by exploring how suburban South African schools seek to cope with the drifting phenomenon. In the context of this study, the term 'drifting' shall therefore mean the movement of rural and township learners to suburban schools while those that drift will be referred to as 'drifters'.

### **2.2.3 Differentiating between urban, township and suburban**

To those in rural areas, townships are urban. For the purposes of this study I need to clarify what is meant by urban and township as well as suburban. Urban pertains to cities. Urban areas referred to are those within the cities, larger towns or built up areas run by metropolitan councils. These make up the central business district, the industrial sectors, the suburbs and recreational areas within the cities or towns. In the South African context, townships are settlements outside the precincts of the suburbs that encircle the cities or built up areas. Thus if one drives out from the centre of the city, one would pass through the central business district, then drive through a suburb or two and (usually in South Africa) after some open space, reach a township which in most cases started off as low cost housing. These townships were strategically placed there by the previous government to enable black workers to commute to work during the day and leave the cities and towns before nightfall thus ensuring a supply of labour when needed and keeping the cities 'white by night'. Schools in the cities were mostly former Model C types and were referred to as urban schools. After the advent of democracy township areas were incorporated into the

metropolitan precincts and now referred to as urban as well. Schools within the city suburbs which were mainly former Model C Schools are now referred to correctly as suburban schools.

#### **2.2.4 Confluence**

Confluence in geographical terms describes the coming together of two or more rivers or streams (Oxford, 2002). Ascribing the definition to people, a confluence would be described as the coming together of people or things (Collins, 1987). Described as a concourse or assemblage, the confluence is that playing field where the suburban school has received drifters while moving in the same direction but showing that things are not the same anymore. The term was chosen to describe the area of focus in the phenomenon to emphasise that it is a merging or flowing together of people coming from different backgrounds but joined to journey towards a common destiny. Like merging rivers, the confluence is fluid and sometimes raging at the point of contact and depending on the capacity of the larger of the two components to accommodate the other, the integration is soon smoothed out and the flow continues thereafter. The study also works on the presumption that each current flowing into the confluence brings with it a strength that would be of benefit to the whole process of integration.

#### **2.2.5 Integration**

Integration which is a complex process is an important aspect of this study which tries to contextualise it within the research framework. The concept also makes up the point of discussion in Tinto's (1987) model of integration which is one of the two theories in the theoretical framework utilised here where it is explained in greater detail. Durkheim (1952) posits that integration is the prior phase of an individual taking up membership in the community of society. Integration arises out of informal and formal interactions of an individual with his or her environment (Tinto, 1993). Two types of integration, intellectual and social are identified by Durkheim (1952) through which an individual claims a place within the society. Social integration is described as obtaining from individual affiliations and from everyday interactions amongst the community while intellectual integration results from the distribution of values within the community of society (Durkheim, 1952; Tinto, 1987). Both types of integration have informal and formal spheres through which



individuals interact within the environment; while interaction within these spheres are distinctive processes, they do share a symbiotic relationship (Tinto, 1993). The study looks at the degree to which drifting learners are integrated in the social and academic life of the suburban school. Integration in the context of this study would therefore refer to the process that rural and township learners go through as they endeavour to become absorbed into the suburban school and its culture.

### **2.3 Global drifting patterns**

News media report regularly on the movement of people from developing countries to the developed countries in search of a better life. Research shows that globalisation has accelerated this trend especially after the Second World War (Kok, Gelderblom, Zyl, & Oucho, 2006). In the United States, Latinos form the largest group of drifters who gravitate towards suburban schools in search of better education for their children (Theobald, 2005; Truscott & Truscott, 2005). Europe has its fair share of Asian and other immigrants seeking to improve their lives and get a better education for their children (Cross, Gelderblom, Roux, & Mafukidze, 2006; Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007; Perez-Milans, 2011) while Africa is regarded as “a major theatre of migration activity” (Cross, *et al.*, 2006, p. 1) meaning there is a constant movement of populations mostly from rural to urban areas searching for, amongst other things, education for their children. Following the Dakar World Conference on Education for All in 2000, schooling for children across the globe was stepped up, encouraging rural communities to take advantage of the new protocol to migrate to urban areas in search for better education for their children (Morna, Rama, & Makaya-Magarangoma, 2013). Malala Yousufzai, United Nations activist for education nearly became a casualty of this new protocol when she was brutally attacked by the Taliban for encouraging rural children to seek education in urban areas if there were no schools in their areas (Morna, *et al.*, 2013). The South African Ministers’ Conference on Population and Development is a regional body which promotes research on drifting within the Southern African states to better understand the chief causes of the phenomenon (Cross, *et al.*, 2006). Throughout the world Africa is well known for its refugees and the resultant demands on education amongst other things in the host countries (Kok, *et al.*, 2006). African drifting patterns are also heavily influenced by urbanisation with South Africa playing host to the largest number of

immigrants in the Southern African Development Community region (Cross, *et al.*, 2006). As a result of factors such as civil war, famine and diminishing farming activities, people tend to drift to towns and cities where growth, evidenced by increased manufacturing and industrial activity is seen as opportunities to make a living.

Spanish authorities grapple with the integration of Chinese immigrant learners into their schools (Perez-Milans, 2011) while on a macro level the European Union is constantly challenged with integration of the ever increasing immigrants from Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Far East into its education systems (Cross, *et al.*, 2006). In some countries such as South Africa, integration of minority immigrant groups into main stream public schools is made the responsibility of schools: “Many schools, even those located in affluent communities, have been especially challenged in their efforts to educate poor and minority students” (Steen & Noguera, 2010, p. 42). Others, such as Spain treat it more seriously, promulgating policy to deal with the challenges (Perez-Milans, 2011). Policy is directed at issues such as linguistic and cultural diversity brought into Spain by immigrants which presents a challenge for the country as it balances integration with its definition of a nationalist citizenship (Perez-Milans, 2011).

## **2.4 Some intra-country drifting tendencies**

Of particular interest to this study is something common to most countries across the world-rural-urban drifting within a country (Corbett, 2005; Irwin, 1999; Meerza, 2010). While the phenomenon is widespread across the globe each country has unique features of the rural-urban drift that define its challenges. In response, some have programmes to assist with drifting rural-urban learners while others allow it to go with the flow or some even hinder it. These are discussed below.

Rural Australian parents, recognizing the educational disadvantage of their children because of their geographic location, seek effective education programmes and resources that they know are readily available in the urban areas (Goos, Lowrie, & Jolly, 2007). Australian authorities however, have other plans: they have a nationwide project which strategizes to rather retain learners in their rural environments and thereby keep those communities intact (Johns, Kilpatrick, Falk, & Mulford, 1999). The Australian Government uses a two pronged approach to try and control the rural-urban drift. In the first instance, government

sponsors funded initiatives to retain rural learners which are further supported by increased levels of private support such as programmes that facilitate transition from school to work and support for Aboriginal learners (Johns, *et al.*, 1999; Kilpatrick, Johns, & Mulford, 2003). Initiatives like these tend to have limited success and are not likely to stop drifting learners seeking a better education in suburban schools which improves their chances of getting into tertiary education institutions and onto jobs, hence the second government approach which expands access to usually lower socio-economic drifters who arrive at the urban centres to address their educational needs (Butcher, Bezzina, & Moran, 2011). In this regard government holds suburban schools accountable for integration of disadvantaged learners that seek admission there (Butcher, *et al.*, 2011). I sought to stretch the drifting debate further to examine research presented here including engagement of the rural-urban problem and accountability of suburban schools for admission of rural drifters and exploration of what happens when learners enter the gates of suburban schools.

Research in India has found that a negative correlation exists between the quality of education in urban centres and the distance away towards rural areas (Mitra, *et al.*, 2008). Their study compared the attainment levels of learners in the rural and urban centres as one of the indicators of quality education. The findings indicate that the further one moves from the suburban schools outwards towards rural schools, the poorer the quality of education received by learners. Lack of teachers and poor infrastructure have accelerated the rural-urban drifting in India in the belief that better quality education is available there (Tsujita, 2012). Almost a quarter of Indian metropolitan populations are made up of people dwelling in slums who start in slum schools and then drift into suburban schools thereby placing an additional demand in these centres (Tsujita, 2012). A steady decline in the quality of education in slums and disadvantaged areas of the big cities results in an increased drift towards better performing suburban schools (Mitra, *et al.*, 2008). Bhattacharya (1998) reports that there has been a significant inter-state, inter-district and even inter-city drift of especially the informal sector in India as the years progressed. Indian authorities have responded by spending large amounts of money on teacher training in the hope that they would be deployed in rural and underperforming schools thereby controlling the drifting that is taking place (Mitra, *et al.*, 2008). The introduction of new education technology and deployment of better qualified teachers is not bringing the desired results because teachers

soon become demotivated and tend to drift back to the suburban schools (Inamdar, 2004). While these studies provide an insight into rural and slum area drifting to suburban schools, they do not detail suburban school efforts to cope with the disparate levels of attainment that learners from rural and slum areas bring into their schools as well as how these drifters are integrated. Tsujita (2012) notes that poverty which is responsible for many rural and slum learners missing schooling for long periods, makes their integration into suburban schools challenging because they remain marginalised. Tinto (1993) notes that the context of the learners' background is an important mitigating factor in the integration process at a new institution in a different environment and cannot be ignored while Bronfenbrenner (1992) in his development of the ecological systems theory posits that growth and development of an individual is affected by the changing environments and its settings as the individual moves through them and interacts with them.

The USA drifting scenario is also complex. Three main drifting tendencies are evident. Drifting learners from Mexico to rural USA schools and the subsequent drift of Mexican learners from rural USA schools to urban ones is the first pattern (Mount-Cors, 2012). Secondly, shutting down of small rural schools as a result of the growth of large scale agriculture leaves rural learners with no option but to head for the big, modern suburban schools that have grown in recent years (Theobald, 2005). These two tendencies have brought large numbers of rural and migrant people to the fringes of the urban areas prompting the American authorities to consider seriously the integration of people on the rural-urban fringes (Queen, Carpenter, McKain Jr, & Burnight, 1952). The third drifting pattern started with 'white flight' which is the self-displacement of white learners from inner city schools to suburban schools as a result of desegregation (Theobald, 2005). Nowadays it is also common to see learners drifting from poorly performing ghetto schools in urban centres to schools in the suburbs that are attaining better results (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Theobald, 2005). In a study of migrating Mexican learners, Mount-Cors (2012) found that most of them moved several times from within Mexico, across the border to low resource rural schools, finally arriving in the urban United States public schools with intermittent learning. This journey, similar to other cases illustrated in this review, which Bronfenbrenner (1979) terms development in context, forms an important part of the study of how learners respond to the different stimuli from the environment they encounter along

the way. It forms the basis of the lenses through which this study explores its phenomenon. The student integration model (Tinto, 1987) complements the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in that it provides the lens to view the effects of separation, transition and integration that drifters are subjected to. Researchers in the United States commonly interrogate family-school-community partnership as an approach to understanding how drifting learners fit into suburban schools in the face of the many challenges they face (Epstein, 2011; Kolodny, 2002; Sanders, 2006; Steen & Noguera, 2010). A study by Dotson-Blake (2010) focused mainly on the experiences of Latinos in family-school-community partnership and how this impacts on their societal behaviour but does not go as far as the confluence of the rural-urban drift, which is the school, to explore how it seeks to cope with the phenomenon. However, an important finding that has striking similarities with the South African scenario is “The contrasting relationship between the insular focus on the school in partnership in the United States and the collective focus on the community partnerships in Mexico” (Dotson-Blake, 2010, p. 107). South African parents have come from a past where they played a minimal role in their children’s academic development at the school level largely because of the independent nature of the old schooling system (Bush, 1999), to a present system that encourages and emphasises full participation of the parents in their children’s education (DoE, 1996).

Rapidly expanding economic development in China has accelerated the rural-urban flow of people looking for a better living (Geng, Zhou, & Hu, 2012; Jialing, 2012). Drifting rural workers, marginalised by poor employment opportunities, turn their focus to getting a good education for their children in suburban schools so as to create a better future and avoid being marginalized as well (Jialing, 2012). The large scale movement of rural populations to urban centres has seen the establishment of ‘drifters villages’ in every Chinese city placing a huge demand for learner places in suburban schools (Li, Stanton, Fang, & Lin, 2008). Rural drifters are not allowed to freely seek jobs and education in urban areas because of the household registration system or *hukou*, which, in effect denies them access to essential urban facilities like education, health care and housing (Zhao & Wong, 2002). As a result much of the Chinese research on rural-urban education challenges centres on the problem of access for the children of drifting rural parents but research reports on what happens to them when they do get into schools are rare or absent altogether. Rural populations in Fiji

are in a similar dilemma, only worse as vast numbers abandon the traditional dependence on farming and migrate to the urban fringes and become squatting communities there (Bryant-Tokalau, 2012). Conditions of hardship and a failing economy has seen a drop in the quality of services including education in the rural areas, forcing parents to seek jobs and a better future for their children at suburban schools (Bryant-Tokalau, 2012).

Canada has a double-edged challenge when dealing with rural-urban drifting. The country's education system has to deal with the regular flow of its indigenous population to suburban schools as well as the large populations of minorities drifting to suburban schools (Irwin, 1999). Poverty is the main driver of the rural-urban drift in Canada leading to suburban schools playing host to low income families that bring along children that may have learning disabilities or interrupted education (Parker, Grenville, & Flessa, 2011). Research studies in Canada therefore focus mainly on multicultural teaching and diversity as challenges and building partnerships between school and the community as solutions (Irwin, 1999; Parker, *et al.*, 2011). The multicultural teaching, focus on diversity and facilitation of school-community partnership efforts are noble efforts that are worth exploring in the South African context.

Rural-urban drifting has also been placed on the agenda of African discussion forums more and more frequently. As far back as 1999, the Southern African Forum for Population and Development, as part of its deliberations on international drifting within the Southern Cone of Africa asked its member states to investigate rural-urban drifting within their own countries (Cross, *et al.*, 2006). Research reveals that rural populations in South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana are steadily declining as the continent's urbanization is set to increase from 39% in 2003 to a projected 54% in 2030 (Kok, *et al.*, 2006). Post 1994, drifting in South Africa took on another dimension to the need for socio-economic upliftment associated with job seeking. Parents in both rural and township areas now began a new struggle - a struggle for quality education resulting in large scale drifting to suburban schools which were perceived to offer better education (Msila, 2009). Parents were becoming aware of their right to seek a better education for their children (Bojuwoye, 2009) and were exercising the right to school choice by this accelerated drift to suburban schools (Msila, 2009). Studies in Africa and especially South Africa concentrate mainly on access to

schooling and school choice which is now enabled by legislation (Bojuwoye, 2009; Msila, 2009; Olofintoye, 2010) yet there are regular reports in newspapers of the challenges such as culture, socializing and affordability faced by drifting rural and township learners when they become part of suburban schools (Davids, 2012; Govender, 2013; Msila, 2009).

A general assessment of literature on rural-urban and township-urban drifting reveals that researchers conduct detailed studies of the origins of the phenomenon and follow it through up to the point where the school, community and sometimes non-governmental institutions partner to assist with the admission of the learners to suburban schools. Details of what happens within the schools, school governing body interventions, additional programmes and activities are not sufficiently interrogated. My interest, which precipitated this study, is what exactly happens at this confluence? How do schools seek to cope with integration of rural and township drifting learners? How do the drifting learners cope with their own integration into these suburban schools? This is the gap I wish to explore and fill.

## **2.5 Some key driving forces behind drifting**

The opening paragraphs of this chapter attempt to provide a background of the South African education scenario and the dilemma facing mainly rural and township parents who see democracy as an opportunity to change the lives of their children through a better education. For many, the salvation lies in drifting to suburban schools which are perceived as offering a better quality education. Key forces driving drifting are re-visited here albeit on an international scale and of course contextualising it to the South African situation. There may be some areas of repetition but this would mainly be for emphasis.

Drifting is a complex issue and is usually the result of multiple challenges experienced by rural and township people who make their way to urban areas in the hope that they would find relief from issues such as health, finances, social welfare and education. Factors that necessitate drifting in some places may vary from others in terms of the strength of the push-factor. Some push-factors for drifting proffered by research studies range from poverty in rural communities, rapid economic development in urban areas, education and health issues (Li, *et al.*, 2008;). A body of research argues that while poverty is the main driver of rural-urban drifting, raised expectations amongst the middle poor and upwards is also a major contributory factor (Cross, *et al.*, 2006; Jialing, 2012; Ma & Lian, 2011). As

people find themselves in better jobs or improved circumstances that lift them out of abject poverty they have some means to move away to urban areas where they expect improved living standards and better education for their children.

In South Africa the struggle to find better quality education has established itself as the primary reason that learners and even their parents dislodge themselves from long established rural communities and townships and drift to suburban schools (Kok, *et al.*, 2006; Msila, 2009). Quality and how it is measured are contextual and debatable. 'Quality education' raises all kinds of questions such as perceptions, what exactly is being measured and what the bench marks are. "This means that quality is not by any means a straightforward notion and does not have definitional clarity in South Africa or in other parts of the world currently or historically" (Carrim, 2013, p. 40). It needs to be noted though, that the perception amongst rural and township drifters and their movement to suburban schools are indicators that better quality education is 'out there'. Reasons cited for the drift to so called 'quality education' schools in suburban centres, centre on the experiences of rural and township parents and learners in their environment. Poor school infrastructure, weak teaching and learning practices, inadequate leadership and ineffective school processes are some factors that are associated with poor quality experienced by rural and township learners (Carrim, 2013).

Apartheid and the infamous 'influx control' system gave way to free movement of people in South Africa with the advent of democracy in 1994 allowing all its citizens to search for a better life for themselves and more especially, for their children. Though the resultant rural-urban drifting, which is also a broad international trend, was expected after democracy was achieved, the drift became more emphatic as numbers steadily increased and township learners joined in. While better jobs, food security and improved health care are some reasons for people to drift from rural to urban areas, it became obvious that school choice, which became an option for parents who yearned for quality education for their children defined the drift as we progressed into our democracy (Msila, 2009). As government grapples with improving teaching and learning as well as providing resources in its rural and township schools, parents here, concerned at the slow pace of delivery, have begun an exodus to suburban schools targeting especially former Model C Schools to give their



children a chance at what they perceive as better quality education (Govender, 2013; Oppelt, 2012). The South African drifting scenario is unique. The majority population actually ends up as the minority in the suburban schools that they drift into (Carrim, 2013). This is because most former Model C Schools largely retained their white learner enrolment and began the intake of learners of colour in the lower grades in small numbers. The other reason is that most of the former Model C Schools are situated in largely white suburbs which act as the natural feeder to those schools.

With the dawn of democracy came economic opportunities for all South Africans leading to a growing middle class that emerged from both rural and township residents. With economic empowerment, the emergent black middle class also aspired to move to urban areas to access better housing, facilities and schools for their children. Carrim (2013) posits that South African democratic transition which positioned the previously disadvantaged to participate in the global economy led to their aspirations to get a better quality education for their children to improve their chances in the modern world as well.

A recent concept paper released by the Member of the Executive for Education of the Legislative in KwaZulu reveals that education authorities here have finally acknowledged the drift but are still a long way towards dealing with it (DoE, 2012b). In essence this means that it is up to suburban schools and their governing bodies to deal with the multi-faceted impact of the township/rural-urban drift. The main challenge suburban schools have to cope with is the integration of rural and township learners with their own. This study places this focal point under the spotlight.

## **2.6 Policy responses to drifting**

Studies suggest that only some governments have been working at the successful integration of drifting learners into suburban schools but mainly on terms that suit the government and not necessarily the drifters (Bosma *et al.*, 2010; Morna, *et al.*, 2013; Perez-Milans, 2011). Spain has the School Welcome Programme (*Programa De Escuelas De Bienvenida*), an initiative by the government to teach Spanish language to newcomers and prepare them for citizenship (Perez-Milans, 2011). The Spanish policy initiative makes it compulsory for those who wish to enrol in its education system to become part of the

process of assimilation by first learning the language and then becoming familiar with the culture (Perez-Milans, 2011).

Rural-urban migration in the United States is seen as a problem that at best should be reversed (Queen, *et al.*, 1952; Ritchey, 1974). Many drifters making their way from rural to urban areas within the United States are Latinos that start their lives in rural schools and slowly gravitate towards urban centres. Some researchers see the American policy makers as obstructionist because of the insistence of English only teaching which disadvantages Latinos by making their integration difficult (Conchas, Oseguera, & Vigil, 2012). Such drifters have to contend with many other socio-economic as well as deal with the language challenge in their attempts to integrate themselves at the suburban schools. This policy severely limits integration of minority groups seeking a future in suburban schools (Santau, Maerten-Rivera, & Huggins, 2011). Individual states within the United States also effect political and policy pressure on admission of minority groups making it difficult for them to get a fair chance at equal education (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, the United States instead has the No Child Left Behind Policy that places a heavy responsibility on schools to ensure that learners are given all the support they need to make grade progression (Epstein, 2001). Policy and perspective in the United States thus encourages well-meaning schools and communities to seek all the assistance they can muster from various sources other than government to stabilise inner-city schools in order to maintain good student attainment levels (Epstein, 1995; Sanders, 2006). The onus is therefore shifted to the school.

Australia too, has made policy attempts to put the brakes on rural-urban drifting. Australia's government initiated public-private partnerships enrich and sustain rural student learning in an attempt to retain rural populations and create opportunities for their growth and development in their settings (Kilpatrick, *et al.*, 2003). Limited success has been achieved through these policies as the exodus from rural areas in Australia continues, prompted by the promise of better opportunities in the urban areas (Johns, 2003). Little or no support awaits these rural Australian drifters when they arrive in suburban schools (Johns, 2003). Reforms to school admission policies since early 1990s have lifted the limitations on drifting and the integration of learners in the United Kingdom as a move to eliminate stratification

and segregation tendencies in public schooling (Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007). Government in the United Kingdom acted out of concern that there was a tendency for schools to polarise themselves by being identified by the public as elitist or non-elitist and therefore leading to stigmatisation of certain learners (Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007).

Contrariwise, China's *hukou* system actively restricts the smooth integration of rural drifters into suburban schools while it baulks with the introduction of policies dealing specifically with settlement and integration of migrant minorities into its cities (Zhao & Wong, 2002; Zhu & Blachford, 2012). While the Chinese pursue an expansionist economic policy that requires increasing number of workers in its urban centres, this has not translated fast enough to policies that support the education of those arriving on the fringes of the cities (Zhu & Blachford, 2012). This results in loss of schooling, feelings of isolation even when admitted and fringe communities that become a social problem through (Zhao & Wong, 2002). Indian registration policies severely hamper the aspirations of slum and minority children from gaining access to suburban schools (Tsujita, 2012). These are drifters that moved into urban areas from impoverished rural areas. Bureaucracy works against these rural migrants seeking a better life in the urban areas (Tsujita, 2012). Second generation slum dwellers in some cases still wait on the fringes to be considered a part of the suburban schooling system (Tsujita, 2012). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) speaks to the importance of transforming the education system into an equitable and integrated one and as such remains a broad imperative.

South African policy, as stated in the South African Schools Act of 1996 merely safeguards the right to admission to schools of choice for its citizens. While education policy production infused with non-discriminatory directives which have estimable ambitions and ideals are in over-supply, guidelines and support on integration are non-existent (Jansen, 2013). The debate still rages on amongst educationists as to whether the disjuncture between policy production and its implementation is hampering integration (Sayed & Kanjee, 2013). Hacking (2013) who conducted a study on the effect of international donor support for transformation in South African schooling said support has helped to prepare systems and policies and it was now up to schools to start implementing. One of the drawbacks to implementation of policy is that action on the ground in the form of trained personnel

acting as mentors and or coaches as well as workshops on integration and the new education imperative are missing. National policymaker, Duncan Hindle admits that DBE officials are desperately needed to be more visible at schools if policy has to be translated into action (Hindle, 2013). In the absence of such oversight, suburban schools have to search themselves for ways to deal with important issues such as integration of rural and township learners. This in itself is problematic in some cases because suburban schools are steeped in a system and culture they have inherited from the past and would rather opt to continue with what has worked for them (Jansen, 2013). The impact of the absence of action to drive integration policy is one of the imperatives that drive this study.

Various factors impact on how suburban schools seek to cope with minority, rural, ghetto, slum and township learners as they drift into suburban schools. How a suburban school seeks to cope with integration of rural and township drifters also depends on the identification and the level of engagement with these factors. Some of the important factors are examined here.

## **2.7 Factors inhibiting or enabling integration**

This section focuses on various factors that interact to either facilitate the integration of rural and township learners into suburban schools or deter the integration process. Drifting communities also display various characteristics in their adjustment to urban areas and suburban schools. Whether they adjust by adopting the urban style and give up their culture and traditions, create new communities with their own values and lifestyles or remain unchanged in the process will be debateable (Caro, 2013). Caro (2013) further suggests that the debate is also around whether drifters, when joining other drifters already present, will contribute to ruralisation of the urban areas or become urbanised themselves. The effect of either rural or urban orientation (Rajabi, 2009) will feature in how the factors either help integration or become obstacles to it.

### **2.7.1 School leadership**

Rural and township schools that are dysfunctional or non-functional are most likely lacking effective leadership (Carrim, 2013; Jansen, 2013; Naicker 2013). The leadership challenge rendering such schools ineffective and therefore providing poor quality education (Naicker, 2013) precipitates the departure of drifters who seek better quality leadership and

education in suburban schools (Jansen, 2013). Drifters therefore place themselves in the hands of the leadership of suburban schools whom they hope will deliver the quality they could not get back home. This is an onerous task placed on an unprepared suburban school leadership given the multifaceted challenges that are presented by such a move. Effective school leadership in the suburban schools ought to proactively apply a problem-solving approach to this scenario, dealing with the issues it comes along with to ensure that learners can be socialised into the school disciplines (Carrim, 2013). While this might create a hot potato for some school leaders, “The most successful leader of all is one who sees another picture not yet actualized. He sees the things which belong in his picture but which are not yet there” (Follett, 1941, p. 242). This is the challenge faced by suburban principals who understand that their role is not just to manage but to set the tone for leadership of their schools into the future (Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004).

Integration brings many challenges for the school to deal with in the present but would ensure its success in the future. Understanding the new context within which suburban schools have to operate is key to unlocking the new kind of leadership required to unlocking the transformational agenda (Naicker, 2013). Providing such leadership means a shift away from the instructional leadership style of suburban schools and a move to transformational leadership because of the complexity of change that schools are faced with (Leithwood, 1994). Comprehensive adjustment of the leadership style is required to understand and ensure integration not just of drifting learners of other ethnic groups but of their communities, their cultural panaches and their social capital. The task requires a visionary school principal who has a multi-focus agenda but a singular goal of success in transformation. Success in this type of high-quality leadership hinges on the ability of the principal to take along his team and at the same time allow them to lead the process of transformation (Burns, 1978; Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). His effective leadership must show in the way he constructively and democratically engages with his team to find positive ways of dealing with new challenges that integration of drifters into the school bring with it (Carrim, 2013). The mark of an effective school principal is the way in which the transformational agenda is given effect in the school by decentralising decision making (Chikoko & Magadla, 2012). Such transformational leadership must be infectious enough to empower all stakeholders within its influence, show flexibility and embrace change (Blase &

Anderson, 1995; Kilpatrick, *et al.*, 2003). While the education environment might be suffused with race-blind policies to enable transformation and accelerate integration (Gumede, 2013), dominant stakeholders sometimes become gatekeepers and want to maintain the *status quo* by resisting policy changes and deciding what is necessary to implement (Macbeath, 1998). Jansen (2013) posits that former Model C School leadership tends to throw a ring of protection around their schools to prevent government, unions or other sources from negatively interfering with their school cultures. Successful transformational leadership demands that a path of both continuity and change is skilfully negotiated (Thomas & Martin, 1996). Stakeholders should be made to understand that change will also be continuous and with it will come the advantage of such things as policy change that will grant new powers that can strengthen teaching and learning in an integrated environment (Thomas & Martin, 1996). Schools, especially suburban ones faced with a unidirectional flow of drifters, must exhibit a depth of understanding of the process of integration. One of the biggest challenges that an suburban school principal will face is how to manage the demands of competing interest groups, all of whom he needs for the smooth operation of the school in a challenging environment (Macbeath, 1998). The position of the principal is therefore not about a leader who has to respond to change but rather to understand that to ensure the cooperation of his team he is required to negotiate, mediate and in some cases even resist change (Macbeath, 1998; Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). Teachers especially, therefore, need to be motivated, enabled, encouraged to work as a team and be accountable (Sergiovanni, 1994).

The principal, who heads the SMT has to chart the way forward after extensive consultation on defining, analysing and understanding what is required to ensure smooth integration of drifters into the schools (Sanders, 2006). Planning programmes of action requires identification of areas that will be targeted to ensure that all stakeholders are part of the integration process. Such issues as partnership, teacher selection, cultural diversity and maintaining attainment levels ought to work to a plan crafted by the leadership of an innovative team that embraces a broad vision of leadership that works with a common purpose and genuine change (Blase & Anderson, 1995; Hampton, 2010). A central factor in the success of integration plans in any school is the driving force of a strong and effective principal who sets the leadership pace (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Innovative principal

leadership is effective in the way it provides support to visionary programmes and expectations through effective communication and support while exercising control over the process (Gretz, 2003).

School leadership that acts as a catalyst for connecting the community with the activities of the school creates the platform for learning in context (Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). What propels school leadership is recognising that the multifaceted integration process cannot be driven by the school alone (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). Leadership at school level must act as a scaffold that bridges the socioeconomic, race and age divide amongst its school community to provide a contextual space for community and school to collaborate in the education of its children (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Pollard, 2010; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). High quality leadership from an effective principal will ensure commitment to transformational learning, parental involvement, a welcoming attitude and open two-way communication between the school and its community (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). The ability to imbue parents and community with the picture of all learners working equally, participating fully in the life of the school and attaining good results creates interest in the work of the school (Ansari, Oskrochi, & Phillips, 2010).

To take this forward, the principal as leader needs to bring the parents and community on board and create ways for them to participate in the integration process that is essential for higher learner achievement (Fielding, 2007; Foskett, 2002). Strong leadership will contextualise collaborative work with a balance between delegation and control to achieve measurable goals that are specified (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Gretz, 2003). Identifying challenges before they happen and preparing for them is a necessary skill for principal leadership (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010). An example of such proactive intervention proffered by Epstein and Voorhis (2010) is when the school translates material and interprets meetings to ensure that the inability of some parents to either read or speak English is not an obstacle to their participation in the school matters. The strength of leadership character is demonstrated by welcoming, identifying and harnessing social capital from drifting parents, creating appropriate contexts for utilisation of their social capital to the benefit of the school to support diverse approaches to multicultural teaching

(Kilpatrick, *et al.*, 2003; Kolodny, 2002; Naicker, 2011). School leadership must steer away from thinking of its new parent sector as competition and move towards socialising them and itself to compatibility rather than opposition terms (Kolodny, 2002). Strategic thinking principals will understand that the quality of the community that the school serves will be defined by the leadership strength of the school (Engeln, 2003). This, of course will depend on the success of its programme of integration.

Visionary leadership must give birth to visionary programmes to assist with coping strategies for integration. One of the main programmes that should be scheduled at the outset is to build capacity of stakeholders (Kilpatrick, *et al.*, 2003). Such action starts the process of distributed leadership, moving leadership from one individual to a team that assumes collective responsibility for the process of integration (Kilpatrick & Johns, 2001). This is an important aspect around which revolves the success of any or all other programmes a school may introduce to aid the process of integration. Programmes should be centred around the school and should have specific targets such as improving communication between parents and teachers (Epstein, 1995; Goos, *et al.*, 2007). School-based partnership programmes must integrate activities of partnership leaders such as a school-community garden that will have the effect of enhancing education (Naicker, 2011; Sanders & Lewis, 2005). A good leader will guide activities by making certain that processes are prioritised, time is made available and stakeholders take ownership of activities (Sanders & Lewis, 2005). Leadership activities must have the effect of inculcating positive attitudes, raising expectations of all stakeholders and ringing in definitive changes that continually work towards integration (Conchas, Oseguera, & Vigil, 2012).

Positive attitudes, strong motivation and vibrant leadership are the essence of integration necessary in the classroom, the most contested space as well as the contextual space where success or failure is finally decided (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012; Tinto, 2011). Teachers can be the tipping point for the ultimate success of the integration programme and activities planned for a school. As role models and leaders closest to learners, their actions and beliefs, their values and norms can make positive change happen in the class or could be detrimental to the process of integration (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). The success of a drifter in a suburban school is cultivated on the trust that the learner builds around the



teacher (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Parker, *et al.*, 2011). Providing a nurturing classroom environment that dismantles barriers to learning, creating diverse learning approaches and belief in the ability of drifters to be successful are hallmarks of a transformational teacher who wants the process of integration to succeed (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012; Steen & Noguera, 2010). Successful leadership in the classroom is reflective of the culture of leadership that permeates the fabric of a school as a culmination of collective efforts of the stakeholders with a transformational agenda for the success of the school through integration (Brooks, 2009; Parker, *et al.*, 2011). In line with the goal of integration through quality teaching and learning, a principal should always be on the look-out to recruit and retain teachers that suit the transformational agenda (Alexander, 2011; Truscott & Truscott, 2005). This should be backed up by institutional leadership provided by the school in terms of provision of resources, data collection and feedback, proper programming and innovation (Tinto, 2011).

Finally, the role of the principal as a leader cannot be overstated. Principals, whose leadership is vital to the success of the integration programme of the school need to be multifaceted beings (Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). A principal has to, at various points in his working day, transform himself into a preacher, a motivator, a marketer, a brand merchandiser, a communicator, a cultural broker, a press liaison officer and still remain a teacher (Brooks, 2009; Dotson-Blake, 2010). Transformational leadership need not start as a big team effort because “Sometimes all it took was one dynamic person to make a difference” (Parker, *et al.*, 2011). South African suburban school principals, especially the former Model C ones, face a double dilemma: they distrust the intentions of the government and are steeped in the practices of the past (Jansen, 2013). In this regard the DBE must make its authority felt in schools by supporting and offering leadership in such areas that they regard as non-negotiable (Hindle, 2013). Principals, who are regarded as agents of change must also have the political will to carry through the process integration despite doubts and obstacles they face (Jansen, 2013). However, the buck does not stop with them: education is a societal issue and leadership ought to come from all stakeholders including school managers, teachers, parents and learners (Hindle, 2013).

Studies reviewed here have contributed vast amounts of research on school leadership and principal effectiveness in making schools work while touching on the process of integration

of drifters at suburban schools. The leads provided in such research work are extremely useful to one who is attempting to navigate towards the practical application of leadership within the school to facilitate integration- the mechanics as it were. While principals might know what to do, the problem may be that they do not know how to do it (Brooks, 2009). This is where my focus on integration will be.

### **2.7.2 The disconnect between school and home**

In the context of the ecology of education, the home environment and the school environment are referred to as microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). This section examines the extent and effect of the disconnect on the integration efforts at the confluence. What strengthens the process of learning is the positive interconnection and interaction between these two environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Tinto (1993) broadens this context in his study of integration to emphasise the reliance of the learner on the home environment as a support system as he or she begins the education journey at the new school. Bronfenbrenner (1992) and Tinto (1993) emphasise that a strong attachment to the individual's past community is paramount to the learner's stability at the new school. When either the home system or the school system disengages from the other, the situation arising is what is referred to as the disconnect. The intensity of the disconnect between home and school can vary and is dependent on many factors which in turn impact on the drifters' integration into a suburban school. Drifting learners need the support of the home environment to be strong as they begin the process of connecting with the new environment and developing a support base there (Tinto, 1993). The absence of this bond between the learner at school and his home support base can severely hamper the integration process (Tinto, 1987).

The culture at mainly black township and rural schools are vastly different: teacher absenteeism, late coming, early leaving, scant teaching and learning and poor principal leadership are commonplace (Jansen, 2013). For most drifting learners, movement from rural and township schools to suburban schools is a major adjustment in their schooling lives as well as their personal lives. Suburban schools are highly focused on learning: school punctuality, teaching and learning, extra lessons, extra-curricular activities and parental involvement are high priorities (Jansen, 2013). Koen (2007) conducted a case study on

retention at the University of Western Cape using anthropological data gathered there during his long stay there as both a student and a lecturer. While his study focused on retention and departure it delves into integration as one of the factors that are explored in the study. His findings which, he posits, are equally applicable to schools are useful to this study. Integration at the suburban school requires drifters to adjust to different ways of learning and socialising in a brand new environment (Koen 2007). Two main reasons for this are firstly, the difficulty associated with separating from friends, the old school environment and sometimes even family and secondly, the inability to tune in to the social and academic demands of the new environment (Koen, 2007). This separation from past habits, socialisations and ways of behaviour sometimes results in a mental departure from the institution which the learner still attends physically whereas, sometimes, the upshot is that the individual actually leaves the institution, in which case the disconnect becomes permanent (Tinto, 1993). In cases where the individual remains at the institution because of family pressure the marginalisation and isolation experienced sometimes manifests itself in a lack of information flow to the family thereby disconnecting them from what happens at school (Tinto 1987). This scenario places both the learner and the family in a state of normlessness (Koen 2007).

Just as many suburban schools prepare for integration of rural and township learners by arranging induction programmes, it is in their own interests to take the parents along as well. Building alliances with its parent community, especially ethnic minorities is vital for the successful integration of its diverse learner population (Brooks, 2009). Drifting learners are in many instances from drifting communities who have uprooted themselves from rural or township areas and have arrived in urban areas in search of a better education for their children (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012). These communities too, are de-linked from their 'home' environment as well as their new environment and need to be brought on board at the school their children attend (Johns, *et al.*, 1999). What they do bring along with them is their disempowerment translated to low expectations which manifests itself into a lack of commitment (Hindle, 2013). Handled insensitively, the suburban school principal can alienate this community from the start and ruin the chances of an integrated, diverse and multicultural support group. Parents, especially those from low-income families who arrive under these circumstances are aware of the power differentials based on race, ethnicity and

socioeconomic backgrounds at the suburban schools and are tentative about the reception they will get (Kolodny, 2002). Suburban parents understand better how to demand their right to a good education for their children while drifting parents, mainly black, may not know exactly how to make such demands and fear being humiliated (Brooks, 2009). Rather than face this humiliation by articulating the needs of their children they choose the silent option and disconnect themselves from the school which in many instances spreads to the entire community (Brooks, 2009). Another reason, studies found, is that drifting communities move into squatter camps on the fringes of the urban areas and get comfortable in their new communities tending to shy away from making the connection with the suburban school they have placed their children in (Mount-Cors, 2012; Zhao & Wong, 2002). There are those too who tend to arrive at the school gate and drop off their children and collect them after school because of the unwelcoming environment (Bush, 1999). Some schools exacerbate the situation by instructing parents to drop off their children at the school gates and not enter the premises ruling out even classroom observation (Brooks, 2009).

Confronting the *status quo* entails commitment from the school to deconstruct such a social order and reconnecting with such communities (Hampton, 2010). A school cannot turn a blind eye to a huge chunk of its parent community remaining disconnected from their children's education (Fullan, 2009). Ford (2004) posits that for a suburban school to remain effective it must understand that accountability for learners' success is everyone's business. A prerequisite for a reversal of the situation is a change in the mindset of the principal who understands that the success of the school hinges on the participation of all stakeholders in the education of their children (Brooks, 2009). Creating a database of disconnected parents, planning meetings, allocating time and resources and securing technical assistance are essential for reconnection efforts (Bayha & Harrison, 2007; Boullion & Gomez, 2001). Teaching and learning at school has to be mediated by the day-to-day social contexts within which learners operate, making it necessary for the school to stay connected to the outside activities of its learners (Boullion & Gomez, 2001). Unprepared schools, challenged by diversity and in the grip of changes sweeping over them typically detach themselves, especially from the minority communities they serve thus accentuating the disconnect which slows integration and impacts negatively on learner attainment (Brooks, 2009).

A useful strategy for suburban schools is to keep parents continually and gainfully involved in their children's learning to ensure the home does not pull away from the school as this widens the achievement gap and disengages learners from seeing school as an avenue for progress in life (Pollard, 2010). Suburban schools need to bring connected meaning to learning by narrowing the gap between blinkered academic ways of learning and context and personal experience to smooth the integration of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (Boullion & Gomez, 2001). Parents ideally should be engaged in the processes of the school from day one and be visible at school especially in the early months when maximum support is required. A school should therefore find creative ways to integrate social capital possessed by its drifting community into its teaching and learning programme thus ensuring the involvement of disconnected families (Ren & Hu, 2013). Many suburban institutions are challenged to render special assistance to linguistically and culturally diverse learners because the home environment is completely disconnected from school activities (Boullion and Gomez, 2001). Being disconnected may accentuate this problem because parents may be unaware that such barriers exist leading to a disconnected educational experience for the learner (Dotson-Blake, 2010). Therefore, regular two-way, open communication between the school and the home plays a major role in growing, improving and intensifying the connection between home and school (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Useful to this exercise is to get disconnected families to clarify expectations for them as well as for their children (Brooks, 2009). By fostering such culturally responsive connections with its multi-cultural communities it opens the way for a better understanding of each other and to work with each other to improve their children's attainment levels (Ford, 2004; Brooks, 2009).

Building these contextual scaffolds only provides a prelude to the real challenge facing suburban schools trying to integrate drifters. Probably the biggest challenge facing suburban schools that has an impact on schooling for all is that class differentials still exist and the poor and disadvantaged will withdraw into isolated and disconnected communities if their situation is not treated sensitively (Vaid, 2012). Vaid (2012) who conducted her study in India found that although the constitution reserved positions for the most disadvantaged sectors of the society the difference between class and caste kept poor communities isolated. Engaging with disconnected communities is increasingly essential to provide a

voice for the isolated and marginalised to return them to the fold and provide them with a voice to campaign for equal opportunities for their children (Pollard, 2010). School managers who receive information and training on such matters sometimes stifle the flow to their SMTs as well as staff thereby losing opportunities to create awareness (Mabogoane, 2013).

Information on this important aspect of integration has been sketchy and difficult to locate, leading me to believe that a lot of work exists in this area. These studies however, provide a platform to build on the work produced in the disconnect between the school and the home.

### **2.7.3 School-community partnership**

School-community partnership should be an integral part of a suburban school's broader plan to realise its integration agenda of the diverse learner population it draws from an increasingly wider circle of families that stretches to township and rural areas in search of a better education for their children. A school-community partnership is a relationship forged by the school with its community to work as a collective to facilitate learner success in school (Chavkin, 2001; Vogel & Avissar, 2009). Building such alliances with local business communities and organisations is equally important for an increasingly diverse suburban school's outlook (Brooks, 2009). School-community partnership is a shared responsibility of the broader community who have a vested interest in the children that attend a school (Price-Mitchell, 2011). Local community organisations, non-governmental organisations, business and industry are regarded as the wider community that can impact on the success of a school through its programmes (Ansari, *et al.*, 2010; Bosma, *et al.*, 2010; Foskett, 2002). A large body of research advocates school-community partnership as an important facilitator of learner and parental integration at the confluence of the rural-township-suburban drift (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Molloy *et al.*, 1995; Pollard, 2010; Sanders, 2007). Striking up a relationship with these role players to work towards smooth integration of its diverse community of learners is not just useful but necessary because the success of any school is in the interests of everyone (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Molloy *et al.*, 1995). Sharing the responsibility in this way is recognized as a major strategy to address the complex issues involved in integrating diverse learners in schools (Ford, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) concurs, citing the need for teachers, parents and community to find collaborative means to develop effective strategies to safeguard social and intellectual development of children.

Suburban schools are multifaceted and multifunctional and are more easily targeted by interest groups because of their easy accessibility. This 'vulnerability' can just as easily be turned into advantage for the school if it in turn targets those around it by being prepared in advance for the type of partnership it wants to strike up with the various approaches it receives. Uppermost in the mind of any principal is the success of the school which is judged by its learner attainment (Epstein, 2010). Types of partnerships should be determined by the impact envisaged, how partnerships will be initiated and perceived by stakeholders all of which should be framed by the need to home in on programmes that support integration (Goos, 2004). Global literature indicates that the focus of many school-community partnerships is in fact framed by support programmes that facilitate integration of disadvantaged ethnic minorities into suburban schools (Alston, 2011; Price-Mitchell, 2011; Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Vogel & Avissar, 2009). Integration of drifters into suburban schools is impacted by factors such as socioeconomic status, race, culture and language diversity, all of which point to the fact that these originate outside the school (Price-Mitchell, 2011). Effectiveness of a school and the improvement it effects is reflective of the type of partnership it has with its community which is a critical factor in the organisational effectiveness of the school (Joyce, 2009). School-community partnership should therefore be carefully cultivated to work towards alleviating barriers such as conflicting views, departmental restrictions and overstepping responsibilities that work contrary to the agenda of integration (Riggins-Newby, 2003).

Central to the establishment of school-community partnership is identifying and analysing the need for the partnership together with stakeholders (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Thereafter clearly outlining the responsibilities and roles of all participants, matching needs of school to partners, carefully controlling the partnership and evaluating progress are important (Riggins-Newby, 2003). Molloy, *et al.*, (1995) propose a four phase framework to plan and establish school-community partnership: introducing and starting the partnership, developing the partnership, creating a shared vision and implementing plans into action.

Amongst the important factors that enable a school-community partnership are effective leadership, encouraging a collaborative climate, teamwork (Molloy, *et al.*, 1995), communication, acknowledging social capital and an open door policy (Naicker, 2011; O'Connor, Hanny, & Lewis, 2011).

Perhaps one of the best known models of school-community partnership is Epstein's (2001) *overlapping spheres of influence* framework. The model identifies three contexts, the school, family and the community as spheres that will have the greatest impact on learner integration and attainment at school (Epstein, 2001). Each of these contexts exerts its own positive influence on the learner, while their synchronisation brings about positive interactions within the partnership (Epstein, 2001; Ndahayo & Gaikwad, 2004). Each sphere of the model intersects each other, creating areas of cooperation. Where the three spheres intersect each other is the confluence, the area that impacts most on the learners (Naicker, 2011). Whenever the interaction amongst the spheres increases, the impact on the goals of the partnership is more pronounced (Epstein, 2001). Various other models of school-community partnership also exist, sometimes with specific purpose or with a focus on a particular aspect of the partnership such as the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) model that gives emphasis to cultural and life related variables as the primary reason that stakeholders should come together to form a partnership. Suburban schools should therefore infuse their partnerships with a focus on different aspects of integration that they wish to target such as school-work-experience programmes that bring drifting learners face to face with urban communities in the work environment (Albertson, Whitaker, & Perry, 2011).

Researchers in these studies have argued that changes in learner demographics must be reflected in the composition of school-community partnership that seeks to address the needs of a multicultural school body (Ford, 2004; Sanders & Lewis, 2005). It has also been reasoned that school-community partnership is generally a broad based framework plan that requires participation of all stakeholders to facilitate its work in the space defined by the common goals identified by the team (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Danzberger & Usdan, 1984; Hands, 2010). Formation of a school-community partnership was posited as not the prerogative of the school but tangential to interested stakeholders although it is practical



for the school to play a leading role in making it operational (Naicker, 2011; Brooks, 2009). Viewed through the lens of integration, school-community partnership unravelled in these studies is presented as relationship driven, social capital based and intended to be ongoing in an expansionist way (Danzberger & Usdan, 1984; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Shapiro, DuPaul, Barnabas, Benson, & Slay, 2010). Many studies concentrated on the formation of school-family-community partnership as a solution to a range of challenges faced by schools (Bosma, *et al.*, 2010; Boullion & Gomez, 2001; Bush, 1999; Epstein, 2001). They could have helped if more findings were made on the impact of school-community partnership on integration. The literature also reflects on non-engagement with integration of drifting minority groups at suburban schools in the absence of school-community partnership (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). Another inference drawn is that those who may not have direct dealings with the school but are nevertheless part of the civic and business society in the area are regarded as important to a school that wishes to make the whole community responsible for what goes on within the school and should therefore be drawn into its partnership.

It was also evident that schools do not readily move into the realm of school-community partnership given the extreme pressure on them to show evidence of effectiveness which is usually judged by learner attainment (Pounder, 1999). Schools caught up in the day-to-day activities of the academic and professional demands made on them and are slow to get such partnership off the ground, lose out on the enormous benefit they can reap by crafting a space for the community to play a role in the school (Sanders, 2001). Where such initiatives have taken off, such as in parts of Australia and the United States, school-community partnership has been equally successful in implementing inclusive programmes to smooth the progress of integration (Johns, 2003; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Integration in suburban schools is vital to the future success and sustainability of these schools. If suburban schools' leadership chooses not to give precedence to school-community partnership and pursue it with understanding and resolve, then the failure of such institutions in the future will rest squarely on the shoulders of those custodians of the education of learners who disregarded their cultural and academic responsibilities (Pounder, 1999).

I was particularly interested in interrogating studies to explore to what extent they focused on the role if any, that school-community partnership plays in the process of integration. The literature provokes many questions, the exploration of which will enrich my findings. This study intends reaching beyond the framework to examine the mechanics of school-community partnership as an integral part of the school programme working towards integration of drifting learners. This will warrant an examination of such phenomena as programmes of assistance and the day to day activities of partners that enable the closing of gaps between drifters and their suburban counterparts, crucial for successful integration. It is therefore necessary to gravitate towards the heart of the matter which is: What does it take for suburban schools to integrate rural and township drifters?

#### **2.7.4 Cultural divide**

The reference here is not to cultural backgrounds and differences between the cultures of the drifting learners and those in the suburban school. It refers to the culture of teaching and learning at the rural and township schools that drifters depart from, as compared to the culture of teaching and learning in the suburban schools. It cannot be denied though, that the environment, cultural background and traditions do colour the perspective of those interacting within such communities. Differences in the organisational culture in each of these contexts will impact the integration outcomes at the suburban school (Miller, 2007). Norms and standards, philosophies and approaches usually define culture within a school or institution (Pratt, Margaritis, & Coy, 1999). Culture is a matrix of traditions that a group evolves to deal with the problem of integrating internally and acclimatizing externally that has, over the years, worked well for them and is imparted to new affiliates to bring them in line with the way the group perceives, reasons, considers the impact of such problems and responds to them (Schein, 1986).

Cultural organisation of a suburban school which is grounded in the monolithic traditions of its historical context, moulds educator thinking and shapes their expectations, attitudes and interaction with drifting learners (Alexander, 2011). Teacher behaviour, communication tendencies, their values and their fundamental suppositions, moulded by the suburban school, shapes the teaching and learning environment around them (Miller, 2007). Suburban schools are characterised by a strong culture of teaching, learning, management

and administration (Jansen, 2013). Teacher presence in class as well as effective teaching and learning, sports activities at competition level, support programmes for slower learners and communication with parents is very high on the priority list of these schools (Jansen, 2013). Effective leadership, motivated learners and teachers and initiative driven staff form a proactive team that reflects the culture at suburban schools (Carrim, 2013). Top performance by learners in suburban schools comes from a deeply rooted learning and teaching culture accompanied by respect for teaching and authority (Jansen, 2013).

The school culture in rural and township areas is often very different. The presence of the teacher and the principal at school is often erratic and even if they are teaching and learning is not effective (Jansen, 2013). Most dysfunctional schools are to be found in rural and township areas (Naicker, 2013). Poor management, the absence of monitoring and evaluating curriculum delivery and incompetent teachers paint a bleak picture of the culture at rural and township schools (Chinsamy, 2013; Soudien, 2013). Strong union interference, lack of sporting and extra-curricular activities and refusal by teachers to work after hours ensures that these schools come to a complete halt at the end of the normal school day (Jansen, 2013). Having been socialized in this way, indifference amongst parents is commonplace (Hindle, 2013). As expected, this culture lays the foundation for the poor results at township and rural schools (Naicker, 2013). Central to the cultural divide is teacher shortages and lack of expertise that is experienced by the rural learner compared to smaller classes and highly trained subject specialists in suburban schools (Delpont & Mangwaya, 2008). Educational disparities of the pre-democracy era, marked by declining quality of education in rural and township schools is still very much the reason learners drift in their numbers to suburban schools (Msila, 2009). Coupled with this are factors such as neglect, poverty and social injustices faced by rural and township learners that create a negative environment within which to learn (Beloin & Peterson, 2000). Rural and township learners arrive at suburban schools from under-resourced schools with sometimes unsafe facilities, unqualified or inexperienced teachers, weak teaching techniques, poor curriculum content, frequent teacher turnover, and lowered expectations and motivation (Ford, 2004; Msila, 2009). Drifters, making the transition to suburban schools have to cross this cultural divide which in many cases is an abyss for them. This switch of schools by drifters will not necessarily provide the quality education they desire if the receiving school is not aware of

the sensitivities of the environmental and cultural impact, both past and present on both the school and the drifters. The development of the child is dependent on the way it interacts with the various environments it passes through during the course of its life and in turn the effect of the environments on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The integration of drifters into suburban schools therefore has to be seen against government policy ensuring access to schools of choice together with government failure to level the quality of education delivery in rural and suburban schools (Alexander, 2011). How suburban schools present themselves also impacts on the process of integration. Well organised structures, neatly laid out plans and processes, effective administrative staff, experienced teaching staff and ready-made programmes found in well-resourced suburban schools (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010) could work either way - either encouraging the rural/township learners to hasten their integration or to slow it down because it could also be overwhelming. Even the physical structure of the huge imposing school buildings can be intimidating to the disadvantaged rural drifter. Former Model C Schools operate within a more business style culture that they established for themselves since their inception while township and rural schools function within an organic culture in which informal and primary relationships including formal affiliations are very important (Mbigi, 2003). A visible difference in suburban schools is the highly bureaucratic, organisational run institution while many rural schools are people run institutions based largely on the dependence on each other to get things done based on the concept of *ubuntu* which, literally translated, means shared morality and shared personhood (Mbigi, 2003). While this is so, suburban schools also thrive because of the dearth of individualistic effort by its teachers who assume the 'manager' role of their classes and duties (Avolio, 2003).

Education reforms which largely have been blanket policies impacting what happens in rural and township schools as well as suburban schools have, in certain instances maintained the status quo of inequality that existed in apartheid times (Mncube, 2008). An example would be the way better resourced and skilled suburban governing bodies are able to manipulate loopholes in SASA and give effect to their own admission agendas such as Rivonia Primary that went to the Constitutional Court to prove that the school governing body and not the provincial authorities had the right to determine learner admission policy (Phakathi, 2013).

Sometimes, suburban school governing bodies, in their narrow interpretation of policy, perpetuate basic assumptions and hamper integration by their actions (Mncube, 2008). In response to the Constitutional Court challenge by Rivonia Primary, the KwaZulu-Natal DBE issued a protocol clarifying admission policy as laid out in SASA (DoE, 2012a) which is an example of the battle to right the wrongs of the past. However, knee jerk reactions by issuing policy adjustments such as clarity in admission policy each time a conflict situation occurs contributes little to help find wholesome solutions to the problems besetting drifting learners and can heighten tensions between them and suburban schools. Theobald (2005) suggests that such one-size-fits-all education reforms serves as a cultural divide between rural and suburban school communities that perpetuates inequalities that started in the past and are still present today.

SASA which was promulgated to reform education was too broad in some areas such as admission of learners to schools therefore failing to be interventionist in some areas resulting in the widening of the cultural divide (Malala, 2012). South Africa's entry for the swimming category in the Olympics will for years to come be dominated by mainly white, former Model C learners who have had the facilities from inception and also because water sport is in their culture. While our policies support the choice on merit, they have not made much difference to closing the cultural divide in regard to this and other such sport by improving facilities, coaching and support for disadvantaged learners to give them an equal chance to compete at international level. Education policy aimed at transforming the education system must take cognisance of the challenges faced by the previously disadvantaged and help as a bridging structure to bring them on board rather than leave it to broad interpretation (Ngalwa, 2012). Another reason for the widening cultural divide is that government finds itself mired in policy overload with little political will to implement significant changes necessary to resolve issues (Jansen, 2002). The contention is supported by Bayha and Harrison (2007) who argue that such legislative weights can have a negative impact on disadvantaged learners. In the absence of affirmative action to speed up delivery of proper infrastructure and sporting equipment in rural and township schools together with the lack of expertise, the suburban school is an inviting option for parents who want a more rounded education for their children (Avolio, 2003; Govender, 2013; Savides, *et al.*, 2012). Policy to facilitate smooth integration of drifters into suburban schools should be

supported by appropriate interventionist action to close the cultural divide rather than expose divisions.

The real effect of the cultural divide is experienced by drifters when they enter the classroom at suburban schools where the greatest impact of the cultural grooming of the teacher is felt (Tinto, 2011). Teaching and learning is a whole new experience not just for the learners but for teachers too, who may ignore the link between theory and practice (Bush, 2003). The drifters' life course and world view undergo a multifaceted transformation because everything changes and it is not business as usual (O'Connor, *et al.*, 2011). Rajabi (2009) posits that the influence of suburban or rural orientation in schooling styles impacts on the way an individual learns. The culture shock experienced by drifting learners is sometimes radical and requires an effort on the part of teachers to be more flexible and earn their trust by trying to close the gap between the suburban and the drifting learners within the classroom (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006; Tinto, 2011). Unique differences must be taken into consideration and steps taken to smooth teaching and learning processes. In his study Rajabi (2009) found that learners coming from rural areas favoured the top-down model of studying while suburban learners were more comfortable with the bottom-up style. Ingrained cultural obstacles, obfuscated by ethnic, religious and race differences become difficult to overcome (Theobald, 2005) if a suburban school does not possess a transformational outlook. Drifters are expected to fast track through these experiences to get on board at the suburban school which is usually already in full flight when they arrive (Meador, 2005).

The dilemma for the drifters and the suburban school intent on smooth integration of the drifters is how to bridge this cultural divide not just in the classroom but on all fronts (Meador, 2005). Definitive programmes that involve all stakeholders are essential to ease integration of drifters into suburban schools and close the cultural divide. Without the benefit of transformational leadership, suburban schools lack the motivation for change and consider integration unidirectional (Avolio, 2003). Actually, a group that holds strong underlying assumptions will find it inconceivable to accept behaviour premised on any other belief (Schein, 1985). Understanding that there will be major dissimilarities and even disparities in the organisational culture of the rural and township school compared to the

suburban school is an important starting point to build bridges with the drifting community and the integration process of drifters (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). A transformational model of integration based on the department taking ownership of it and allowing suburban schools the flexibility to implement the programme will be useful to cut across bureaucratic 'silos' both on the ground level and the level of the department (Barry, 2013).

Political leadership to bridge the divide is weak. Instead, to stem the flow of drifters, the MEC for education in KwaZulu-Natal introduced a concept of creating 'model schools' in rural areas fashioned around the former Model C School format (DoE, 2012b). His intention was to take the best of the operational culture of former Model C Schools and infuse them into the rural and township schools thereby improving their operational and organisational culture, raising learner attainment and preparing rural learners for life in tertiary institutions which the suburban schools do well (DoE, 2012b). The attempt to take good practice from suburban schools and transplant it in rural schools cannot succeed without a wholesome plan that takes into account the cultural and other factors which have combined to create this malaise (Mbigi, 2003). Such piecemeal initiatives come across as disjointed and lacking in fundamental policy reform that targets how teachers teach. Efforts such as these to help close the cultural divide at suburban schools where it is much needed are not forthcoming from the policymakers, leaving suburban schools to their own devices or to carry on business as usual (O'Connor, *et al.*, 2011). Suburban schools are also generally slow in their programmes to integrate the families of their diverse learners in the culture of their schools and their plans to improve learner attainment which is attributable to factors such as how the school is structured and the preparedness of the leadership and staff for change (Sanders & Lewis, 2005). In many cases the easy route for suburban schools is to proceed the acculturation route for its drifters (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012). Drifters, who want to escape the political culture that holds their education captive in rural and township schools arrive in a state of normlessness and are sometimes easily assimilated into the culture of the suburban school as they seek a better education to participate in the world order (Carrim, 2013; Jansen, 2013; Tinto, 2011).

Instead of emphasising differences in rural and suburban cultures through educational policies (Theobald, 2005), governments should rather use educational reforms to instil a

national culture in schools (Gonzalez & Thomas, 2011) thereby easing the process of integration of drifting learners into suburban schools. A very important caveat in the implementation of such reforms is to ensure that the affected are part of the solution and must be included in determining how the process should unfold (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; O'Connor, *et al.*, 2011). This includes learners who must be included in decisions that are critical to their education process (Mncube, 2008) such as curriculum choice and choice of sporting codes. The other caveat is that if all interest groups do not show a willingness to collaborate, then the process will be constrained (Miller, 2007). Closing the cultural divide is a daunting task that suburban schools must include as part of their teaching and learning strategy. At school level, diversity must be embraced as a springboard to close the cultural divide (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Teachers and learners in suburban, culturally diverse classrooms must appreciate that diversity goes further than race, religion, ethnicity and language (Alexander, 2011). Stakeholders attempting to introduce changes will be challenged by territorialism, the dynamics of power, contradictory expectations, organisational structural differences and withholding of information (Miller, 2007). Equipping each other with an all-embracing, appreciative awareness of the presence of the cultural divide and its implications for the success of the institution, school leadership, the dominant parent community and the drifting parent community together with learners can work towards charting an integrative, all inclusive journey for themselves (Miller, 2007). The research presented above demonstrates a very strong argument for the need to close the cultural divide as one of the multi-pronged strategies necessary at this confluence to ease integration of drifting learners into suburban schools while maintaining their attainment levels. It also exposes the gap in the literature about any insight into what exactly is taking place within the confines of the suburban schools as they respond to government legislation to get on with integration of the population.

#### **2.7.5 Inclusivity in cultural diversity**

One of the biggest challenges to drifters is trying to navigate the cultural practices at suburban schools (Dotson-Blake, 2010). Inclusivity of cultures or the lack of it can determine the level of success an suburban school will enjoy in its compliance with state policy (DoE, 2012a) that determines whether drifting learners who choose to study there will remain or depart. Koen (2007) makes the point that integration of learners who move from one



environment to another is multifaceted and their retention at the new institution, in this case the suburban school, is dependent on how their cultural needs are satisfied as well. Suburban schools sometimes battle to deliver an adequate or equal wholesome education programme to *all* their learners because they remain static in the way they interact with all their learners and parents on various related issues while pursuing the maintenance of high attainment standards (Theobald, 2005). A huge challenge faced by predominantly white, suburban schools is teachers who have negative, prejudiced opinions of minority learners as well as their families who may be of other races or from poorer communities (Brooks, 2009). Research in India suggests that in some schools such prejudices are worsened by discrimination on the basis of caste and gender (Tsujita, 2012). Negative perceptions of teachers easily spreads to the learners of the dominant group within the school. Brooks (2009) posits that such attitudes could lead to the social exclusion of minority learners and negatively impact on their integration and academic performance at the school. In addition, cultural and societal differences, institutionalised racism and limited opportunities for cross-cultural interaction were found by Dotson-Blake (2010) to be major barriers to drifting learners getting a fair chance to educate themselves.

Raising proficiency levels of low achieving learners while providing pathways for them to participate in all other curricular and extra-curricular activities is vested in an inclusive environment that is intrinsically linked to the future success of the suburban school (Lauer *et al.*, 2006). The four pathways to sociocultural integration at school are described by Meador (2005) as sport, academics, socialising and in the context of their families. These pathways should colour the cultural fabric of a school serious about integration. To appreciate diversity schools need programmes that will help staff to understand the culture of the different groups that attend their school before setting out programmes in each of the pathways described above. Sanders and Lewis (2005) advise that suburban schools should prioritise the process of understanding cultural diversity by setting aside time to develop and implement programmes for this and in the process, bring the parent sector on board to support learners and the school. Drifting parents are also faced with a multitude of barriers and challenges to integrating themselves with the stakeholders of the host school (Dotson-Blake, 2010). Many drifting parents aggravate the situation by resigning themselves to sending their children to suburban schools and not participating in activities of the school

(Bush, 1999; Hindle, 2013). Schools in turn, challenged with improvement of drifter attainment to maintain their levels of performance, emphasise academic programmes (Bosma, *et al.*, 2010; Brooks, 2009; Bush, 1999). They are placed in the unenviable position of accounting for the improved learner attainment of increasingly diverse school populations and are often found lagging in their efforts to integrate the various cultures as pathways to improve learner attainment (Sanders & Lewis, 2005). Without a proper plan such suburban schools face the prospect of becoming high risk institutions threatened with instability and poor learner attainment (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Building a successful inclusive policy is paramount to future stability of an suburban school suggest Beloin and Peterson (2000). They posit further that the biggest problems facing such schools is the inability to stay focused on a positive vision of the future. A fixation on 'rural inferiority' is often a stumbling block to creating an inclusive environment in suburban schools (Reeves & Bylund, 2005). Bridging the gap between the drifters and the suburban school is vital to build a successful culturally diverse school and it requires strong will on the side of the drifters as well as the suburban school to keep the process alive and moving forward.

Promoting diversity needs a welcoming climate at the school, strong support from the school principal and open two-way communication between the school and its community (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Minority parents, especially those from rural areas face a dilemma in the manner in which their traditional roles of participation in schools are subjected to change at the suburban school, leading many to remain silent and even alienating themselves from inclusion into the suburban school's programmes (Brooks, 2009). The dynamic process of education requires the synchronized involvement of the established school structure, the parents and the learners in the process of integration (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Ndahayo & Gaikwad, 2004). In fact, the school, family and the community should be cogs that cannot move without each other in the process of creating the right climate for the proper integration, education and academic attainment for the learner (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Rural and suburban settings present significant differences in the way learners approach the quest for knowledge, necessitating an inclusive environment that also compensates for cultural and social differences (Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1993). Drifting learners therefore should also be allowed a voice in their own schooling by being included in relevant decision making structures (To, 2007). Where the

school personnel take full control of all processes involving learners and learning such as decision making, it tends to marginalise drifting learners who are usually in the greatest need of support (Meador, 2005). In the pursuance of inclusivity, Reeves and Bylund (2005) recommend that school improvement as opposed to school performance should be the watchword when suburban schools develop policies. "Thus, racial integration policies and inclusive education policies can be argued to share the same aspiration and goals for learners to develop a shared trust and identity through education" (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 494). Building trust and confidence in the new environment are hallmarks of a progressive institution and forward thinking leadership (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Tinto, 1993).

The nature of extracurricular activities offered at a suburban school is a significant indicator of the integration process at the school. Suburban schools sometimes offer sports codes such as swimming and hockey that drifters were not exposed to which starts them with a handicap in terms of inclusion in those activities. It is a well-known fact that learners who are good at sporting activities are regarded as good students by their teachers and popular amongst their peers (Meador, 2005). Schools that are serious about integration of their learners ought to take the first step towards bringing down these traditional barriers (Parker, et al., 2011) in ways that would ease the entry of drifters into these areas of activity. This begins with the school moving away from the cultural deficit perception (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012). Recognizing and harnessing social and cultural capital in the wider school community improves partnership between the school and its stakeholders (Hands, 2010). A cricketer or rugby player from the minority community who volunteers some coaching time would make it easier for drifters unfamiliar with the sport to participate and even excel in the sport. So also is the introduction of cultural, social and sporting programmes that drifters participated in at their previous schools a way in which they are able to identify with their suburban schools. Activities that cut across cultural boundaries solidify relations, reduce conflict and connect families at the confluence (Lu *et al.*, 2010). Such programmes ought to run side by side with the social and cultural constructions that are envisaged by the institution as important to the institution to maintain its own trajectory in terms of sporting and cultural attainment (Perez-Milans, 2011). These actions have the effect of increasing acceptance, encouraging integration and reducing the risk of academic failure (Lauer, *et al.*, 2006). Important too, is the need to phase in the drifters to

the dominant activities of the school so as to level the playing fields as time goes on. There needs to be a definite, measurable programme for this such as teaching new grade 8 learners swimming in the first semester at the suburban school. How the cultural space within the school is worked by the various stakeholders in the pursuit of incorporation and attainment of the school's goals is key to the institution's success (Youdell & Armstrong, 2011). The process of transforming itself culturally is also vital for the school to remain an important player in contemporary society (Perez-Milans, 2011).

Cultural integration is fundamental to the growth and stability of school on a transformational trajectory as revealed by the research reviewed above. Understanding that cultural diversity and ethnic identity goes beyond issues of religion, race or language reduces conflict and boosts integration of drifting learners to suburban schools (Alexander, 2011; Conchas, *et al.*, 2012). What is also clear is that culturally diverse classrooms are increasingly becoming the norm across the world and teachers should develop a better understanding of the cultures of the learners they teach thereby nurturing the development of their ethnic identities (Alexander, 2011; Meador, 2005). Drifters who are made to feel at home in the suburban school tend to take ownership and generally perform better. The caveat 'cultural conquest' postulated by Freire (1993) must be considered during the research. Freire (1993) warns that the dominant elite of urban areas always have an agenda to manipulate the poor or the oppressed who are dependent on them into assimilation or acculturation thereby turning them into aspirant bourgeois with an appetite for suburban success and losing touch with their real cause which is to rise out of oppression in the first place which, in this case is to escape poverty through a better education. Carrim (2013) argues differently, positing that, with the dawn of democracy, South Africans movement towards the political economy of the global village is inevitable and therefore drifters at suburban schools groom themselves by imbibing the 'middle class cultural capital' as a stepping stone to modernity. Since the world is based on modernity, suburban schools are vehicles of assimilation that produce the cultural capital required by learners to be propelled into modernity (Carrim, 2013; Soudien, 2013).

The literature provides a mirror to the extent of inclusivity, strategic planning as well as strategic thinking on the part of suburban school governors and principals as well, which

needs exploration. It remains largely silent on the thoughts and feelings of the teachers and drifters which I will pursue during my study.

### **2.7.6 The linguistic challenge**

A body of research agrees that, of the numerous trials facing rural learners converging on suburban schools filled with positive expectation about their educational success, the linguistic challenge is probably the most difficult to bridge (Brooks, 2009; Dotson-Blake, 2010; Sanders & Lewis, 2005). Many learners arriving from rural backgrounds where the mother tongue was emphasised do not have the necessary competence in English as their suburban counterparts do and start their suburban schooling with a perceived deficit background. Furthermore, monolingual English-speaking teachers, the language gap and a significant backlog in content knowledge challenge such drifting learners in their attempts to integrate with their new environment (Mount-Cors, 2012). This may be problematic for suburban schools that do not have a plan to assist drifting learners they admit.

While the language of teaching and learning switches from the mother tongue to English after the Foundation Phase (Mathee, 2013), failure to gain proficiency in English is a major challenge for rural and township learners drifting to suburban schools. In a study of rural learners, Delpont and Mangwaya (2008) found that 47,5% of grade 7 learners passed English while over 50% of those entering secondary school did not possess the necessary competence in the language. South African learners are further challenged by the national policy which demands that they be taught through the medium of English from grade 4 onwards (DoE, 1996) although there is a growing lobby for mother tongue instruction (Wolhuter, 2005). The policy demands that learners mainly in rural and township schools have to very quickly become proficient in English (Schollar, 2013). It is difficult for learners to make the switch to English and learn all the other subjects in the curriculum through the medium of English (Schollar, 2013). Drifters, already disadvantaged by teachers who continue to use mother tongue well after the Foundation Phase are further disadvantaged when they arrive as second language English speakers at suburban schools where the main language is English. Proficiency in everyday spoken English is not necessarily proficiency in the classroom as many drifters may have acquired a certain fluency in expressing themselves but cannot commit that to paper (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Mount-Cors (2012)

posits that even if second language English learners reach oral proficiency, they still need another five years of English study to master academic reading and writing to properly grasp concepts in subjects such as science or social studies. A struggle with language proficiency has wider and more detrimental implications for drifting learners (Mount-Cors, 2012; Tsujita, 2012). Subjects like mathematics and physical science require a good grasp of English.

Disregard for competency in the drifting learners' home language alters adversely the academic trajectory of drifting learners. Where programmes for integration exist, the emphasis is placed on acculturation whereby learning the predominant first language is fast tracked and the drifting learners' own linguistic capital is completely parked (Perez-Milans, 2011). Language and culture are intrinsically intertwined, sometimes making it difficult for drifters to use English in linguistic and socially suitable ways (Genc & Tekyildiz, 2009). In South Africa the Isizulu and English languages represent 2 different cultural backgrounds. Mainstreaming learners into English instruction may come across as a well-meaning policy to combat educational inequities but it slows the progress of second language learners (Steen & Noguera, 2010). Research reveals that learners fluent at reading in their first language can use that skill when learning to read in English (Jimenez, Garcia, & Pierce, 1996). With adequate support and a contextual learning environment argues Rubinstein-Avila (2006) these learners can use their knowledge of their first language and comprehension skills as a scaffold to learning English. In reality these learners are forced to keep their inherent knowledge of language and culture at home and participate in the suburban schools' programmes for integration which may include additional literacy classes (Perez-Milans, 2011). Rubinstein-Avila (2006) notes that in some cases teachers are insecure about allowing drifters to use their mother tongue at school. Nevertheless, research suggests that it is to the school's advantage in its efforts to bridge the linguistic divide to incorporate cross-cultural variances into language instruction programmes (Genc & Tekyildiz, 2009).

The real challenge for second language speakers is usually in the classroom. The occupation of relational space by the first language speakers sitting in the same class as the drifters in suburban schools brings with it a power differential that raise tensions and increases the

barriers to learning (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Youdell & Armstrong, 2011). Slum children who are mostly drifters in India's big cities are seriously disadvantaged when it comes to the language issue because no bridging strategies exist in the mainstream suburban schools to help them with the language spoken in school (Tsujita, 2012). Being unfamiliar with the language of teaching and learning at these suburban schools and lack of help from parents who are illiterate or semi-literate leads to disinterest in studying amongst these drifters (Tsujita, 2012).

Assumption by teachers in the United States that Latino learners are sufficiently proficient in English sometimes leads to a lack of support and hastens failure amongst these drifters as they lose interest and drop out (Mount-Cors, 2012; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Drifters sometime slow down their own progress in grasping English when they move into geographic enclaves (Mount-Cors, 2012) such as the 'drifters' villages' in Chinese cities due to socio-economic factors (Li, *et al.*, 2008) where the chances of using English are minimised. Through no fault of their own second language drifting learners become subjected to 'ability segregation' in suburban schools and are less likely to mix with others because of the acute feeling of inferiority resulting in poor academic performance (Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007). The situation is exacerbated by teachers who do not offer special or extra care for these at risk learners whose mother tongue differs from the dominant one at the school (Tsujita, 2012). Marginalisation of learners who do not use English as a first language becomes problematic for their aspirations to get on with their education if their home language is seen by their teachers as an obstacle to their learning (Meador, 2005).

The argument that integration and success at the suburban school was dependent on the speedy grasp of the English language by minority learners sometimes leads to teachers demeaning the cultural background of these learners (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012). One of the reasons for that is that most suburban schools do not have a staff complement that adequately reflects the linguistic and cultural diversity of its learner population (Alexander, 2011). Observations by minority teachers who sometimes find themselves on the staff establishment of suburban schools suggest that white teachers there do not work hard enough to establish good working relationships with the drifting learners (Meador, 2005). Minority teachers use their bilingualism to initiate interaction of minority learners with the

rest of their class and help in the integration process by mentoring such learners (Meador, 2005). Quite often predominantly white teachers are not adequately equipped to teach diverse linguistic learners many of whom have a poor command of English and therefore struggle with other factors such as discipline and lack of interest (Alexander, 2011; Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1993). They are however, important persons in learners' lives and play a vital role in exhibiting progressive attitudes, views and values to be seen as role models by all learners (Irwin, 1999).

Success for drifting learners at suburban school hinges also on proficiency in the dominant language and an understanding of their own reality in a suburban school (Alexander, 2011; Meador, 2005). Developing good listening skills and being able to communicate with ease in their second language is a necessary part of the drifters' own effort towards integration (Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1993). Mastery of the dominant language (Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1993) is central to how the drifter mitigates the social, cultural and academic space within the new environment (Tinto, 1993; Youdell & Armstrong, 2011). Studies have found that drifters, in many instances do not participate in classroom discussions and do not answer questions which results in them impeding improvement of their English (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006).

Like South Africa, Singapore has a multilingual and multicultural reality and therefore emphasises that its learners are bi-literate and bilingual with the emphasis on English since it is the medium of instruction from primary school through to university (Ren & Hu, 2013). Singapore has had a high level of success getting its primary school learners to be able to read and write in both English and the mother tongue by the time they reach grade 6 (Ren & Hu, 2013) something that South Africans are battling to achieve. The main reason for this success is the competitiveness of the Singaporean society who possess a social attitude known as *kiasu*, a word drawn from a Chinese dialect which means 'fear of losing' (Ren & Hu, 2013). Parents play a vital role in motivating and supporting their children in overcoming the linguistic as well as other challenges they face in their new environment (Epstein, 1995; Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Such support could take the form of checking on homework, encouraging bilingual conversation at home and additional tuition in English for those parents who can afford it (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Naicker, 2011; Sanders, 2006). In



fact Singaporeans spend so much time and money on additional classes and support for their children that it has been dubbed a 'shadow education system' (Ren & Hu, 2013).

A worrying tendency of suburban schools, through their language policies, trying to assimilate and acculturate drifting learners instead of letting drifters' ethnicity mitigate their identities (Meador, 2005) emerges from this part of the literature. These constructs are sometimes linked to the ideological, political and historical thinking of the suburban school governors as well (Perez-Milans, 2011). Factors such as lack of will, the urge to keep the status quo and unwillingness to see the bigger picture of diversity are contributory to suburban schools holding back from embracing bilingualism and multiculturalism (Alexander, 2011). Suburban schools will have to grapple for solutions to these education challenges as there is no quick fix solution being proffered from any quarter and no short cuts (O'Connell, 2013). Drifting learners find themselves caught in the trap of uniformity at suburban schools having to aspire to conformist ideals through linguistic assimilation (Meador, 2005). Integration is a dynamic process and cannot be the prerogative of any single facet of education but is the interplay of various factors of which an understanding of the richness of a diverse language bouquet is the key. These studies present a strong background to pursue what happens on the ground within the suburban schools.

#### **2.7.7 Social justice**

Social justice is one of the cornerstones upon which the CRSA based. In its preamble, the constitution states clearly that all forms of social injustice should be removed from South African society. Social justice in education is regarded as a process that allows all learners to shape their learning environment to meet their needs and participate fully and equally within that learning environment (Francis & Roux, 2011). While it is the search for quality education that is the driving force behind drifters arriving in ever increasing numbers at suburban schools, ongoing injustices in rural and township schools is adding impetus to this movement. In the latest injustice by education authorities, merging of schools, already battling with various forms of dysfunctionality, is being mooted as a way to achieve equity (Jansen, 2014). In the context of this study, however, social justice refers to fairness in the way drifters are integrated into the education system at the suburban school. Relational, the way social relations are engendered and distributional, the way fundamental duties and

rights, commonly referred to as educational goods are distributed, are the two key dimensions of social justice (Mncube, 2008). Social justice for drifters therefore is the redistribution of the relational and distributional goods at suburban schools (Pendlebury, 2004). With poor quality education in South Africa already being a social injustice, social justice has to do with equal opportunity and access to those deprived in the past to attain successful outcomes similar to those who were privileged in the past (Kadt, 2009; Mncube, 2008; Pendlebury, 2004).

Learners from disadvantaged backgrounds face a multitude of social injustices when they arrive at suburban schools (Kiyama, 2010). The American dream doesn't exist for rural learners, especially Latinos who arrive in urban areas because the system discriminates against them through biased cultural curriculum, tracking and education that favours the middle classes (Meador, 2005). South African learners drifting to suburban schools face similar battles with discrimination and stereotyping challenging them on arrival (Alexander, 2011). In the absence of social justice, educational iniquities thrive (Kiyama, 2010) making it necessary to democratise both socialisation and education at the confluence of the drifters and the suburban schools (Mncube, 2008). Rural-urban drifting sometimes takes a tremendous toll on all family members, especially children (Meerza, 2010) who uproot themselves from their support structures and start all over again in the hope of a better life.

Drifting patterns across the world reflect the pull effect of urbanization which is the result of the promise of relief from poverty through jobs and 'better' education in better resourced suburban schools (Ma & Lian, 2011) which are not always realised or attained at great social cost. Schools in suburban areas have a history of battling to provide social justice to drifting learners challenged by race, language and ethnicity (Truscott & Truscott, 2005). Jialing (2012) concurs arguing that their status and origin hampers drifting learners in the search for better education in suburban schools. Research indicates that drifting learners are often intensely stigmatised, making them feel inadequate to their suburban counterparts and marginalized in their new environments (Li, *et al.*, 2008). Some examples of social inequality suffered by drifting learners listed by Li, *et al.*, (2008) are stereotyping, discrimination, status loss, unfair treatment and separation and exclusion. In the South African context, whereas there is movement towards acceptance and integration of rural and township drifters aided

by disjointed government efforts to stimulate social cohesion, cases of racial tension and discrimination in schools are still reported (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010). Cases, taken to court show that schools sometimes are unwilling to take action or do not take cases of racial abuse seriously enough (Wagner, 2014). Encouraging integration by promulgating desegregation policies for schools has had limited success in the light of frequent reports of racial discrimination and interracial violence at schools (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010). Responsibility rests on school leadership not to trivialise cases of social injustice as demonstrated by the case against Queen's College Boy's High School for treating 'racial misbehaviour' and hate speech as minor transgressions (Wagner, 2014).

A pre-requisite for learning amongst drifting learners is a sense of belonging to the suburban school which is modulated by various influences in the new environment (Geng, *et al.*, 2012). Integration however, is slow and painful for drifting learners and their parents who have had a vastly different experience with schooling in the township and rural schools that they came from. Unsafe psychological feelings brought on by hostile classroom environments and racism are a nightmare for drifting learners who might opt to drop out of suburban schools rather than stay and bear the injustice that they are exposed to (Brooks, 2009). Having been socially dislocated by the move to suburban schools, the drifters lose background community support and sometimes find themselves in a situation of normlessness as they face alienation on both sides of the social structures (Brooks, 2009; Koen, 2007; Tinto, 1993). Parents in rural schools come from a background of walking into a school unannounced, being attended to and discussing a range of issues pertaining to the child whereas suburban schools follow a strict protocol of appointments and a bureaucratic process that follows (Brooks, 2009). Frustration with these new processes and intimidation by the protocol and meeting styles frightens many parents into withdrawing themselves from active involvement in their child's learning although they want to be involved in their children's education (Dotson-Blake, 2010). They then face a new dilemma of how to be accepted as a good parent in the eyes of the suburban school which doesn't recognize their traditional ways of participation in the education of their children (Brooks, 2009). Factors such as ethnicity, social background and perceived learner ability often lead to stratification of learners in suburban schools and segregated from mainstream learning (Gibbons &

Telhaj, 2007). Drifting learners and parents are in danger of becoming resentful of the very school they aspired to if unequal treatment is meted out to them (Kolodny, 2002).

Attitudes of teachers and the learners at suburban schools shaped by their preconceived perceptions of drifting learners tend to develop into the formation of a substructure that emphasises social inequality of drifting learners (Geng, *et al.*, 2012; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). In South Africa, some white teachers display low expectations of black learners because they believe that white learners have greater inherent potential than their black counterparts (Alexander, 2011). Many teachers will accept multicultural teaching because it is politically correct to do so but in their personal capacities there is no strong conviction to make it happen (Irwin, 1999). Uncomplimentary references such as hillbillies, cracks, country bumpkins and hicks are regular American terms for drifting learners attaching negative connotations to them and downgrading their status in suburban schools (Theobald, 2005). Learners drifting from Delhi slums to suburban schools face government, school and teacher discrimination in terms of religion, caste and gender (Tsujita, 2012). In fact, the social justice system in India continues to plague the poor who are stratified according to the caste system (Vaid, 2012) and are treated less than equally in suburban schools. To this end the National Human Rights Commission in India challenged the state in 2013 to probe the denial of admission of *dalits*, (considered the lowest class in India) to suburban schools in the vicinity of Madurai, where they lived for 42 years (Saju, 2013).

Teachers are crucial in the battle for social justice for drifting learners with their actions either being detrimental to them or contributing to progressive changes within the school (Conchas, *et al.*, 2012; Irwin, 1999). Teachers are entrusted with a the task of preparing learners and their communities to participate in an open society that is not oppressive (Francis & Roux, 2011). Mitigating the contexts of gender, physical handicap, cultural and ethnic background, race and linguistic ability is a vital part of the teacher's role in the integration of drifting learners (Irwin, 1999; Meador, 2005). The teacher's work must be guided by the knowledge that, understanding the importance of social justice eases racial tension and reduces conflict in the classroom environment (Lu, *et al.*, 2010). Francis and Roux (2011) posit that there is a misconception that it is only learners from disadvantaged communities that should engage in social justice education. White teachers in training

should be conscientised about social justice education so as to arrive at suburban schools with the right attitude (Francis & Roux, 2011). The study was carried out by Francis and Roux (2011) amongst a purposive sample of female white pre-service teachers and the strategy was to identify their understanding of teaching for social justice. Their findings indicate that the sample group thought that the school and not the individual is responsible for social justice in teaching. Many drifting learners and parents are unaware of social justice due to them and will endure severe hardships to pursue the dream of a better education. It is incumbent on the principal to therefore build strong school-family-community partnerships to keep the three spheres intact in the pursuit of social justice for all stakeholders, not just the learners as schools continue on the journey of integration (Engeln, 2003; Epstein, 2011). Clear and close connection between the school and the family will ensure the frequent flow of two way communication and allow social injustices to be reported and dealt with rapidly (Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1993; Lu, *et al.*, 2010). The principal should understand that given the various factors that mitigate against the drifting learner, it places them at a higher risk of academic failure which is ultimately a reflection on the school (Lauer, *et al.*, 2006; Sanders, 2007). Principals in these schools who are not alert to these signals are bound to face a dilemma because their schools will be labelled failures with declining enrolment, high dropout rates and a no go zone for outside support (Gretz, 2003).

Restructuring the outlook of suburban schools to reflect their multicultural enrolment will promote social equality, change attitudes and bring a sense of belonging to drifting learners (Ford, 2004; Geng, *et al.*, 2012). This requires teachers to be re-skilled in the demands of multicultural education and overcoming biases and societal stereotyping (Irwin, 1999). Purposeful intervention by both the school and parents is necessary to improve socialization of learners (Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). Brooks (2009) posits that by challenging negativity within the school and making changes in areas such as parental relationships, values and norms, the principal can also make a positive impression on the community he serves by making his school inclusive to those who hold differing views from him. Principals must be seen to lead the fight for social justice, paving the way for a natural synergy of drifting and suburban learners that would bring mutual and optimal benefits to the school and its community (Brooks, 2009; Zhao & Wong, 2002). Schools must take the lead to establish the

space to start the initial process of analysing problems and looking at social capital available to resolve them and find lasting solutions (Kiyama, 2010; Truscott & Truscott, 2005). Opportunities must be created for pedagogical inclusion of marginalised learners to develop capabilities necessary for a full school life (Pendlebury, 2004). To overcome social injustice, stakeholders must identify its causes and through transforming action, create a mutually beneficial context so that social justice can be pursued (Freire, 1993). Banding together of suburban and drifting stakeholders to share this disquieting space to fight injustices caused by differing circumstances will improve how schools respond to this phenomenon (Truscott & Truscott, 2005). Enver Surty, deputy education minister in South Africa said the pursuit of social justice could not be divorced from the school because the school represented a microcosm of the society it serves and the process needs the school-community partnership to come together and increase their power to combat issues plaguing schools (Masombuka, 2014b). High inequality, insufficient stakeholder participation and the slow turnaround pace of transformation seriously affects social justice in suburban schools and must be changed to afford authentic opportunities for all learners to succeed equally (Kadt, 2009; Mncube, 2008; Pendlebury, 2004).

#### **2.7.8 Emotional and behavioural disorders**

Factors discussed up to this point as well as others can place drifting learners under tremendous mental strain in the suburban school (Li, *et al.*, 2008). High expectations and strong motivation for a better future quickly diminish when drifters feel inequality, loneliness, lack of social interaction and marginalization on arrival at suburban schools (Jialing, 2012; Li, *et al.*, 2008). Separation from the background environment, negotiating the new environment and a change demanded of the behaviour pattern of the drifter have a shock effect and can precipitate emotional and behavioural disorders (Li, *et al.*, 2008). Tinto(1993) warns that left unchecked, it could lead to dropping out of school, violent clashes or at worst, even suicide (Vide Chapter Three, section 3.22). Two main types of behavioural disorders, externalizing and internalizing behaviours are identified as common to such circumstances (Lane, *et al.*, 2012). Externalising behaviours which are also referred to as ‘undercontrolled behaviour’ presents itself in such acts as arguing and fighting while internalizing behaviours referred to as ‘overcontrolled behaviour’ lead to such conditions as withdrawal, anxiety and depression (Lane, *et al.*, 2012). Andreescu (2013) posits that there

are three theoretical perspectives to victimization and fear of rejection or insecurity: the vulnerability, the victimization and the ecological viewpoints. Persons that have a lower potential to deal with victimization and or defend themselves fall into the vulnerable category while victimization usually targets racial or ethnic minorities and those from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds; the ecological framework is mainly focused on the consequence of contextual aspects of fear (Andreescu, 2013).

A body of research found that many drifting learners, stigmatised as 'outsiders' succumb to symptoms of mental health such as anxiety, social isolation, depression, social withdrawal and hostility in response to the various challenges they face in the integration process at suburban schools (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Li, *et al.*, 2008; Olofintoye, 2010). These conditions could arise out of various experiences that the drifter undergoes at the school resulting in difficulty with psychosocial adjustment which in turn leads to the emotional and psychological health problems (Geng, *et al.*, 2012; Li, *et al.*, 2008). Treated as outsiders, some learners experience severe trauma at being unable to make the connection and become an integral part of the suburban environment (Geng, *et al.*, 2012). This feeling, referred to as 'sense of belonging', commonly occurs in drifting ethnic minorities and impacts negatively on the learners' self-esteem while exacerbating emotional and behavioural problems (Geng, *et al.*, 2012). Stresses in the home such as a divorce, can also cause serious emotional upheaval in the child, leading to behavioural problems as much as stresses in the classroom can cause stressed families at home (Swick & Williams, 2006). Antagonistic attitudes arising from preconceived perceptions that drifters are undisciplined, disorderly and loud place a heavy burden on their mental state (Andreescu, 2013). Unequal treatment of drifters has the effect of sometimes leading to misdemeanours such as, threats, intimidation, vandalism and even assault (Andreescu, 2013). Displaying outwardly aggressive behaviour which is a common defence mechanism used by many drifting learners to hide their insecurities can disrupt classroom activity easily and distract the school from its core business of teaching and learning (Lane *et al.*, 2012). An unwelcome spin off from this is the negative stereotyping drifting learners earn from such behaviour that then seriously impedes their aspirations of becoming integrated, fully fledged learners of the institution causing instability and inconsistency in their progress (Jialing, 2012; Li, *et al.*, 2008). In

addition they become a threat to their own progress if they do not realize that these are barriers to their dream of a better life through education (Jialing, 2012).

Global research indicates that drifting learners with emotional and behavioural challenges are treated inadequately at suburban schools (Sanders, 2007; Steen & Noguera, 2010; Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). It is essential, therefore that suburban schools respond to this phenomenon and take precautionary measures to ensure smooth integration and schooling for drifting learners. Beloin and Peterson (2000) note a caveat here- that it extends beyond the school to the wider community such as the media and non- governmental agencies to focus on social capital in drifting communities instead of painting negative pictures that handicap them before they arrive at the suburban confluence. However, it falls to the school to start the process of identifying problems and analysing them before setting out a plan for reform (Truscott & Truscott, 2005). It is therefore necessary for schools to broaden their perspectives and widen the circle of influence to the community that has a vested interest in the success of the school (Steen & Noguera, 2010). It is already a well-known fact that poor communities usually receive little or no medical assistance with mental health issues thus increasing the chances of a higher drop-out rate amongst drifting learners (Meerza, 2010; Steen & Noguera, 2010; To, 2007). Behavioural and emotional disorders challenge suburban schools that are in turn faced with the additional challenge of seeking psychological assistance for such learners to ensure uninterrupted learning and teaching (Lane *et al.*, 2012). Teachers sometimes form a mental picture of what a good student should be- hardworking, sportsperson, good home, popular and does homework- which comes from their prior suburban school background which they then apply to drifters thereby rating them lower than their suburban counterparts (Meador, 2005). Aiming lessons at first language speakers, preferential treatment, negative anticipations and lack of support for drifters can lead to academic, social and psychological estrangement (Meador, 2005).

Suburban schools must find ways to bridge the gap between the background drifting learners come from and the new culture that confronts them when they arrive in these schools to ease the psychological pressure on them to 'fit in' (Li, *et al.*, 2008). Understanding the causes of stresses that lead to psychological disorder amongst learners is important for teachers to adequately perform their duties within their classrooms (Swick & Williams,



2006). Some seemingly ‘unimportant’ trends such as the difference between verbal and listening skills of second language English speaking drifters are important for teachers to improve their communication with these learners and thus move towards easing their plight in the classroom (Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1993). Vigilant teachers need to be alert to the symptoms of such psychosocial conditions because change in one learner can affect relationships with others and lead to disruption of teaching and learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Positive approaches to integration by teachers will lead them to finding strategies to accommodate diverse learners in their classes (Olofintoye, 2010). Creating a positive environment and teaching all learners in the class without any preconceived notions or discrimination contributes to the social and psychological well-being of the drifter (Olofintoye, 2010).

If emotional and behavioural disorders are not timeously and effectively attended to, drifting learners will find it difficult to cope with academic work as they struggle with their antisocial behaviour and underdeveloped social skills as well as depression and anxiety (Lane, *et al.*, 2012). Understanding the urgency of the situation ought to lead the schools to re-calibrate the way teaching and learning takes place and redirect their approach to education into an all-embracing one (Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). The school’s core principles in this regard should reflect inclusivity by adapting teaching to diversified learners, and empowering its learner population to articulate their thoughts and ideas (Beloin & Peterson, 2000). Such adjustment should work towards creating a better balance between drifters’ social and emotional behaviour on the one hand, and academic attainment on the other (Epstein, 2011; Li, *et al.*, 2008; Olofintoye, 2010). As stated earlier, the psychological battle would be won if drifting learners, like their suburban counterparts, adopt a ‘sense of belonging’ approach to their school (Geng, *et al.*, 2012). In this regard drifters face a toss-up in terms of social and psychological adjustment: a drifter who works hard on fitting into the new environment may not fulfil his personal ambitions whereas if he works on achieving his personal needs he may not fit into the bigger picture (Olofintoye, 2010). This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory which posits that the development of the child is a two way interaction between the child and the environment and the environment and the child (*Vide* Chapter Three section 3.1.3). Failure to arrest social and psychological disorders that can deteriorate into mental illnesses can lead on to difficulties

after high school resulting in strained relations and joblessness during adulthood (Lane, *et al.*, 2012).

### **2.7.9 Knowledge gap**

Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshega described as 'disaster' the Grade 9 Mathematics and English Annual National Assessment at the end of 2013 (Child, 2013). The Administration Manual of the Annual National Assessment released by Motshega in 2013 confirms the state of these crucial subjects in a background to the state of readiness of South African learners to pursue higher education. It reads: "It is a widely recognized that the country's schooling system performs well below its potential" (DBE, 2013, p. 3). Learners from rural and township schools who account for the majority of the South African schooling population were found to get progressively worse in English and mathematics as they progressed by grade while a team of experts appointed by Motshega to investigate the results reported that the 'problem is in the classroom' (Child, 2013). NGOs have had a long history starting prior to 1994, to improve education delivery in South Africa (Soudien, 2013). Since 1994 there have been many partnership attempts with NGOs and overseas governments to improve the delivery of quality education in mainly rural and township schools (Hindle, 2013). An early partnership programme supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy focused on improving capacity in rural and township schools and thereby offer redress to the type of content delivered in these schools (Hindle, 2013). It did not provide the turnaround expected as evidenced by the constant drift of learners to suburban schools who still struggle with content and knowledge as a direct result of poor content knowledge amongst their teachers (Chinsamy, 2013). Another ambitious programme signed in 1995, The Integrated Education Programme supported by the United States sought to improve the content knowledge of teachers to influence learner performance in mathematics, literacy and science (Mabogoane, 2013). The project did not produce the necessary result of closing the knowledge gap because of poor cooperation from teachers and principals (Mabogoane, 2013). At a local level, attempts by government to demand that teachers demonstrate knowledge and competence in a subject, such as by conducting tests for matric markers are scuppered by the unions (Jansen, 2014). Despite these and various other efforts, learners who are mainly from rural and township schools still receive the poorest quality education (Joubert, 2014) and arrive at suburban schools

with inadequate education exemplified by significant gaps in their knowledge content (Soudien, 2013).

Research confirms a significant gap in the achievement of learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds which is linked to the knowledge gap between those coming from poor backgrounds and those in advantaged situations (Alexander, 2011; Santau, *et al.*, 2011). It is a well-documented fact that suburban schools, in particular former Model C Schools, consistently produce higher rates of learner attainment than rural and township schools (Govender, 2013; Wolhuter, 2005). The background to this is also vested in apartheid education which was fragmented into many separated education systems and which imposed a curriculum on black people, the majority rural and township learners, that prepared them for mainly unskilled jobs in the economy (Wolhuter, 2005). This is similar to the early American system of education that slow-tracked its migrant, rural learners made up of mainly Latinos, to prepare them for mainly domestic and menial jobs in the market (Meador, 2005). While the debate about the effect of the inequalities of the past education system rage on, the reality is that 20 years on, the disparity is still high between the knowledge acquired by drifting learners at their former schools and those at suburban schools (Wolhuter, 2005). Coupled with the necessity to gain proficiency in English some drifters arriving at suburban secondary schools still have to catch up a multi-year content knowledge gap (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Mount-Cors (2012) posits that the struggle with the English speaking monolingual teachers, the language gap and the substantial gap in content knowledge is a triple bogey for integration of drifters.

Integration for drifting learners is made more difficult as they contend with other inequity factors such as poverty, lack of support and social injustices concomitant with the change in environment which is complicated by their point of entry into the suburban schooling system (Beloin & Peterson, 2000). Poor teaching in rural areas, lax controls in terms of punctuality and attendance and weak parental support for homework activities all take their toll on the drifter who arrives at well-organised, highly focused suburban schools (Delport & Mangwaya, 2008; Mncube, 2008; Msila, 2009). Research work, the media and even government utterances that frame rural and township education in negative terms have the result of drifters developing a deficit mentality (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). Government

policy stipulating English as the medium of instruction in South African schools entrenches the integration struggle for drifting learners whose low English competency makes it difficult to keep pace with first language learners and monolingual teachers (Alexander, 2011). 'Integration' for them means they have to compete unevenly with suburban learners groomed in formal schooling, enjoy better academic fortes and have had wide ranging support for their prior learning (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Even if drifting learners reach oral proficiency in English, they need at least 5 years of additional schooling to become competent in reading and writing academically necessary to grasp content knowledge adequately such as required in the study of science (Mount-Cors, 2012; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Since most suburban primary schools institute catch-up programmes for drifters, chances are that drifters who join suburban schools at high school level are unable to take advantage of them (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). A drifter arriving at a high school will probably be exiting before he or she gains full competency in the academic subjects.

What emanates from the studies is that drifting learners will struggle with their integration into suburban schools if teaching programmes to suit their academic needs are not framed by their prior learning experiences. The suburban teaching models, established by advantaged schools for advantaged learners do not work equally well for drifters (Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996). It is apparent that suburban schools are either unprepared or struggle with changes in learner demographics (Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Drifters, who have different learning abilities must be dealt with in an inclusive way instead of being stratified and segregated in classrooms (Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007). Understanding that rural learners have specific needs and are not a problem area for the suburban school such as bringing down their academic standards will help the school plan and programme its work better for these learners (Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996). Drifters must also become aware of their learning styles while teachers should factor this into their teaching strategies (Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996). Suburban schools should always be guarded against instituting programmes aimed at assimilating its drifting learners rather than attempting to improve their attainment (Meador, 2005).

Left unchecked, some drifters lose concentration during lesson time, tend to become inattentive and at worst resort to disruptive activities (Meador, 2005). This could easily spill

over onto the school grounds where violence, intimidation and a gang culture could manifest itself, polarising the learner population and impeding integration efforts (Joyce L. Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Meador, 2005; Sanders, 2006). This is a further setback for drifters because studies reveal that such behaviour is self-defeating and heightens the struggle to close the achievement gap with the more advantaged peers (Lauer, *et al.*, 2006). The danger is a macro one where the further behind the integration process falls through hindrances such as the knowledge gap, the less the contribution towards the economy and competitiveness of the country by its youth who may drop out or achieve low level passes in high school (Tinto, 2011).

The first step that suburban schools should take is to identify problems that challenge the process of integration and analyse them with the intention of finding meaningful ways to deal with them (Truscott & Truscott, 2005). Tinto (2011) theorises that integrating drifting learners into the suburban school should have the classroom as the focal point which is the most intense engagement space for all participants led by the teacher (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.4). There should be a close correlation between the purpose and the design of classroom and other activities with the desired outcome clearly enunciated to all stakeholders (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010). This should be underpinned by a conscious effort to move away from normalising failure and rather embrace fundamental strategies that improve cognitive development and academic proficiencies in drifters (Steen & Noguera, 2010). Learning programmes, designed with the aim of closing the knowledge gap, should be crafted in such a way that they generate a positive learning atmosphere, ensure protection of learner rights and act as the springboard for positive change within the school's education system (To, 2007). The connection between learner achievement and integration must be made by teachers working as a team who effectively construct, implement and sustain learning activity that includes learning area-specific and learner-specific interventions (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010). Programmes which should be of an empowerment and development nature characterised by excellence in teaching and collaboration ought to provide a synthesis between positive change and improving learning (Lauer, *et al.*, 2006; Parker, *et al.*, 2011; To, 2007). Instead of modifying curriculum content or watering down content for intervention purposes, integration driven programmes intent on closing content knowledge gaps should show creativity by interweaving content with

subjects such as language, art, drama *et cetera* (Hammond, 2006). Further to this, studies reveal that the drifters' 'funds of knowledge' should be merged into the curricular programme to improve understanding of content (Mount-Cors, 2012; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). 'Funds of knowledge' refers to the extensive knowledge possessed by drifters in areas such as building, carpentry, maintenance, electrical work, horticulture and small businesses that can be used as contextual scaffolds to bridge the divide between inherent knowledge and the transfer new knowledge (Boullion & Gomez, 2001; Mount-Cors, 2012; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Catch-up programmes and activities that run outside normal teaching time have shown considerable improvement in the results of drifters in subjects such as Mathematics and English (Lauer, *et al.*, 2006). Investment in time for such activities as one-on-one tutoring, peer mentoring and reading influence effectiveness of teaching in the classroom while they provide informal avenues for drifters to improve their capabilities and deal with difficult parts of their knowledge catch-up (Lauer, *et al.*, 2006; Meador, 2005; To, 2007).

Tinto (2011) identifies the following attributes necessary within the classroom if learners are to succeed in closing gaps in knowledge: expectations, support, assessment and feedback and involvement. Expectations refer to both the schools' expectation for the drifter and the drifters' own expectations. The other attribute that begs comment is involvement or engagement as it is also known. Tinto (2011) emphasises that the more intense the engagement of drifters with peers, teachers and other staff members, the greater the likelihood of success and the link to other aspects of integration such as social connections, emotional and social support. Fitzgerald and Bloodsworth (1996) posit that for interventions and teaching strategies to work, the following characteristics of drifting learners must be considered: learning as a societal experience, willing to cooperate with teachers and peers, experiencing learning as a social proficiency, the need for consultation, preference for informal learning and a feeling of helplessness concerning happenings and the surroundings. Applying such modifications when creating the suburban model of teaching and learning will enhance teaching approaches, classroom environment and social supportive competences (Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996). Schools need to continually evaluate and re-engineer the character and quality of goal-driven agendas for teaching and learning contexts to find

better ways to close the content knowledge gap thereby continually facilitating the path to integration for drifters (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006).

## **2.8 Highlights of the implications of the literature for this study**

Various studies have been examined within the themes presented above. In exploring the work of researchers in the different fields, the primary reason is to establish what is known about this topic and what informs it. To get a good grasp of the extent of work required of me in the field and what kind of information to expect, I had to initially probe these studies to see what came out of them. In this way I was able to keep a flow as I worked through the various themes that arose from my readings to get a broader understanding of the material informing my topic. It must be noted also that not all the authors quoted presented findings from studies. Some were articles written by people knowledgeable in the field.

While the early focus was on what was studied and what emerged, I was mindful that implications of the review needed to be manifold. Inferences drawn from the review were necessary to inform this research in other ways as well: besides considering what was studied, it was important also to understand how the studies were undertaken, what the findings were and the implications for my research. On a second level, I have looked at studies in more detail, exploring the design and methodology mainly of those that were pertinent to this research. While designs and methodologies are many and varied, it is not my intention and not beneficial to this research to provide detailed explanations of each of them. In the following paragraphs I present selected studies and cite others quoted above, the designs and methodologies of which I found best suit the manner in which I wished to pursue my research while drawing attention to others not suitable for my purposes.

Parker, Grenville and Flessa (2011) used a qualitative methodology that applied the case study method of narrative telling to explore and understand how schools in Canada, through their leadership, provided a conducive environment for poor learners from minority backgrounds in mainstream schools. Asking *what* the school did, *how* programmes were implemented and *why* certain schools had chosen specific programmes, they were able to gather multiple sources of data through open-ended, semi- structured questions. Their sample included six small and three large schools from an urban area, one suburban school

and one rural school generating information from over 100 participants, visiting the schools twice in two years. Findings were drawn from common themes generated from the case studies. The nature of their study and the success of their findings to answer their stated objective of getting a realistic understanding of how schools coped with challenges such as poverty, culture and community perceptions is indicative of how the design and methodology suited their need. Data analysis is conducted in various ways by researchers. Some generate categories and produce propositions from the data while others may use theoretical propositions with the main idea being to arrive at a reasonable conclusion after considering the data (Merriam, 1998). In a different case study, Sanders and Harvey (2002) utilised a software programme called 'Atlas.ti' to analyse the qualitative data elicited from participants through semi-structured interviews and transcribed. This method was not one of my considerations for this study because of the restrictive cost factor and non-availability of resources and it led me to consider the route of studying themes generated by the data in my research.

Johns, Kilpatrick, Falk and Mulford (1999) used the case study methodology in their qualitative research. While five communities were researched, findings from only one of them were presented. The focus was a senior high school with an enrolment of 600 learners and 50 teaching staff. Data were elicited from principals, learners, staff and parents of selected schools using three techniques available to case study methodology. These were semi-structured interviews, document study and observation. Analysis of the data was useful in providing information on how to encourage school-community linkages. Findings from their study provided solutions for closing the disconnect between the school and the community by involving them in decision making and various projects that would interest them. The study provided insight into other options within the case study methodology that could be combined successfully to provide additional data suitable to the research.

Randomly selected multiple samples from an urban and a suburban school were used by Conchas, Oseguera and Vigil (2012) in their qualitative case study. Twelve participants from the schools who were of drifting minority extraction were interviewed to find out how diverse cultural and structural factors influenced how the school engaged with such learners. Their findings indicated that aspirations of drifters, demographic vicissitudes,



poverty and ethnic identity affected academic success. In a similar qualitative study done by Sanders (2005), three sites were selected for the case study from a population of high schools. Data collection, originally planned as face-to-face semi-structured interviews with twenty three stakeholder participants, was adjusted to accommodate three of the participants that were not available to be present physically but willing to participate. These were then telephonically interviewed and copious notes taken. The flexibility of the methodology and the fact that it did not compromise the findings contributed to the decision that the choice of the qualitative case study and the interview instrument for this research would be a safe route to follow because of the tight time frames agreed to by schools and participants willing to be interviewed for this study.

In a different kind of research, Voorhis and Sheldon (2004) conducted a longitudinal study of 320 schools in 27 different states in the United States over a two year period. The study involved returning survey forms in both years of the two two year period. Using independent variables, the data were analysed through a computer programme and the results presented as correlations between the variables. Findings of the quantitative study predicted the quality of various partnership programmes that schools had undertaken with the communities. My study depended on the stories of individuals who were interviewed and the flexibility to follow leads during discussions which meant the quantitative route was not suitable for me. In additions, the magnitude of this study in terms of cost, time and resources ruled it out as a predictor of the direction that would be adopted for this study.

An important study to quote is that done by Dotson-Blake (2010) which uses Latino immigrant families as its population of focus. It is significant because of the parallel with the South African drifting communities making the shift to suburban schools. Both are minorities in predominantly white schools. But that's where the significance ends. The study, which sought to probe culturally inclusive ways of integrating the Latinos in the suburban schools, utilised critical ethnography in a qualitative inquiry methodology. Purposeful sampling was used to choose participants that were observed as focus groups in a particular community. For data collection, the researcher spent 2 months living with a family in the community, interviewing them and observing them in their interactions with the school. The resultant copious amount of information, analysed inductively was used to

provide a picture of the partnership experience of the Latinos with the suburban school. My topic and the nature of my study did not necessitate an ethnographic approach. My focus population, which was stakeholders at schools, could be interacted with differently to gather information. Ethnography was not suitable for this study.

Brooks (2009) used the case study approach to gather multiple-data from a variety of sources on policies, practices and strategies utilised by the principal of a suburban school to bring on board parents from an adjoining depressed community that housed poorly performing learners. In the semi-structured interview section the purposive sample of 7 parents, 8 teachers and the principal provided rich, varied data. However, the principal was interviewed 5 times to gain further clarity about information gathered from other sources. In addition school newsletters, newspapers, school reports, DBE reports and learner reports were scrutinised for additional data. These were supported by observations of interactions between the various stakeholders within the school environment. Multiple sources of data provided for triangulation. The constant comparison method was used to analyse the data. The findings, which showed how the school principal at a suburban school with 95% white teachers used several strategies to bring on board and improve the learner attainment as well as the lives of a black, socially dislocated community.

While I have largely desisted from being repetitive as well resisting the urge to discuss how all of the studies cited in the previous section were conducted I have presented similar types of studies here that are drawn from the qualitative, case study methodologies. The main reason was to demonstrate how they could be nuanced by additions of other techniques to enhance their findings where the researcher found it necessary. Also presented were other forms of methodologies to demonstrate why they are not suited to this study. Such analysis of these methodologies allowed me to make an informed decision about the route I wished to follow.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

Global literature shows that efforts to change how schools confront the integration issue have brought about minimal change with poorly-conceived programmes and many schools leaving it to teachers to devise their own programmes or even relegate it to volunteer

programmes (Beloin & Peterson, 2000; Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007; Tinto, 1993). To push the integration agenda, schools need to pursue diverse models of integration and be held accountable for the success of culturally and linguistically diverse learners disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control (Meador, 2005). These initiatives must be sustained by policies that move schools away from self-interest and emphasise the integration imperative (Meador, 2005; West, 2006). Policies that give impetus to the process of integration should show objectivity, fairness and close the gap on ambiguity (West, 2006). In addition, policies must be seen to uphold socio-political values, give impetus to accountability, reinforce diversity and address ongoing change in the needs of education (Meador, 2005; Truscott & Truscott, 2005; West, 2006). An important caveat in the pursuance of change through policy is that recurrent changes can halt progress and place the process in a state of inertia because implementation of new ways of doing things takes time (Truscott & Truscott, 2005).

The literature also implies that there is general consensus concerning the significance and usefulness of grooming stakeholder participation to play a greater role in the integration process of drifters in suburban schools. The practicality of how they ought to achieve this is not clear and therefore allows this study the space to explore this avenue. A useful starting point for the process of integration is for the three main spheres of influence, the school, the family and the community to draw closer as a partnership in pursuit of the quality and equality that they seek in an integrated school environment (Epstein, 2011; Kiyama, 2010; Kolodny, 2002). Partnerships must be structured to reflect cultural inclusivity reflecting the demographics of the communities that the school serves so that the needs of the learners, which is important to the success of the school, are met (Dotson-Blake, 2010). Crucial to formation of school-family-community partnerships is to define and plan the rationale behind the formation of partnerships (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Gretz, 2003; Sanders & Lewis, 2005).

A powerful question that emerges from the studies above is whether suburban schools are perpetuating segregation and stratification of drifters because of their disadvantage and thus maintaining the *status quo* of the privileged or, if they are in the process of integrating drifters, are they merely assimilating and acculturating them into the existing system

(Alexander, 2011; Conchas, *et al.*, 2012; Meador, 2005; Msila, 2009). In other words, the question would be whether schools are situating integration in the historical context and thereby making value judgements of purpose and significance of action rather than merely working towards efficient and effective running of schools (Pounder, 1999). Another caveat for schools to factor into their philosophy is that they are a microcosm of society and should therefore engage their learners to participate in processes that directly affects their life trajectory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Koen, 2007; To, 2007). Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that development takes place through a series of complex mutual interaction between the child and its environment which allows the child to integrate with its environment (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.2). To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such engagement convinces them of the school's sincerity in allowing their full integration as well as to prepare them for democratic processes in their adult lives (Mncube, 2008; To, 2007). Very often the best intentions of school leadership are retarded by deficiency of thought and a plethora of misapplied zeal (Pounder, 1999).

Research provides the platform from which to understand integration efforts in suburban schools and their coping mechanisms. However, research presented here is short of the specificity required by suburban schools to effectively cope with integration of drifters. The research reviewed offers a point of departure for me to provide such specificity through a multi-site case study using data collected from participants through semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework necessary to pursue such a study is presented in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The phenomenon investigated in this study was multi-faceted and required a theoretical framework that was broadly focused to understand what was being unearthed. In this regard I utilised a theoretical framework that combined Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory with Tinto's (1987) student integration model to better understand the complexity of integration of drifters at suburban schools. These two theories were sifted from and chosen from amongst many others that I studied because they worked well together in the focus on the dynamics of integration in a confluence where the environment influenced development. I shall discuss each theory separately and then combine them to form the theoretical framework.

### **3.2 The Ecological Systems Theory**

The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), is a framework created to understand the development of a person within the context of the surroundings in which the person lives and functions. It is a kind of broad-spectrum model for scientifically studying the development of a person (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). It utilises various relational and environmental experiences and processes to chart and explain their development (Darling, 2007). The theory emphasises that close and personal relationships as well as external factors impact powerfully on a child's development. Human development therefore underpins the theory of ecological systems which is described as an "Ecological paradigm for development in context" (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 189). Important to this study is the suggestion by Johnson (2008) that a study applying the ecological systems theory positions itself to cognise human development in the context of relationship systems that shape a child's environment.

Definition: "The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in

which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 188).

The definition spells out in scientific terms how a bond of trust with children is the most powerful force available to us to effect positive development in youth (Brendtro, 2006). A child’s emotional, moral, intellectual and social development Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues, is dependent on its regular and continuous participation in multifaceted, give-and-take activities with more than one person dedicated to the development and welfare of the child with whom the child fosters a reciprocal, solid and emotional bond. The model stresses the vibrant interaction of processes that transcend time frames, platforms of investigation and settings crucial to which are time and judgement (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Broadly speaking the model is made up of two defining parts: The first part emphasises the context in the development of the human being and the second part details the ecological systems within which development occurs (Johnson, 2008).

### **3.2.1 Development in context**

The child is seen here as an active person that engages with the environment and provokes responses from it while the environment provides a range of stimuli that will be responded to differently by different individuals at different points of the developmental journey (Darling, 2007). The emphasis is on the interaction between the child and the surrounding environment in an attempt to describe the behaviour of the child (Johnson, 2008). Four interrelated concepts namely process, person, context and time are identified in the theory that define the properties of the model (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). In the original model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) contended with only three of the concepts and it was therefore referred to as person-process-context model to which the concept of time was later introduced to complete the model (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

The process-person-context-time model centres on specific characteristics in the environment that are regarded as either favourable or risk factors for particular development outcomes in children with particular characteristics (Johnson, 2008). Bronfenbrenner (1992) puts forward two propositions that are central to his theory. In proposition 1 he states that “Human development takes place through processes of

progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as *proximal processes*" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38). Some examples of these proximal process patterns that endure, identified by Bronfenbrenner (1994) are activities that involve parent and child, child and child; reading, playing games together or alone, extra-mural games, learning skills, studying and the performance of tasks that are complex. The proximal process comprises a continuous two way dynamic between the developing person and the elements of the environment (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). In fact the proximal process acts as the developmental engine of the growing individual (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000).

In the second of his propositions the threefold nature of the proximal processes was defined. By their interactions and participation in these activities people begin to comprehend their world, making sense of it and influencing change in the existing order while fitting into the new order (Tudge, *et al.*, 2009).

Proposition 2 states that "The form, power, content and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment-both immediate and more remote- in which the processes are taking place; and the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38).

Contextual and individual aspects vary the nature of the proximal process since they are a joint junction and subject to 'ecological niches' (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Darling, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Tudge, *et al.*, 2009). Ecological niches according to Bronfenbrenner (1992) are parts of the context that may be positive or negative to the development of children who have individual characteristics. For example, development of a child that comes from an impoverished background may be slower than the one that comes from an affluent background.

"Propositions 1 and 2 are theoretically interdependent and subject to empirical test" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38). A research design that utilises them simultaneously in its

investigations is referred to as a process-person-context-time model (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

The importance of the *person* in the model is emphasised by Bronfenbrenner (1992) when he suggests that the environment cannot develop the child without the child being actively involved in the process as well. However, presence of caring adults such as parents can also optimise development. When, for example, two parents are present in the child's developmental trajectory and each is educated as opposed to being illiterate, Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that maximum impact is derived from the interaction. If the parents are educated and knowledgeable, a very advantaged ecological niche is created with the child receiving the maximum impact of the proximal process because they would understand the child's needs better than parents less educated than them and unable to help with things like mathematical problems (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Demand, resource and force characteristics carried into a social interaction played up the role of the person in the process of development (Darling, 2007; Tudge, *et al.*, 2009). Demand characteristics are face value stimuli such as skin colour, language and age that elicit immediate responses to the person; resource characteristics which are not always revealed initially are such things as skills, aptitude, experience and social connections; differences in motivation, perseverance and character are examples of force characteristics (Tudge, *et al.*, 2009). The individual's role in changing the trajectory of his development could be passive or active depending on the extent to which the various characteristics are brought into play (Darling, 2007). Proximal processes are thus recognized as more influential than the context of the environment in the development of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) found that the actual development and functioning of a child can be significantly raised by proximal processes. They further argue that the proximal process effect is significantly higher in children coming from disadvantaged environments who are given opportunities such as computer access thereby giving the child the competence to influence his or her own circumstances (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

In the earlier writings the context aspects of the model were emphasised which are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Tudge, *et al.*, 2009). This was later



extended to include the dimension of time referred to as the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

### **3.2.2 The contextual environment as systems of development**

The context of the environment in the ecological system is presented as a set of structures nested inside each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) like a set of bowls in the kitchen. But that's where the similarity ends because each context is dynamic and interactive, working from the inside out and *vice versa*. The model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) states that a child's developmental world consists of systems that interact and are interrelated: (1) Microsystem, (2) Mesosystem, (3) Exosystem, (4) Macrosystem and (5) Chronosystem. Darling (2007) notes the active nature of the environmental factors and the 'contextual variability' in response to the process of development as opposed to the way it is generally presented with the child stationary at the centre while everything around the child exhibits movement. This is supported by Freire (1993) who posits that a child is not abstract, autonomous, secluded and separated from the world but is very much connected to the world as a reality that is part of him. The inter-connectedness of the systems and the context of the child support the growth and development of the child through opportunities and bases of growth afforded the child by each of the systems (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). Each system is a developmental context nested in the other and radiates from close interpersonal collaborations outwards to ever increasing influences that become broad-based (Santrock, 2006). Combined, they form a powerful influence on the child's development (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 1997). The environment into which a person is born is referred to as his or her *social address* from which is garnered basic information such as activities taking place there, what the environment is like, who the people are, what they do and more importantly how these impact on the person (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The *social address* forms the platform from which the development context of the person evolves. A closer examination of each of the systems is necessary to understand its workings and its interactions with the other systems.

### **3.2.3 The Microsystem**

"A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material

features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 227). The parents of a child form the first circle of influence around a child, creating the immediate environment of physical, psychological and social platforms that becomes his or her microsystem of referencing the world (Brendtro, 2006; Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). This close-knit circle is an incubator that nurtures the child’s development in its most crucial years (Delport & Mangwaya, 2008). Brendtro (2006) reflects that this core group can sometimes be strengthened by the support of another adult such as a grandparent or in the case of some cultures, the entire community shares in the upbringing of a child. This core unit becomes the centre of his nurturing experience and lays the foundation for his or her future development (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). This foundation is grounded in trust and the formation of a mutual bond between the child and the family as its point of departure into the world (Pipher, 1996). Clearly, the family is the child’s first microsystem, teaching it how to live (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). Brendtro (2006) notes however, that in today’s society the core support group of the immediate family and the grandparent or even the extended family has sometimes been replaced by what he terms ‘solo parenting’.

### **3.2.4 The Mesosystem**

“The mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and school, school and work place, etc.) In other words, A mesosystem is a system of microsystems”(Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 227). The mesosystem is therefore a networking tool that brings together more than two systems which the family, parent and child occupy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It widens the circle of influence, making it multifaceted and extending it beyond the microsystem (Brendtro, 2006). Positive influences are allowed to penetrate the inner circle from various directions and contribute to the healthy development of the child (Brendtro, 2006; Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). An example would be a friend at the book reading club who introduces a person to the civic association open day and helps by looking after the children while they are out. Neighbourhood links facilitating community involvement in lovingly contributing to the caring and development of a child must be fostered for a child’s natural growth (Brendtro, 2006; Pipher, 1996). This is similar to *ubuntu* in Africa which means ‘I am because you are’ where the whole

community is involved in raising a child in rural villages and *tiospaye*, the native American term that means ‘to be in community with each other’ (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). Mesosystems therefore, are made up of bi-directional interactions that extend between the elements of the microsystem and beyond family, school and peer group to include amongst others the church, places of work, youth clubs, sporting bodies and connections such as extra tuition classes (Brendtro, 2006; Tudge, *et al.*, 2009). One illustration of the mesosystem of a school is evident in the collaborations and exchanges between two of its microsystems which are the learners and parents (Johnson, 2008). An example of this is Epstein’s (2001) *spheres of influence* which demonstrates that the greater the interaction between the school and the parents the greater the impact on the learners who worked harder to improve their own attainment.

### **3.2.5 The Exosystem**

“The exosystem encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person (e.g., for a child, the relation between the home and the parent’s work place; for a parent, the relation between the school and the neighbourhood group)” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 227).

Immediate family as stated in the microsystem is the first ‘system’ that surrounds any person that nests him or her in a buffer of support. This is an example of physically being present in a system. Exosystems are the systems in which a person may not be physically present but live in it psychologically (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). An example of this may be a parent who is at home physically but be present at the church camp that the child is attending for the first time. In the same way a child may be present in the workplace of his mum psychologically to experience what it is like because he will never experience it personally or physically (Galinsky, 1999). Although exosystems are contexts that become a vicarious experience for individuals the impact they have is direct (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). An exosystem can empower an individual or damage him or her depending on the type of influence it exerts. Therefore, staying away from the system does not necessarily mean that it does not influence a person’s life (Gabarino, 1992). Therefore a

husband may feel the acute stress being experienced by his wife at her workplace making it important for persons to be involved in their exosystems to be able to provide the necessary support to each other (Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006).

### **3.2.6 The Macrosystem**

“The macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of micro, meso and exosystems characteristics of a given culture, subculture or other broader social context with particular reference to the developmentally- instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 228).

This is a broad system made up of the culture and subculture in which the child lives and is the net effect of broader political, cultural, societal and economic influences and beliefs that energise the development of the child (Brendtro, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). Socializing agents such as teachers, parents, churches and organs or government, and other proxies draw from this repertoire in grooming the future generation (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). It is a sort of blueprint from which the developing person draws to shape himself or herself and the environment around him or her providing motivation and meaning for the person to continue on the developmental path (Bronfenbrenner, 1976, 1977). A child is therefore influenced by the particular macrosystem that it lives in. Minds of Afghan children will probably be shaped by the political and social turmoil in their country which spans more than twenty years and make them more susceptible to becoming soldiers or even freedom fighters. This will probably be an anti-thesis of the good that can be achieved by a macrosystem that can provide support, values and norms for the normal development of a community, let alone a child. A macrosystem constituted by the factors discussed above surrounds the various types of groupings that develop over time in geographic or other types of groupings such as tribal ones (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kevin James Swick & Williams, 2006). Gabarino (1992) advises that without such a support system parents, children and families are vulnerable to harm and a worsening of their situation. “It follows that the scientific recognition of the belief systems prevailing in the world of the developing person is essential for an understanding of

the interaction of organismic and environmental forces in the process of development” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 228).

### **3.2.7 Chronosystems**

“A chronosystem encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives (e.g., changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life”(Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).

The chronosystem is the final systems parameter based on a time-dimension that impacts on all the other systems already discussed (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Johnson, 2008). The development of the person over the years is contextualised as movement from the microsystem outwards as it experiences influences from the changing environments *en route* (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Along the way diverse environments exert different influences on the development of the child prompting it to respond to these too, thus enabling growth as well (Darling, 2007). Two types of developmental transitions are usually identified, the first being normative, for example a child entering the schooling system, going to university, starting a job, getting married and having children, buying a house, watching children get married, retiring and finally death which is a certainty; the second, non-normative where a family moves, wins the lotto, has a death or a severe illness (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). These transitions that occur throughout the life of the person, influence development by providing impetus for change and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Developmental changes are effected at various points along the way by the external environment as well as from within the child by altering the relationship between the child and the environment and triggering responses from the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Darling, 2007). The chronosystem can refer to either short-term or long-term such as changes that occurred in its learner population over a term and over a few years (Johnson, 2008). The importance is that it is dynamic and in a continuous state of flux where the people and the environment continually influence change in each other while the individual actively contributes to his or her development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

### **3.2.8 Relevance and application of the theory**

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory as one prong of the theoretical framework is applied to this study because the theory facilitates understanding of the development of children and adults in real-life educational situations. Exploring the experience of the congregants at the confluence of the rural/township drifters and the suburban school in the process of integration is the focus area of this study. Two sets of dynamisms as described by this theory allow us to investigate how and whether people learn in a school: the relationship between the learners' characteristics and their environment either in school or at home is the first and the second is the relationship that exists between these contexts. The study of these two groups of forces, referred to as the *ecology of education* by Bronfenbrener (1976) aids recognition of connections between existing phenomena under study as well as providing a scaffold to discover new connections (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009).

Prior to this theory, teachers, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and other researchers studied the world of a child in compartment-like fashion (Brendtro, 2006). Bronfenbrenner (1979) combined the various windows in the formulation of the ecological systems theory that possesses structural features to make it a broader paradigm through which to undertake studies with a developmental outcome. The model enables a comprehensive and deeper understanding of the consequences of rural/township-suburban drifting. The dynamic of the suburban school as the confluence of the drift presents an opportunity to study both the contextual environment thus created in addition to the participants through the various systems in the model (Swick & Williams, 2006). But, in the words of Tudge, *et al.*, (2009) it should go further and examine how accurately and how well the theory fits the phenomenon under study.

The ecological systems approach is valuable in the way it posits a large amount of new information about drifting learner development as well as the suburban school. This framework allows the confluence to be placed under scrutiny as the phenomenon of integration is examined at the suburban school. The environment at the confluence is viewed through the lenses of the theoretical framework as a nested assembly of formations, each included within the next. The following key features are discussed with a view to

explain how they help to explore and understand the integration of drifters into suburban schools.

### 3.2.8.1 Social address

The social address is actually a first level research paradigm that is employed to compare the development of a person in divergent environments such as a rural area and a suburban area (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). It is a point of departure in the study of the development of a person- a sort of baseline. A simple model, it is used to study how the varying environments impact or influence the development of the person (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The danger of using the social address model is that it views development of the individual solely as result of environmental factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A school that is serious about integrating its drifters with its suburban learners should, as a start, try to learn more about the background of its rural and township learners to understand them better. Whether drifters with a gap in their content knowledge or a poor command of English will be regarded as weaker or under-performing learners as opposed to being considered unlocked potential will describe the school's stance on how it views social addresses. Another instance of the suburban school's perception of social addresses is whether it considers drifting parents as arriving at the school with a deficit basket or an asset full basket when considering what skills and expertise they have to offer. Assessment of the influence of the outside environment on the development of the person is referred to as process- context (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). As a school looking out in the direction of where its drifters come from, this second level should allow the school to measure the effect of the environment of origin on the drifter that it admits. Language skills, content knowledge and even attitude to school work can be assessed in this way. Development of the drifter within the suburban school environment is also easily tracked in this way.

### 3.2.8.2 Person-process-context

This addition to the paradigm brings a third element to the system, that of the individual. The paradigm emphasises the importance of the characteristics of the persons in the external environment on the development of the person (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that the characteristics of the parents of a child play a significant role in the environment that shapes the child. In the school context the

characteristics of the drifters and the environment need to be taken into account when tracking the drifters' development. Displaying characteristics such as being withdrawn or adversarial should raise the concern of the school and appropriate intervention made. Relationships between the parent and the child and the closeness of the parent to the previous school as compared to the relationship between the drifter, the parent and the new school will also indicate whether the drifter is succeeding at the new school. The home environment might have to be adjusted depending on the need.

#### 3.2.8.3 Proximal processing

Interaction between the various elements in the environments raising the learner occurring regularly and over extended periods of time are referred to as proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Proximal process patterns that will be found in the school- home environment are activities such as parent and child, school and child and child and child. As the study explores the phenomenon of integration it will consider the effect of proximal processing as a result of activities such as reading, playing games together or alone, extra-mural games, learning skills, studying and the performance of tasks set by the school. The study will use this lens to understand the continuous two way dynamic between the drifting learners and environment and also how they comprehend their new world.

#### 3.2.8.4 Ecological niches

These are particular areas of the environment that either favour or retard the development of individuals with certain distinctive characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecological niches assist in looking at drifters as individuals, each with their own character rather than as a body of learners arriving from the rural or township areas. They help to track and explain accelerated growth or hindered growth in the development of the drifter at various points in the drifter's sojourn at the suburban school. While it is important to understand ecological niches and the context within which it fits into learner development, this study will not necessarily study individual drifters but rather attempt to present general findings at the end of the research process.

#### 3.2.8.5 Normative and non-normative transitions

The progress of the learner through the developmental phases is based on the effect of the interaction of the learner with the various environments. As the learner makes the



transition from one system to another, the impact of the former informs the development in the next system. Such effect continues along the developmental trajectory providing a conglomerate effect at the end of schooling, at the end of tertiary education and so on. The transition begins with the setting closest to the child after it is born.

#### 3.2.8.6 Early development

The microsystem is the closest setting, such as the home or school within which the learner operates. The home or school is where the occupiers participate in their roles of teacher, parent or learner each for specific periods of time (Johnson, 2008). Factors making up the elements of the setting are made up of time, place and activity. (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). In the case of the drifters they would probably operate from 2 microsystems- one at home and one at school because they would be disparate systems compared to their suburban counterparts. Understanding the existence of the 2 microsystems allows the researcher to compare and comprehend the development life course of the drifter as he or she moves between these.

#### 3.2.8.7 Support structures

The interrelations between the home context and the school context makes up the learner's mesosystem at any point in his or her development trajectory (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). For the drifter a typical mesosystem would be the connections or exchanges among family, church, school, friend groups, extra mural activities etc. In its entirety, the drifters' mesosystem would be a system of microsystems within which interaction takes place. Each of these acts as a support structure other than that found at home as well as providing more reference points for the growth of the learner.

#### 3.2.8.8 Wider influences

The exosystem is a broadening of the mesosystem into both formal and informal social constructions that impact on the contexts in which the learner operates thereby influencing what takes place there (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The drifter is surrounded by organisations and institutions other than the home- school- family institutions. Government offices, the DBE, the media, transportation and social networks are all part of the drifters' exosystem. Each plays a role in regulating or defining what goes on within the drifters' exosystem. The system contributes to the learner being socialised into society.

#### 3.2.8.9 Broader directives

A macrosystem is a sort of umbrella of systems such as political, economic and educational ones that overarches the microsystems, mesosystems and exosystems which are the tangible manifestations on the ground (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The system ensures that the sum of the parts adds up to make the whole. Whether and how the stakeholders at the confluence make meaning of their macrosystem is important to understand how the stakeholders then interact and treat each other in the school setting.

#### 3.2.8.10 Time trail

The chronosystem provides a barometer to gauge development of individuals as they grow older (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Important to this study is that chronosystems allow tracking developmental change over time both within the individual and the environment in which they operate. This study will be assisted in understanding the relationship between the two processes as the drifters attempt to adjust to the suburban school and the school in turn attempts to integrate the drifters.

### **3.3 Tinto's Student Integration Model**

This, the second prong of my theoretical framework is fashioned from the various works of Vincent Tinto that focused on retention, departure and integration of college students through which he developed his student integration model (Tinto, 1985, 1987, 1993). Although Tinto's (1987) model was developed to understand integration at tertiary level institutions he agrees that it could just as well be applicable and adaptable to integration at school level: "Our model is also a model of educational communities... which emphasises the shaping of student life and the importance of involvement, that is integration" (Tinto, 1987, p. 128). For the purposes of this study the student integration model and the writings have been shaped to derive a theoretical framework that will suit the focus of this study which is to explore how suburban schools seek to integrate drifting rural and township learners into suburban schools. I shall discuss the relevance of the theory and how it will be adapted for this study after describing the theory. There are many parallels between what happens when learners leave their homes and communities and head off to university or college and learners who leave their rural and township schools and enter suburban schools which are mainly former Model C Schools. Tinto's (1993) work on integration and his

writings on the academic and social structure in institutions as well as student interactions are relevant to this study as well.

Tinto (1987) develops his theory based on the work of Van Gennep (1960) on the 'rite of passage' concept he developed. The 'rite of passage' is the movement of an individual from one environment to another and the processes that are involved therein. The means of diffusion of relationships from one group to another was discerned by three clear phases each with its own special rituals and ceremonies (Van Gennep, 1960). Van Gennep (1960) further posits that the orderly movement of persons such as from youth to adulthood actually impacts on the stability of the community they are in. Tinto (1987) who extensively explored retention and departure of students from educational institutions focused on integration of the student into the social and academic life of the institution.

Three distinct phases marking the 'rite of passage' identified by Van Gennep (1960) are separation, transition and incorporation. Orderly transmission of individuals through these stages is facilitated by use of rituals and ceremonies (Van Gennep, 1960). The process therefore ensured that the rites and ceremonies contributed to the takeover of the younger generation from the older generation while safeguarding the society's stability at the same time (Tinto, 1987). Van Gennep (1960) suggested that the rites of passage theory had many applications in the movement of persons from a known environment to a new one and in the process crossing some sort of boundary marked by a ceremony of some kind.

### **3.3.1 Separation**

The thinking earlier was that in stage one of the college career, separation, necessitates that the individuals cut certain ties with their old school, some family and in some cases even their place of residence (Tinto, 1993). Later, this was mitigated by new research that revealed that students need not make a complete break from past communities instead remaining connected to their past institutions such as family, church, or community is helpful in the period of separation (Tinto, 2007). Where the new institution presents a new environment with different norms and values defining behaviour requiring the individual to transform and even cast-off the customs of the old school and community (Tinto, 1993) this may well work for some while a strong bond with the past acts as a stabiliser in others (Tinto, 2007). Demands on students to free themselves from parents and other community

ties can worsen an already stressful situation and lead to serious conflicts not just with the past links but within the student as well (Schafer, 1966). Left unchecked, it could result in students leaving school, violence or even suicide (Tinto, 1983).

Separation is accentuated if the distance from the old to the new area is quite long, necessitating both a physical and social disassociation with the past community (Tinto, 1987). For many students this is a painful, stressful situation that can be perplexing (Koen, 2007). Commuting students who do not necessarily disassociate themselves from their place of residence suffer less of this experience (Tinto, 1985). Such students will therefore operate from two centres of power: the college community and the residential community and may initially find the separation easier to handle. Tinto (1987) warns that intellectual and social support of the residential community is generally weaker than that at the college which is to the detriment of the student. Students who live at home and attend college may initially find separation less stressful but will not reap the full rewards of full-time residential students at the college (Tinto, 1987, 1993). Schafer (1966), however, adds a caveat that estrangement from the support base of the past may actually act against some students who in turn attempt to rid themselves of these ties.

In his earlier work, Tinto (1998) suggested that family and peer forces are strongest of the many that can prevent or slow down incorporation into college of students who commute from home if they do not support higher education. The social maturity of the community and their intellectual standing impact on the separation process (Tinto, 1987). Separation for students whose parents attended college may be easier compared to those from illiterate households. Varying intensity of these forces influence the manner in which the student handles the separation especially in the initial stages (Anderson, 1985). In the same way students from small and rural communities as well as minorities will find separation daunting (Tinto, 1975, 1998). These high-risk students need all the support of the past as well as programmes of the destination institution because both impact on the process of separation that the students' experiences (Tinto, 2007). The attitude and support of the institution plays a vital role in how these high-risk and sometimes even low-risk students handle separation (Valverde, 1985).

### 3.3.2 Transition

This, the second period in the movement of the person from one context to another is a sort of 'waiting room' where things pertaining to the new context start to happen. It comes after separation but there is an overlap with separation as well as students find themselves trying to let go of the past but still anxious about what the future holds (Tinto, 1993). New interactions begin in different ways with people in the new grouping where the person is destined for (Van Gennep, 1960). It is a stage between the old and the new experiences, a platform from which students take their initial steps into the institution (Koen, 2007). The transition phase is punctuated by numerous factors such as norms, values and behaviour patterns of the past communities and that which is required for integration into the new (Anderson, 1985; Koen, 2007; Tinto, 1985). There is no one size-fits-all solution in the transition phase as was the earlier thinking (Scott *et al.*, 2013; Tinto, 2007). Being urban-oriented, colleges tend to overlook the needs and uniqueness of rural students (Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996). In recent years this has shifted somewhat with more emphasis placed on the institutional preparation for students from a wide variety of background types and not necessarily affluent residential types that was previously the standard (Tinto, 2011).

Student experiences in high school and in the family context have an influence on the transitional phase but the problem is that the institution has little to do with this prior to the student's arrival (Tinto, 2007). Knowing the student's background and prior support received would be of help to institutions to configure effective support programmes for students of different situations and backgrounds (Alexander, 2011; Koen, 2007; Tinto, 2011). The difficulty faced by most institutions is how to efficiently tap into the background of students being enrolled to help in their preparations for the transitional phase (Andreescu, 2013; Tinto, 1993). This phase particularly shows up students who come from vastly different backgrounds compared to the environment into which they expect to be integrated. High risk students made up of minorities, low-income students, rural students and those from smaller communities face a particularly tough challenge because of a lack of adequate prior preparation (Anderson, 1985; Tinto, 1987; Valverde, 1985). Almost all students experience some form of difficulty in the transitional phase to higher education institutions (Tinto, 1987).

The extent of prior preparation for transition from the old to the new plays a huge role in the range of the transition stage (Ihlanfeldt, 1985; Koen, 2007; Tinto, 1998). Where a student has long decided on his institution of choice and linked it to his career goal he or she may start the process of socialisation towards the institution prior to arrival (Tinto, 1987). 'Anticipatory socialization' as Tinto (1987) refers to it, arises from the desire of the student to 'fit in' to the institution and therefore aids but does not eliminate the strain of the transitional phase.

Characteristic of the period of orientation are activities such as training, rituals, functions, games and even isolation to groom the person into a separation from the past and into the new environment (Tinto, 1987; Van Gennep, 1960). Koen (2007) posits that activities such as orientation and induction are discernible events that help smooth the passage into the new environment. Individuals in the transition phase acquire skills, knowledge and become acquainted with roles required to fit into the new environment (Tinto, 1987). A process of adoption by the individual of the new environment as well as adoption of the new environment of the individual begins in this transitional phase. In the final analysis it is the person's response to whatever is taking place in this phase that will determine whether the transition is successful or not. Any kind of support in the form of activities or other forms will only be successful if the individual is willing to endure the isolation and stresses of the period of transition (Tinto, 1993).

### **3.3.3 Incorporation**

Following transition, the final phase, incorporation requires the person to adopt the new patterns of socialising and interacting with the new group to establish full membership and become integrated with that group and the environment (Koen, 2007; Tinto, 1985). Passing the first two hurdles does not guarantee the individual incorporation into the new environment but is dependent on the adoption of the new behaviour trends and norms of the institution (Smith, Lippitt, & Sprandel, 1987; Tinto, 1993). Achieving such congruence between the individual seeking integration and the institution's academic platform are dependent on many factors which will now be unpacked.

Parallel integration into the academic and social spheres of the institution is vital if the student wishes to participate as a full and wholesome member of the institution (Ihlanfeldt,

1985; Koen, 2007; Tinto, 1993). The academic sphere revolves around formal education and centres around the laboratories, classrooms and faculties that deal with student training (Gavenberg & Rivers, 1987; Tinto, 1987). The social system is comprised of student interactions, the regular routine of students and faculty members and activities outside the classroom that involve intellectual as well as social activities (Tinto, 1987; Toy, 1987). Establishing the connection between the student and the academic and social environments of the institution requires a willingness from the student as well as suitable catalysts on the part of the institution to facilitate the congruence (Tinto, 2007, 2011).

In the formative stage of his theory, Tinto (1985) emphasised intentions and commitments as the main attributes on the part of the student that will ensure effective incorporation into the institution. Student intentions vary considerably and are not always clearly indicated. In some cases students will arrive with the intention of degree completion while in other instances the intention may be to use the institution as a springboard to move on to other institutions after a year or two (Tinto, 1985). It is also possible that students will change their intentions after a year or two as they mature and their preferences and judgements take over from their earlier reasons for entry (Tinto, 1975, 1985). The level of integration will therefore hinge on the intention of the student. Commitment requires the student to put in a lot of hard work and effort towards completion of a degree which comes with the concomitant need for regular attendance and cooperation (Tinto, 1975, 1985). Elevated levels of commitment to the institution and to academic work are thus necessary for student success as well as fuller integration (Koen, 2007).

In developing the theory further Tinto (1993, 2011) shifted the emphasis from the student to the institution arguing that it had a greater role to play in the incorporation phase given its resources as opposed to those of the students. The danger of over-emphasising the student role was the isolation and normlessness that faced those who couldn't sustain their intentions and commitments (Tinto, 1987). Tinto (1987) turned to the work of Durkheim (1952) who denoted intellectual and social integration as the means through which incorporation could be achieved. Family, past peers and church support were insufficient in the process of incorporation which required an alternative strategy hinged on an increasingly interventionist role of the institution that included a greater understanding of

students' backgrounds (Durkheim, 1952; Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996). A joint strategy of co-operative affiliation, shared values and a sense of heightened mutual sentiment prepares the way for fuller integration (Koen, 2007). Tinto (2011) notes in his departure from the earlier thinking that too much currency was given to incorporation and integration as add-ons to regular university work. Broader, multi-dimensional forces including economic, social, cultural and institutional are now recognised as potencies that shape student integration (Alexander, 2011; Durkheim, 1952; Tinto, 2007).

The earlier form of the theory considered all freshmen as a singular body and focussed on activities such as the transition to university, students' interaction with the extracurricular activities and programs such as orientation and seminars and their contact with their faculties as the means towards the expected integration (Reik, 1966; Tinto, 2007). These concepts, based on what each context expected of each other (Reik, 1966; Tinto, 1975; Toy, 1987) were burnished and refined as Tinto (2007, 2011) improved his model of integration. Changes were prompted by the need to understand the backgrounds and experiences of the different students as well as understanding how the forces of culture, economics, social settings and the institution tend to shape the student (Alexander, 2011; Du Toit, 2013; Fitzgerald & Bloodsworth, 1996; Tinto, 2007; Wolhuter, 2005). These features should take into account features of race, social wellness as determined by students' backgrounds and the ease with which they take to the institution (Tierney, 1992).

Departing from earlier thinking, the model now favours student retention of contact and connectedness with their past communities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 2007, 2011). Secondly, Tinto (2011) argues that in order to improve integration and ensure success the focus must shift from the related programmes and rituals to increase the classroom experience of especially low-income and under-represented students. Thirdly the model states that efforts must be made to understand better the distinction between residential students and the increasing number of commuting ones and the unique challenges faced by each group such as psychological, economic and sociological factors (Koen, 2007; Tinto, 2007, 2011). Involvement or what is termed engagement of the student on the campus is increasingly the focus of what matters most when it comes to student integration and success (Schafer, 1966; Tinto, 2007; Toy, 1987). Core to the success of the



student at the university is level of social integration and academic integration that the student achieves within the first year of entry (Durkheim, 1952; Koen, 2007; Tinto, 2007). How students influence each other and how the academia influences the student accounts for the way the social integration of the student develops while the combination of the normative and structural integration account for the academic integration of the student (Koen, 2007). The fundamental basis for Tinto's (1987) model of integration then, is that heightened levels of academic integration increases the yearning to succeed while increased levels of social integration increases the resolve to remain at the college.

Tinto (2011) argues that academic success is a necessary attribute for academic integration therefore institutions need to take the lead in ensuring success in the classroom. Key to these attributes are clarity of expectations, proper support, meaningful assessment and regular feedback (Ihlanfeldt, 1985; Snyder, 1966; Tinto, 2011). The main thrust of integration programmes which lies in the classroom is the prerogative of the faculty which must encourage active engagement of students in learning with each other when they are all together (Ford & Urban, 1966; Gavenberg & Rivers, 1987; Tinto, 2007, 2011). Academic and social integration will always differ in the form and intensity with which they occur in different students (Tinto, 1993). Integration in the one system does not necessarily mean automatic integration in the other while it is quite possible also that integration in say the academic structure will aid and assist integration in the social structure and vice versa (Ford & Urban, 1966; Tinto, 1987; Toy, 1987). While the academic and social systems might sometimes be intertwined, they are for the most part quite distinct, revealing that integration into the two systems is not necessarily symmetrical (Tinto, 1993). Institutions should find a balance between the two systems if they wish to improve the integration levels of new students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). It is not uncommon to hear of universities that emphasise sports or the arts as opposed to straight academic universities. Negotiating the blend in academic and social integration in these circumstances is the challenge these institutions must grapple with. As pointed out earlier Tinto (1993) warns that integration could be complicated by the coming together of residential and non-residential students where the social system of the non-residential students is weaker. Of course, factors such as the influence of the family and community context as well as the student's own disposition can cause conflicts in the process of integration initiated by the

institution and need to be carefully managed mainly by the individual to ensure his or her success (Koen, 2007; Lane, *et al.*, 2012; Tinto, 1987).

Koen (2007) identifies four areas of intersection that Tinto's (1987) model examines:

- Attributes prior to admission such as social, cultural, family and school backgrounds.
- Intentions, commitments and goals in regard to career aims and personal motivation.
- Students experiences within the academic system such as grades, progression and interaction with staff and faculty.
- Experiences in the social system including peer group, family and study related.

The model serves two broad purposes from the students' perspective. In the first instance, the model tracks the journey of the students over a period of time resultant from the impact of the interplay within the matrix described above on the commitments, intentions and goals of the student (Tinto, 1987). Secondly, it charts how the subsequent integration demands that students craft their transition to the institution and become merged into the continuing intellectual and social systems of the institution occurs (Tinto, 1987). The model also provides guidelines that are rather specific from the perspective of the institution. In the re-worked model of student integration, Tinto (2011) shifted the emphasis from the student to the institutions and clarified the interventions necessary from their end to ensure student integration. It challenges institutions to go beyond drawing students into their academic and social systems and expecting them to integrate. In the final analysis it is about how determined students are to fit into an institution that is working equally hard to safeguard their smooth integration.

### **3.3.4 Learning from Tinto's Integration Model**

Minimal tuning is necessary to reshape the model presented above to suit this study. While that may be so, the main idea is to be able to utilise what is unearthed here and the model created thereof to 'see' into the phenomenon more clearly, understanding the complex dynamics that play out as participants begin to tell their stories and to make sense of them. In the main Tinto's (1987) theory focuses on the movement of learners from all walks of life

from the realm of high school education to tertiary institutions. It goes on to examine the challenges of the three main phases involved *viz* separation, transition and then incorporation which mainly revolves around integration of the student into the institution. Against the background of all the factors such as cultural, social and economic as well as the student's own intentions and commitments affecting these phases Tinto (1987) earlier theorised about what would make a student remain at the institution or depart. Tinto (1987, p. 126) in describing his model, posits that: "In its full form our model of student institutional departure sees the process of persistence as being marked over time by different stages in the passage of students from past forms of association to new forms of membership in the social and intellectual communities of the college". He immediately adds to it an important extension that allows the same model to be applied almost in its entirety to understand the process of integration in schools: "Eventual persistence requires that individuals make the transition to college and become incorporated into the ongoing social and intellectual life of the college"(Tinto, 1987, p. 126). In his later review of the model, Tinto (2011) incorporates the huge responsibility of the institution in the process of facilitating integration of new students. This is an important tool placed in the hands of the researcher who will be trying to understand the phenomenon from both perspectives, although this study is based on the exploration of how suburban schools are seeking to cope with the integration of drifters who arrive with a rural or township background. Similar dynamics that arise as a result of movement of learners from high school to university and movement of learners from rural and township schools to suburban schools are the main connectors that establish the link between the processes. At the same time, some of the factors presented in the model have to be adjusted to suit this study. An example of such a factor is that, whereas at tertiary level, interaction of parents in the education of their children is minimal, at school level there is a strong social, as well as legislative impetus for parents to be fully involved in their children's education and therefore their integration. Identifying such a gap and utilising it was just as important as unearthing material that was useful as presented.

Separation, the first phase identified by Tinto (1987) is very much what the drifting learners will go through. The trials and tribulations of leaving their old mates and their old school environment behind will be felt by most if not all learners changing schools. This is a

separation not just from their cultural backgrounds but the culture of the school they leave as well. Here too, learners will be made up of those who commute from their areas and those who leave the area altogether. Added to this is the category of learner who ends up having a weekday home in the suburban area and returns to the township or rural area in the weekend and holiday. Whatever form it takes it entails separation of the kind discussed in the model above. This separation is accentuated by the distance between the home and the new school and the falling away of the support structures available to the learner in his old environs. While many learners will undoubtedly maintain contact and receive support from the past community structures such as church, family and peers, such support will become intermittent because of the reduced contact time and sometimes eventually lost if the family makes a permanent move to the suburban area. An essential focus of this study will be to hone in on how drifters respond to the vacuum which many of them will experience. How the pain of separation affects adjustment and re-focussing as posited by Tinto (1987) is essential to establishing the nature of the drift. Important too, is to probe whether the suburban school recognizes such trauma amongst drifters.

Transition from the old environment to the new as presented by Tinto (1987) is every bit the same for both the contexts. The gap between high school students going to university and learners moving from township and rural schools to suburban schools is minimal especially in South Africa where we do not offer a bridging year for students prior to attending university. There is a huge gap between high school and universities here making the transition period extremely stressful for the majority of learners. A very similar gap exists between rural/township schools and suburban schools. The feeling of normlessness and waiting for acceptance in the new institution is felt acutely, especially by those learners who are moving on to an environment completely new to them and at the same time having to let go of the support links with the past community. If separation is painful, then transition is traumatic for many drifters. Anxiety levels are high and both sides are caught in this state of limbo; the suburban school just cannot be expected to have sufficient or in some cases any background information on incoming learners while rural and township communities will find it extremely difficult for suburban schools to prepare their learners for a life in a new environment. The study will seek to understand the preparedness of the suburban school to deal with the trauma of the transitional period. Open days as well as preparatory

programmes targeting prospective rural and township learners and parents are either non-existent or very rare amongst suburban schools. Even if open days are held, they are usually a platform for disseminating information about the school admission policies and its curriculum offerings. This will be exacerbated by the lack of effective strategies to handle and accommodate rural and township learners (Wolhuter, 2005). Highly motivated learners who have clear goals and are committed to achieving these will weather the transition phase better than those who may have been 'sent' by their parents to get a perceived better education. In the transition phase the role played by the administration and staff is crucial to preparing the way for integration of drifters. Assumptions and perceptions theorised by Tinto (2011) will be applied to the confluence here as it is scrutinised for responses by both the suburban school as well as the drifters.

Incorporation and subsequent integration into the suburban school can take many forms that are similar to what happens at the tertiary institution. Integration, which is the main area of focus of this study, will rely heavily on Tinto's (2011) revised model which incorporates and emphasises the role and interventions of the institution, which in this case will be the suburban school. Tools realised from the model will be utilised to unlock the multi-faceted dynamic of what exactly is taking place at the confluence of the drifters and the suburban stakeholders. Here too, the two main structures, the social system and the academic system will be central to the integration of the learner into his or her new environment. Social systems at suburban or any other schools for that matter do not have the same clout as those at universities. Drifter integration into the social system at the suburban school level is heavily dependent on the formal school structures and programmes such as the induction programme or the grade 8 evening organised by the school. At university level there are ancillary structures that are sometimes run entirely by students that deal with social and related issues. University student bodies and structures other than the mainstream academic ones offer a lot more opportunities for students to give impetus to their demands arising from their need to be heard while the Representative Council of Learners at schools are still a long way from being serious players in the life of the school. Students reaching university also mature very fast after their initial year (Tinto, 1993) and are better able to steer their integration. Social activity, actively promoted at university is different from the school controlled activities that are also fewer and not primarily aimed at

social interaction. The second system, the academic system of integration is largely driven by academic activities that happen within the classroom as well as in meetings with parents. Activities such as parents' meetings focus mainly on how they should support drifting learners to comply with the suburban school routine such as getting homework done, being punctual and attending school regularly. Classroom activities referred to by Tinto (2011) will provide useful glimpses of how the process of integration is unfolding within the academic system of the school. Social and academic integration which incorporates sporting activities will be delved into at length in the data collection process. Of particular interest will be the part played or not played by the various stakeholders at the confluence.

Five windows of opportunity for investigation into how suburban schools cope with integration are therefore identified at school level. These are parent- school interaction, learner- learner interaction, classroom engagement, sports activities and school social events such as induction and fundraising events. The model that is derived for this study is adapted from Tinto's (1987) model and relies heavily on his extensive work on integration at tertiary level.

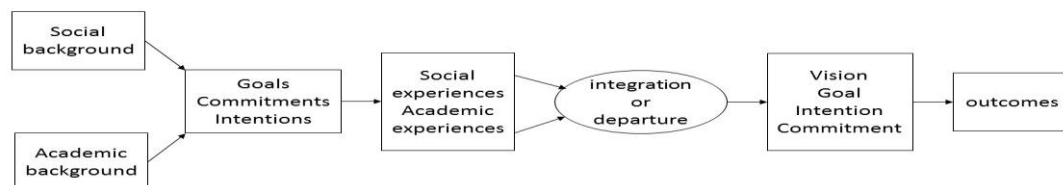


Figure 1 Model of Integration adapted from Tinto (1987)

Figure 1 shows the adjusted model which will be employed as follows:

- The model starts by considering the background attributes of rural and township learners both socially and academically. Social outcomes, the upshot of factors such as parental backgrounds, socio-economic status, peer-group pressure, age and race are some of the background traits for consideration of the social attributes.

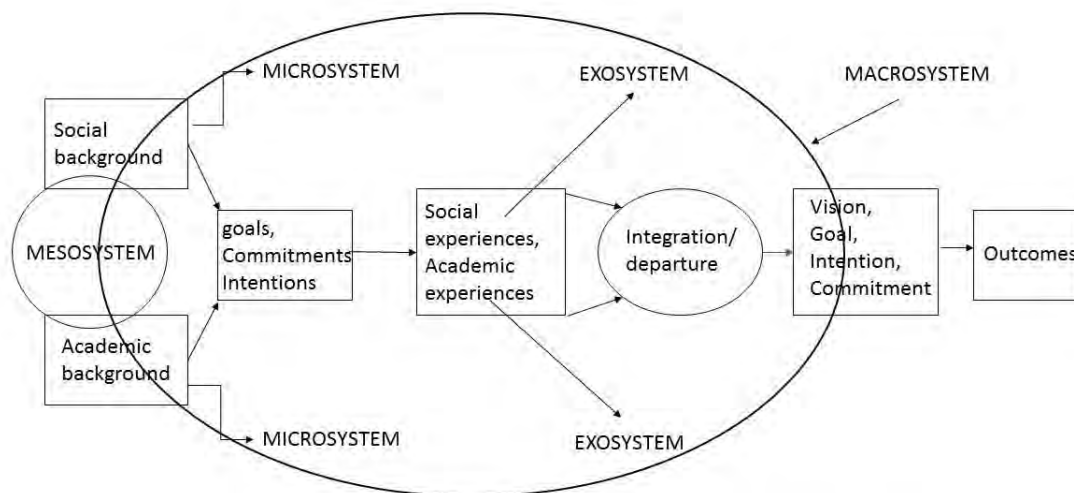
Academic considerations will centre on prior schooling and the literacy levels of the parents which invariably impact on learner performance in school.

- Learner and parent goals, commitments and intentions as well as personal motivation to make the transition to suburban schooling coupled with confidence and academic skills.
- Social and academic experiences at the suburban school.
- The school as the confluence of the social and academic integration process or the decision to depart.
- Personal commitment, intentions, vision and goals.
- Outcomes.

Beyond the phases of separation and transition is the incorporation, which is integration of the learner as a full member of the academic and social member of the suburban school community (Tinto, 1993). The aim of this research will be to determine how the suburban school as a confluence of the rural/township learners and the suburban school community seeks to cope with this integration.

### **3.4 Applying the two- pronged theoretical approach**

This study brings together two significant theories involving the growth and development of individuals in the context of the environments into which they are born and the trajectory of those individuals as they interact with environments along the way to acceptance, integration, success and reflection on their life journey. Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems theory and Tinto's (1987) model of integration, while being distinct in character and unique in what they set out to understand also display areas of convergence that are suited to this study. It is for this reason that they have been selected to jointly provide a broader, clearer, deeper and more focused understanding of the phenomenon under study. The idea of bringing them together is twofold: to utilize each theory individually as a lens to explore the phenomenon as it unfolds; to utilise the theories together to grasp the meaning of what unfolds at the confluence of the rural/township drifters and the suburban schools as the process of integration is undertaken.



**Figure 2** Combined Model of Integration adapted from Tinto (1987) and Bronfenbrenner (1976)

Figure 2 shows the combination of the two models. Both theories begin with the need to understand the background of learners. The ecological systems theory speaks of this as the individuals' social address and the environment within which their development begins while the integration model describes this as the social and academic background of the learner in the past communities. In the process of separation as described by Tinto (1987), we are urged to consider the effect of various aspects of the learner's background that will impact on his move to a new context. These aspects, noted as parents' literacy levels as well as their ambitions for the child, peer influence and the effect of the cultural and socio-economic background on the learners' social and academic competence resonate with the proximal processing described by Bronfenbrenner (1986) in the movement of the child through the various systems while interacting with them. He notes that the environment that a child evolves from plays a central role in shaping the various aspects of the child's development. While Tinto (1987) speaks to the process of separation as a phase, Bronfenbrenner (1979) looks at the home environment as a context referred to as the microcosm and emphasises its link with the next context. Tinto (1993), who in his earlier writings advocated a complete break or separation with the past context if the learner were to succeed, later reviewed this argument conceding that this link with the social and academic background is just as important to the development of the learner as is getting to grips with the new environment. This is a crucial development for this study which will also



follow closely how the background of rural/township learners facilitates or hinders the suburban schools' attempts to integrate them. Both theories emphasise that the individual, also, is expected to play a key part in mitigating each of the phases or contexts that he or she goes through.

The model of integration refers to phases of separation, transition and incorporation in the movement of the learner towards integration while the ecological systems model looks at the various contexts or environments in the learners' trajectory. While, in the integration model the movement is seen as lineal and tracking follows a more or less forward moving process, the ecological systems model looks at contexts or environments in concentric circles as the individual moves from the initial microcosm outwards into the bigger contexts. Bronfenbrenner (2011) emphasises the synergy between each of the contexts which are referred to as being nested in each other and the way each one gives effect to the other. When the two theories are brought together the lineal process of tracking the integration of the learner described by the integration model is enhanced by measuring the development of the learner in each of the contexts as described by the ecological systems theory. The overlapping of the theories is contained in their common reference to the various environments that the learner is exposed to on his trajectory through his or her school career and beyond. We are of-course concerned specifically with what happens to the rural/township learner at the confluence - the suburban school, which is not a static event but a process both of integration and development. Bronfenbrenner's (1976) description of the proximal processing of an individual suggests that it becomes integral to the integration process that a learner will be exposed to on arrival at the suburban school. The integration model describes the various opportunities for integration such as classroom activity, social activities, sports and student activities. Brought together, these two models make a potent combination to observe the phenomenon more effectively.

Important too is the 'nested' concept that is introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1976) where each context or environment that the individual moves onto gets bigger, more complex and contributes significantly in a variety of ways to the individual's development while being intrinsically linked to each other during the individual's growth period which lasts throughout life. As the microsystem gives way to the mesosystem which broadens to

include the exosystem and then nests itself in the all-encompassing macrosystem they remain tracked by the chronosystem that helps gauge the growth and development of the individual (Bronfenbrenner 1986). In describing development in context, Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that maximum impact is derived from the interaction of the individual with these various contexts. The phases of separation, transition and incorporation described in Tinto's (1987) model of integration flows through these contexts described by Bronfenbrenner (1976) and maximises itself at the point of incorporation which focuses largely on integration of the individual at the institution. Integration as a process studied through these double lenses is the combination of the many activities and actions of individuals and environments both within and outside the institution with the individual playing the central role in becoming a part of the process taking place or withdrawing from it in various ways.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Thus, the crux of the combined theories which frames the integration process is Tinto's (1993) proposition: links to past as well as present communities and social and academic experiences are vital to the success of an individual that moves on to a new- experience-institution. Bronfenbrenner's (1986) emphasis that the individual's development within himself and the environments within which the individual operates from are necessary ingredients for success complements Tinto's (1993) proposition. Both theorists agree that the key to the individual's integration is the individual's own dynamic role in the process supported by initiatives and interventions put forth within each of the environments either by the background community or the new school. The synergy created by this joint effort will provide the platform for success. The knowledge from these theories, namely that the development of the child is dependent on the environment that processes him or her is useful in seeking answers to the critical questions that ask how stakeholders experience the drift and what becomes necessary for suburban schools seeking to integrate drifters in the sense that they will act as lenses through which to view what emerges from the phenomenon being studied.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This is a multiple- site case study that examined how suburban schools have responded to the call to integrate drifters from rural and township areas as part of the broad transformational agenda. The research design provides details of the researcher's proposal or plan to manage research and the procedure involved in putting the plan into action. It stands on three pillars: a broad assumption, world view or paradigm that colours the researcher's perspective of the study, the strategic enquiry tactic that connects with the world view and the actual *modus operandi* to be employed when generating data (Cresswell, 1994). The success of the investigative process rests on the ability of the researcher to ensure contextual engagement of the three pillars or contexts while keeping focus of the phenomenon being studied (Cresswell, 1994; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This qualitative study is nested in the interpretivist paradigm. The chapter details the research design which incorporates the broad inferences that were necessary to locate the study within the framework of an assumption, the strategy employed to collect data and the detail of methods used to collect, analyse and interpret the data (Murray & Beglar, 2009). The complexity of the area of research, the type of schools targeted, the people involved there as well as the researcher being comfortable interacting with people in the field are factors that were considered in selecting a research design for this study. The chapter opens with an explanation of the qualitative approach which frames the rest of the design. It moves on to describe the research paradigm and the compatibility of the qualitative study to the interpretivist paradigm. The next section deals with the research design, positing the choice of case study as the strategy for data collection. Details of the research setting, identifying the participants and the manner of gaining entry are unpacked in the next section. Arguments for the choice of the data collection instrument and its application are then discussed ending with the process involved in analysing the data. The chapter ends with an outline of how the issue of trustworthiness was handled before the concluding paragraph.

## **4.2 The Research Design**

### **4.2.1 The qualitative approach**

The qualitative approach provides the framework for the research design employed as a strategy for data generation in this study. Qualitative research is a way to probe, study and understand the sense people or groups attribute to a societal or human conundrum (Cresswell, 1994). It is reinforced by ontological and epistemological fundamentals that researchers employ in their attempts to interpret and understand social phenomenon (Jupp, 2006). The qualitative approach attempts to offer a perspective of the social phenomenon through the stories of the people, their actions, concepts and views of the world (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). As opposed to quantitative approaches which depend on prediction and deduction as a research method, qualitative approaches are more inductive, naturalistically designed and depend on the in-depth study of cases for attributes to emerge that will contribute to clarification and an understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002; Smit, 2001).

Hence, the qualitative study thrives on investigating, without interference, the phenomenon in its natural setting, allowing the participants to tell their story within their context and from their perspective (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Wheeldon, 2010). Furthermore, the qualitative approach permits greater flexibility in its quest for the real story by allowing the researcher to immerse himself or herself in the research process (Maree, 2007; Smit, 2001). Generating more individualised and unique data through the human instrument compared to quantitative methods that keep the researcher detached from the participants elicits wholesome, contextual stories not fragmented variables (Khanare, 2010; Wheeldon, 2010). There are various ways to approach qualitative research (Finlay, 2002). However, some general guidelines on the characteristics and stages of a qualitative study that will ensure its effectiveness are necessary when embarking on a qualitative research project: Qualitative studies do not, as a start employ a hypothesis but rather a single focus on the phenomenon but are open to the emergence of relationships later; although multiple methods and exacting processes are used to gather data, the strategy should be to use a single or multiple enquiry format such as case study, ethnography and phenomenology; faithfulness

and truth must prevail at all times to provide a realistic picture for readers by verifying and analysing data progressively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

A qualitative approach is indicated by its fitness for purpose and its use for what is appropriate (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). This study necessitated getting underneath the surface of what presented itself at former Model C Schools as they were explored to understand how they responded to integration of drifters. A qualitative researcher is pivotal in the process of collecting, selecting, constructing and interpreting data (Finlay, 2002). Surveys and questionnaires would have provided statistics that would have been used to quantify the relationship between the variables that were measurable and reported on (Cresswell, 1994). I was looking beyond relationships and trends towards listening to real stories of success or failure or both, trials and tribulations and generally treading uncharted territory to discover the truth rather than to guess or confirm what was hypothesised (Finlay, 2002; Maree, 2007). The qualitative approach allowed the flexibility to keep focus on the phenomenon while exploring thoughts, meanings, feelings and actions of the participants within the context of their own world (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Maree, 2007; Smit, 2001). But the qualitative approach is not without its limitations. Awareness of limitations to this study helped to prepare strategies to guard against them adversely affecting the study. Factors such as access, timeframes, resources data availability and credibility place certain limitations on studies (Vithal & Jansen, 2006). This study was a small scale, in-depth look at a particular phenomenon in a particular setting. Restricted time offered by schools and insufficient resources available may not have allowed me to probe the phenomenon as thoroughly as I would have preferred, the consequence of which was presenting findings limited by these constraints.

There is however, a limitation of another kind that one had to be mindful of as well: as Ritchie and Lewis (2003) posit, how a researcher carries out an investigation is dependent upon factors that span, amongst others, their own view of the make-up of their social world, what knowledge means and how to acquire it as well as the researcher's own interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The interconnectedness of the qualitative approach to the specific method of generating data is nuanced by the research

paradigm within which the researcher thinks and operates (Cresswell, 1994) and therefore necessitates unpacking.

#### **4.2.2 Research paradigm**

This study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. The research paradigm establishes the context for a researcher's study (Ponterotto, 2005). "A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). Worldview or philosophical assumption are other terms commonly used by researchers to describe a research paradigm (Cresswell, 1994). The nature of the social world, the person's contextual position in it and the multiple relationships possible within it define the researcher's paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It provides a kind of general positioning for the person within the world, relative to the person's research orientation, which is moulded by the academic area of interest, viewpoints held by those providing academic support and research experiences (Cresswell, 1994). The type of knowledge and the interest in a particular field of knowledge determines the paradigm within which a researcher will operate (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Basic beliefs are drawn from a person's grounding, culture or traditional norms and values that will have to be accepted frankly and on faith despite scholarly or other arguments because there is no mechanism to ascertain their fundamental philosophy (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1994) posit that categorising basic beliefs into particular paradigms can be achieved by finding the answers to three, fundamental and interrelated questions which are the ontological question, the epistemological question and the methodological question. The ontological assumption feeds the epistemological enquiry which in turn gives effect to methodological options; these determine instruments and data generation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

Ontology involves the nature of being and the reality of being (Ponterotto, 2005). Ontological assumptions are concerned with the essence and the form of the social phenomenon under investigation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007); the ontological question asks what the form and nature of reality is, what lies out there that can be discovered, the reality of how things work and the real existence of things (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher is led by the ontological question to ask whether the social reality being sought exists 'out there' in the world objectively or is a product of the individual's mind (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). It

forms the basis of the philosophy of existence (Smit, 2001). This forms the area of strength of the researcher's knowledge or the authority base from which the researcher operates (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

The epistemological assumption questions how the world is known (Smit, 2001). This study utilised a qualitative approach to discover how the phenomenon is known. An epistemological assumption concerns the foundations of knowledge, its form and nature as well as the process of acquisition of knowledge (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Epistemology involves the connexion between the participant and the researcher (Ponterotto, 2005). It is the search for knowledge truth as well as knowledge transfer *viz* how knowledge is communicated from those who know it to those who wish to know it as well as what the knower wishes to be made known (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Knowing, posit Guba and Lincoln (1994) is dependent on the researcher remaining objective in the search for the social reality by finding out how things actually work. Reality, which is socially constructed depends on the vibrant communication between the participant and the researcher which is pivotal to encapsulating and explaining the experience of those within the phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2005). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) regard this relationship between the person and the environment the third assumption. It follows then that the two questions discussed above will have a direct impact on the methodological question which deals with how knowledge of the world is gathered (Smit, 2001).

The objective or the subjective stance will demand appropriate research methods suited to data collection either from a detached position or from a position of involvement (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The nature and form of the fundamental philosophy that resides in the researcher usually guides the researcher towards adoption of either a qualitative, quantitative or a mix method direction of inquiry, each of which follows a specific research path (Cresswell, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jupp, 2006; Smit, 2001). Thus, a paradigm represents the stance taken by the researcher after having considered the three questions and responding to them in the way chosen therefore making it a *human construction* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In effect this suggests that the answers to the three questions are products of the human thinking based on value judgements which stand to be corrected because it does not represent the ultimate truth; such responses to human and social puzzles are

therefore dependent on the researcher's persuasive ability to convince readers of the utility of the adopted position rather than providing proof of the argument (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative approach which is contained in the interpretivist paradigm is the stated epistemology for this study.

These positions have a flow effect on the methodology that the researcher will employ in pursuing what needs to be known or what knowledge needs to be gained (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Wheeldon, 2010) which, for this study will be unpacked as the section unfolds. The paradigm in turn assumes a nexus between the knowledge interest and authority of the researcher and the object of study (Khun, 1962). The politics and principles that shape the knowledge interest of the researcher (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007) influence the investigator's direction of research, the methods employed and the interpretation of results (Bryman, 1988). Qualitative studies follow an interpretative approach to discover, make sense and report on the phenomenon being researched in its natural setting (Finlay, 2002; Smit, 2001). This brings us to the next part which is the interpretivist paradigm within which this qualitative study is vested.

The interpretivist paradigm adheres to a relativist view that adopts multiple, apprehendable and correspondingly valid realities that are constructed within the mind as opposed to a cause-effect approach employed by positivism that does not allow for the context to be taken into account (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ponterotto, 2005). A researcher's cultural, historical and personal background plays an illuminating role in how phenomenon is interpreted during the investigation process (Cresswell, 1994). It colours the framework through which the researcher observes the phenomenon. In attempting to seek an understanding of the world of others, the researcher becomes immersed into the lived world of the participants and becomes a co-creator of meaning of what is going on by bringing background subjective experience to the study (Voce, 2004). For example, experiencing and understanding how the education system worked prior to and post-apartheid has added value to my interpretations of what comes out of the interactions with participants who are drawn from 'both worlds' as it were. It is an attempt to understand society by exploring phenomenon through the eyes of the participants and the interpretation by the social actor who perceives it (Jupp, 2006). Important too is the



flexibility that the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to decode the dynamics of complex, interactive situations by deciphering the meaning systems of the phenomenon (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). This is based on the understanding that to gain access to reality, a researcher must be able to 'read' social constructions such as consciousness, language and shared meanings that emerge as people try to make sense of their situations (Smit, 2001). Nuances, emotions and focus on the particular are interpretivist clues that bring out fresh perspectives on the contextual meaning of the phenomenon (Smit, 2001). Such clues are only available to a researcher working at the coalface to feel and experience the 'vibes' emanating from the people as they interact within a particular scenario (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Observing, describing and recording specifics to reach wider meaning and make sense of these interactions are the inductive processes necessary when operating within the interpretivist paradigm (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Voce, 2004). The interpretivist approach differs from the traditional, quantitative approaches such as the positivist paradigm that operates scientifically to determine facts through verification (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Cresswell, 1994).

Some distinguishing features of the interpretivist paradigm as described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) are: People are spontaneous, acting instinctively and creatively in making sense through their actions within their natural setting; people play an active role in the construction of their world; processes and actions evolve in response to circumstances that fluctuate continuously; reality, which is defined by the people is both multifaceted and intricate and cannot be simplified for the sake of the researcher's understanding.

This study sought the complexity of the contextual world of the participant that can best be brought about through the interaction of the researcher with the participants at the coalface of the research site. The interpretivist paradigm therefore, justifiably provides the basis underpinning qualitative research methods employed to pursue a study (Ponterotto, 2005). It also establishes the foundation to make sense of the world of the participants by developing a mural of import as research work progresses rather than by starting out with a pre-conceived idea of what to expect (Cresswell, 1994). Researching the integration of drifting learners into suburban schools was facilitated by understanding that the interpretive paradigm integrates background cultural, historical and personal experiences of

the researcher in the field of research. Such a point of departure drew me into the process from the outset and allowed me to understand more empathetically what was going on.

Qualitative research viewed through the interpretivist paradigm can follow one of several methodologies. These include phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study and the historical route. The next section which is the design section describes the process of generating raw data from the field as well as how it was processed. It details the methodology of data collection, the preparation for collection, the instruments used, the precautions taken and the analysis process thereafter. The methodology or kind of research used to accumulate the information and transfer it as faithfully as possible into the report was the case study. In this case it was a multi-site case study. The method or the specific instrument employed was the unstructured interview which will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

#### **4.3. The case**

This is a multi-site case study that employed semi-structured interviews as the instrument to generate data. Multi-site refers to the same case being investigated at three or more sites. It was supported by observation. A case study is one type of a qualitative strategy for the in-depth exploration of a single activity, a process, an event, a single person or persons (Cresswell, 1994). Stake (1995) posits that a case study is twofold: a process of investigation into the case and the result of that investigation. The qualitative researcher usually studies such a specific phenomenon to make an analytic generalised finding by working through information gathered from narratives or responses to interviews of participants rather than a generalisation deduced from statistical findings (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). A case study as defined by Yin (1984) is a first-hand study that explores a phenomenon in its natural setting, particularly when the borders between the phenomenon and the context are blurred. Merriam (1998) defines the qualitative case study as an exhaustive, comprehensive account and examination of a particular occurrence, event or social spectacle. There was a natural tendency in this study to go the route of a case study because it depended on the stories people had to say of how they were making sense of the situation they found themselves in. The purpose of the case study as cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) is to depict, examine and explain through interaction the unique situations of ordinary people in the real

world going about their lives. The case study works through the understanding that context plays a pivotal role in establishing cause and effect (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). This is mediated however, by the complexity of the phenomenon which is regarded as the heart of the matter (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Investigating and reporting on the dynamic complexity of a phenomenon with evolving exchanges of events, developing human interactions and related issues is the mainstay of a case study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

The case or the unit of study for this research was the confluence between the three suburban schools and the drifters as they grappled with integration. The case, or the unit of study and what can be learned by exploring it is the focal point or the target of the case study (Stake, 1995). For the purposes of research, the case study is understood to contain three essential parts which are the unit of study, the research procedure and the product at the end (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1984). Merriam (1998) posits that the most important feature of a case study is the ring fencing of the focal point of the study. The resultant enclosed system under study is therefore referred to as “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries”(Merriam, 1998, p. 27). A case may be straightforward or multifaceted (Stake, 1995). The case could be the focus on an individual such as a teacher, a group, a role, a body of individuals, a policy, a school and such like (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Merriam, 1998). The specific phenomenon, in this case, what needs to happen for integration to be enabled at suburban schools, is the distinguishing feature in a case study. This is the area that was fenced in for the sake of this study. An important aspect of a case that a researcher has to understand is that there will be features that lie within and those that lie outside the boundaries of the study (Stake, 1995). Focus is on the heart of the case with the boundaries of the case being of less interest to the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Being based on human systems that have an integral dynamic to them, the case therefore has to be focussed and studied in depth, necessitating a boundedness for the sake of specification (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Stake, 1995). Boundedness of a case can be assessed by establishing the number of people that would be interviewed when studying a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). The design, which specifies the number of people to be interviewed, fences in the phenomenon as a specific, complex focus for analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Pre- determining how finite the data collection was going to be (Merriam,

1998), was the technique used to establish the boundedness of this case study. A case deals with a something that is operative and multifaceted but is specific (Stake, 1995).

Choosing the case study is dependent on what the researcher is trying to understand (Yin, 1984). Further to this Yin (1984) adds that 'why' and 'how' questions are better suited to the case study. A researcher usually chooses to work within a bounded system because of interest in the particular issue, a concern with the matter, a hypothesis or even to get a better understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). A simple instance of a bounded system is one which has an obvious boundary around it that easy to decipher (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). An example of a bounded case could be a school child, a classroom, or the school curriculum. The case or the bounded system was selected for this study because of the interest in gaining a fuller, deep understanding of what is happening at the confluence of the drifting rural and township learners and the suburban schools as they contend with the process of integration. Stake (1995) refers to studies undertaken to grasp a better understanding of the phenomenon as *intrinsic case studies*. The main reason for undertaking such a study is because of the researcher's interest in exploring, analysing and interpreting the area rather than to come to grips with something abstract about the phenomenon or testing an hypothesis (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). The case study facilitates this by allowing the researcher to get as close as possible to the natural setting of the phenomenon (Stake, 1994). The context, such as institutional, geographical, organisational and other factors are contributory in determining the boundary of the case and are defined by the roles of the participants within the phenomenon (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The focus on a single unit of enquiry allows the researcher to explore, discover and provide a full description of how factors central to the phenomenon interact (Merriam, 1998). Such a case study design is particularly suited in instances where the context and its variables are difficult to separate (Yin, 1984). These characteristics of the bounded system are particularly suited to this study that delves into a highly subjective area of interaction.

#### **4.3.1 A search for the particular**

What is useful to understanding a case is a comprehensive knowledge of the particular and acknowledging that it is located in numerous different contexts (Stake, 1978). A case study endeavours to describe how it feels to be in the setting to grasp first-hand the close up

world of the phenomenon and to get a rich, thick description of the participants' world of experiences and in its real-life context (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Geertz, 1973). Special features of a case study characterise it as being either *particularistic*, *descriptive* or *heuristic* (Merriam, 1998). Delving into the phenomenon during research for this study meant looking for the particular within the confluence of the drifters and the suburban school that would reveal how suburban schools sought to cope with integration. Each of these elements are examined below because they have relevance to the case this study investigated. This study set out to investigate a particular phenomenon and relied on the rich, thick description necessary to relay the complexities of the phenomenon to the reader to allow a better understanding of what the study set out to explore.

*Particularistic* refers to the case focusing on a particular phenomenon, event, circumstance or programme (Merriam, 1998). What is revealed about the phenomenon and what it stands for lends significance to the case (Merriam, 1998). The feature of specifically focussing on a problem aspect made the case study a good design for this research because it concentrated attention on a particular group of people bounded by the research question while capturing a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon. Stake (1994) posits that the particularistic focus of the case brings out the unusual by drawing on the way it functions, its historical background and geographical setting as well as contexts including legal, political, economic and social extracted through the involvement of the participants. The particularistic nature of a case is characterised by the way the researcher's bias may or may not influence it; the manner in which it lends itself to exploration of a particular instance but clarify a general conundrum; providing direction to the reader about how to react or respond to a particular situation (Merriam, 1998). How suburban schools sought to cope with integration given the historical and political background of the former Model C Schools lent a particularistic angle to how these schools function now.

*Descriptive* implies the outcome of the case is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998). A case study that is descriptive allows the phenomenon to speak for itself rather than being arbitrated, decoded or appraised by the researcher (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). While the case study may combine objective and subjective data in being comprehensive and descriptive, this in no way means that it is just illustrative and not

systematic (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Terms such as exploratory, lifelike, holistic and grounded have been used to describe case studies which, as a qualitative rule incorporate as many variables as they can and can also gather data over a period of time strategically decided by the researcher (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1978). The descriptive nature of case studies allows it to be built on complexity of issues; include the impact of the past on the present as well as the effect of the period taken to compile the study; comprise rich material such as newspaper articles, interviews, quotations and other descriptive sources; bring out the complexity of the outcome achieved as a result of differing opinions (Merriam, 1998). Integration of drifters is a complex phenomenon given the various factors discussed in the literature as well as the theoretical chapters. Building the story of the drifters who find themselves in the suburban schools needed a descriptive approach to recording the happenings within the phenomenon.

*Heuristic* implies that a case study illuminates the person's understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Merriam, 1998). This happens in many ways such as confirming what is known, discovering new meaning, clarifying the phenomenon and extending the experience of the reader or the researcher. The heuristic nature of a case study unravels variables and connexions unknown prior to the study which lead to a reconsideration of the phenomenon under study (Stake, 1995). An understanding of how things got to the stage that they are at can be expected (Stake, 1995). The heuristic aspect of a case can unpack a problem in terms of its background, providing explanations for what happened and why; clarify why something succeeded or failed while providing the opportunity to assess and deliberate on options not selected; increase its possible applicability by its potential to assess, summarise and draw conclusions of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Findings for this study, the analysis and the recommendations made are heuristic in nature and will, hopefully, contribute to a better understanding of all stakeholders about integration of drifters in suburban schools.

#### **4.3.2 The uniqueness of a case study**

A research design plays a key role in setting apart a case study from others. Merriam (1998) postulates that although the method in a case study makes it unique, the research questions in relation to the outcome of the study are just as important. Stake (1994) extends this,

suggesting that there are four main differences between knowledge gained from other types of research as opposed to case study knowledge. First, he argues that it is more tangible and resonates with the researchers' own experience because it is not abstract but more solid, intense and corporeal. Secondly, Stake (1994) posits that it is more complex contextually since the researcher's experiences are deeply embedded in numerous backgrounds or contexts. Such case study knowledge sets itself apart from formal, abstract knowledge gained through the application of differing research designs. In the third instance case study knowledge is more extended by the reader's understanding who views the case study through lenses tinged with their own experiences and interpretation (Stake, 1994). Generalisations are evolved when old data is supplemented by new data and contribute to knowledge production (Stake, 1994). Fourthly, Stake (1994) suggests that case study knowledge is more reference- population based, meaning that when the reader engages with the case study, generalisation is extended to a reference- population the reader has in mind. Suburban schools, drifters, the DBE and various education stakeholders would benefit from the outcome of this case study.

#### **4.3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of case studies**

Just like other research designs, case studies also have their strengths and weaknesses. A research design is weighted by the rationale proffered for choosing it as the best plan to explore the research problem (Merriam, 1998). It has been argued that case studies do not exhibit a high level of control making it difficult to illustrate cause and effect inferences (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The element of researcher and participant bias (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2003) is also a pivotal factor in case studies which make generalisation difficult (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Prior selection of what data are presented can also weaken a case study because only the researcher will know what was included and what was left, allowing the unethical researcher to be selective in illuminating what he wants to foreground (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Other limitations that need to be considered during the study are: inadequate or lack of research training; results not being generalizable; insufficient resources such as money and time to ensure rich thick descriptions; oversimplifying the study; subjective researcher integrity and sensitivity that impact on choices and selections during the process (Dyer, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Merriam (1998) however posits that a case study still remains the best design to answer a

research question and its weaknesses are eclipsed by its strengths. The limitations described here have been a consideration in the planning of my research and countered by taking steps not to weaken the outcome. This case study sought to strengthen its outcome by budgeting time and money appropriately, ensuring that timeframes for participant interviews were negotiated well in advance and took place according to schedule. A thorough understanding of case studies served as a constant reminder of subjectivity and the danger of bias during interviews. In addition, results were written up in reader friendly language both to take back to participants to verify and so that they are easily understood by readers. Choosing the case study for this research was an attempt to present the real-life story of the interaction of the drifters and the suburban school at the confluence as they grappled with integration. In doing so the uniqueness of the process was also captured in the way it was analysed and interpreted. This study endeavoured to portray the complex interaction that emanates from the players at this confluence. It was important to be as faithful as possible to the participants while attempting to give the reader a sense of living the experience. In preparing the narrative report that emerged from the case study, the three main stages viz starting with a wide focus in undertaking the study, progressively narrowing the field of focus and presenting the draft to participants were followed (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

## **4.4 Methodology**

### **4.4.1 The research setting**

The research setting can be viewed as the social, physical and cultural site where the researcher undertook the study (Cresswell, 1994). A researcher should not intrude into a setting and attempt to take control of the site or the conditions of the study but should rather focus on natural activities to locate him or her in the context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 1994). The idea of presenting the research setting is to be able to give the 'audience a front row seat at the movie theatre' as it were so that they may catch all the action of the complex behaviour as participants interact with each other and of their situatedness in 'realtime' background. The research setting must endeavour to give the audience a sense of being there (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).



This study was conducted at three former Model C Schools within the Durban Metropolitan area. These were Meraska School which is a Primary School, Camalita Preparatory which is also a Primary School and Roaine High which is a Secondary School. They were selected on the basis of availability and access being granted. Former Model C Schools are government schools that were previously whites only schools in South Africa that still remain state schools but are funded by parents, past learners as well as commerce and industry. They usually charge fees that are lower than independent schools. The schools although similar in operation were situated in different parts of the city suburbs and did not have any day-to-day dealings with each other. They were chosen because of proximity from the researcher who resides in KwaZulu-Natal as access facilitated by local networking. What they did have in common is that rural and township drifters sought admission there in pursuit of what they perceived as a better quality education. This is the research setting that suited the characteristics sought by this study. Purposive sampling, which is a feature of qualitative research, allows investigators to cherry-pick sites for study according to their fitness for purpose (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). These sites were carefully chosen that way so that they could be investigated as separate entities but with the same objective hence becoming a multiple-site case study. This information was made available to me from DBE officials that interacted with the schools in question and subsequently confirmed by their principals in my initial engagement with them. The sample thus suited the specific purpose of the study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

While a more detailed picture of each school will be portrayed in the presentation and discussion chapter, it is necessary to present some broad brushstrokes of the setting in general at this stage. This will allow the reader to get a visual of the research setting and better comprehend this particular process. All three schools are set in spacious grounds located within leafy suburbs of the previously upmarket part of the city. Access to the schools is easy if you live within the city and especially if you own a car. In the previous Education Department administered by the apartheid government, schools such as these would have received the highest budget allocation amongst all schools in the country. These former Model C Schools were highly resourced as a result and have maintained their status as well-resourced schools up to this point. Because funding to them has been significantly reduced by the present DBE, they depend on fundraising, corporate connections and higher

than normal school fees to keep the *status quo*. Their main competition comes from independent schools that historically attract the higher-end parent who can afford exorbitant school fees.

All three principals served under the old Natal Education Department prior to democracy as teachers and in management positions and have come through the ranks of their schools. Some staff members are still here from the time the schools were Model C while there are some new faces. Demographics suggest that staffing at these schools is still largely white. Administration staff is mostly white. Learner population also shows a larger white component than the other races put together. All are well uniformed and seem happy in their environment. Discipline is good and learner attainment is excellent at all three sites. In all three schools parent visibility during the school day is high, some being involved in volunteering for duties such as running the tuck shop while others may be present because of appointments related to their children's schooling. The three campuses exude a feeling of seriousness and professionalism when you arrive at the school. From access control through to reception and finally meeting with the principal the process is well organised and very professional. Although people are always busy with work, everything still follows an orderly pattern of operation.

Grounds and buildings at these schools are immaculately maintained and are used to capacity. Learners are seen in the grounds for physical education, in the halls for subjects such as speech and drama and either in specialist rooms or classrooms for lessons. Teachers are present at all these venues. There is order and discipline as everybody goes about their work. There is a waiting list for admission at all three schools indicating a demand for places at these schools. One gets the overall the impression that all is well.

#### **4.4.2 The participants**

With the choice of sites accomplished and access confirmed, the next step was to identify and confirm participants from whom the data were to be generated (Vithal & Jansen, 2006). Three important questions led the researcher to the choice of participants for the study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007): Will the timeframe the researcher works within permit interacting with all the identified persons? What kind of sample is required? How to ensure a representative sample of the selected sites? The rationale behind the exercise was to

purposely select participants who would provide the best data to get a better understanding of the phenomenon (Cresswell, 1994). In the qualitative approach purposive sampling allows the use of a representative number of participants to be handpicked to gain an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon (Maree, 2007). Therefore the purposive sample had to provide the researcher with maximum learning (Merriam, 1998). Guba and Lincoln (1994) regard the choice of participants in the role of information sources as a potent mechanism for knowledge transfer from the phenomenon to the investigator. In such instances the researcher whose experiences and training mitigate his or her role gets drawn into the process as both investigator and participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Choice of participants is also important for the researcher who wants to go beyond the ordinary happenings and detect details of the phenomenon that are not immediately perceived but can be obtained through interacting with the people (Stake, 1995). Such nuances are only achieved through the dynamic of deep and focused interaction with participants in their natural setting as they make meaning of the complexity of their situations (Stake, 1995).

Eighteen participants, six from each school were identified to be interviewed for this study. They were made up of the principal, the deputy, one head of department, one teacher, one learner and one parent member preferably from the school governing body. A wide ranging data source yielding detailed and in-depth data brings out the uniqueness and individuality (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007) in the representative sample chosen purposively to interrogate the phenomenon. The principals at all three sites had been teachers or members of management in their respective schools prior to 1994 and had been subsequently promoted to head of the school. This was a bonus because they suited the research objective perfectly. Although drifting did occur sporadically and at the behest of the suburban schools prior to democracy, the so called 'scramble' began after 1994. Principals were able to paint a picture for me of the terrain before, during and after democracy up to the present which gave the study a central thread that it could follow through as the other participants gave their versions of the story of integration. It is also important to include principals in such studies because they are the nexus between the various stakeholders at a school and generally reflect the character of the school (Gonzalez & Thomas, 2011). Furthermore, leadership demonstrated by the principal especially in times of change impact the

perceptions of stakeholders especially the parent community (Swick, 2003) an aspect that added depth and offered clarity to questions that arose during interviews.

Principals are gatekeepers of their schools and have the potential to block access to the 'right' participants. I chose to be upfront with them, making my intentions clear to the principals at the outset so that I could rely on their assistance to choose the right persons to participate in the interviews. By this I mean persons who were able to bring a wealth and a depth of information to our interviews. Having made this clear to the principals, they were very helpful in the process of choosing the sample of participants drawn from teachers, parents and learners. However, the potential for bias in helping to identify participants within their schools was always present, prompting me to specify the preferred periods from which I wanted participants drawn. Where possible I tried to secure teacher participants who would bring rich, thick descriptions with them to the interviews because of various factors such as length of service at the school, exposure to the period of transition and those that came in well after transition. DBE policy led by government legislation at the time ensured that almost all teachers serving at suburban schools prior to democracy were white. With the advent of transition there has been a shift in employment tendencies, albeit minimal, to include teachers of colour at these schools. Where possible, I endeavoured to include in the sample, such teachers that had come in soon after democracy as well as later in the process as part of the sample. This spread was purposively chosen to give me a wide spectrum of how different people saw the same phenomenon. In some schools I had the luxury of interviewing additional staff members from different phases. Besides this, the semi-structured interview questions were designed in such a way that they were able to draw participants into conversation about experiences that I wished to talk about thereby generating the kind of data the study needed.

When selecting the parent participants of the schools to participate in the interviews my intention was to target those that served on the school governing body. I considered such persons to be useful because they would have the additional benefit of knowing the inner workings of the schools as well. More importantly, I tried to find drifting parents that had subsequently been elected onto the governing bodies so that I got a real feel of how those that came in from the 'outside' perceived the phenomenon. I was successful in two of the

schools, recruiting drifting school governing body members to be participants. In the third school I was able to interview a drifted parent that was however, not a member of the school governing body. In the learner sample, I choose drifters as my participants. Here, I targeted learners that had started their schooling at township or rural schools and subsequently been admitted to these suburban schools. The idea was to understand the effect of *proximal processing* (Vide Chapter Three, section 3.1.10.3) in each of the environments on the learners and the impact of different schooling systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Thus, through this selection process the participants were secured within a bounded system (Merriam, 1998) to investigate the phenomenon. The variety included in the purposive sample was to ensure that the phenomenon was treated holistically while maximising what could be learned from this particular case (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Further, as suggested by Cresswell (1994), qualitative studies give researchers the room to design frameworks that accord the previously marginalised a voice. While the selection of participants endeavoured to ensure that the voice of the drifters was heard during the study, it did not compromise the balance and integrity of the study by leaving out the voice of the establishment.

#### **4.4.3 Gaining entry**

Timeframes are a vital part of planning a research project as I discovered. Before any fieldwork commenced, the necessary go-ahead needed to be secured from two authorities *viz* the DBE and the university. Firstly, my research centred on 3 public schools in KwaZulu-Natal that were controlled by the DBE. Secondly, this study was being conducted under the aegis of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Before anything was done, consent had to be gained from both these institutions. Permission was sought from the Provincial DBE (Appendix 2) to conduct research in the specified schools and ethical clearance requested from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix 1). Ethical clearance from the university was received within the timeframe set for the process, flowing smoothly from the research proposal stage to receipt of the final letter of approval. However, permission I sought from the DBE at the provincial level was not forthcoming as the time for fieldwork approached. My application was made a year in advance. Direct representation was made to the Head of Department and the letter collected personally so that my plans were not jeopardised by

upsetting the time frames and creating additional limitations (*Vide* Chapter Seven, section 7.2.3). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) warn that researchers ought to safeguard permission to gain entry to the site as a factor that should be considered early in the process of conducting a study and that it is also practical.

In the case of access to schools, permission had to be tied in with practicality (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Such practicality includes being mindful to try and fit in with the schools' operational side such as school times and availability of staff members during teaching time. Another practicality was to be careful not to ruffle feathers while ensuring that the study is not compromised. Entry can be denied by potential participants for various practical reasons such as unavailability of time to be interviewed by the researcher or something that the potential participants do not want to reveal or discuss (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). In the case of the schools initially targeted as potential participants, consideration had to be given to the main gatekeeper - the principal and the willingness to open up the school and allow reasonable access to participants and information. This was important because while access to the school might be gained, the amount and kind of information made available could be mitigated by the influence of the principal on the institution (*Vide* Chapter Five section 5.6). Some institutions are also quite circumspect about information being released into the public domain (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

Having worked out the type of school and participants I wished to target, the entry phase had to be carefully planned. The reader will have to understand that these were former Model C Schools and still run mainly by principals and teachers who had been part of the old system that denied access to black learners and as such may be tentative about studies probing how they were handling integration. As pointed out earlier, I had assistance in securing introductions to schools that I had chosen as potential and possible participants. Of the three schools, the third, Camalita Preparatory School was the easiest to gain access to because I had previously interacted with the principal there as a colleague within the same circuit and we were in touch with each other. With the first principal at Meraska School, I was introduced by a mutual friend of ours and was able to secure an initial interview to introduce myself and tell her about my research. This worked out well for a few reasons. The principal, who had been around since the transition and was due to retire in a year

wanted to talk about her experiences there since she was instrumental in opening the school under the new order. She had a jolly demeanour and a welcoming personality that made it easy for me to explain what I wished to do at the school. Having clarified the research strategy and the number as well as the type of participants, we were able to set a date for the start of the process. Gaining entry here went smoothly and according to plan. Roaine High, which was the second I visited, was bit of a challenge to gain entry. Having been introduced to the school by a department official who was the now retired circuit manager of the school, securing the first interview with the principal was straightforward. Buoyed by my experience at Meraska School, I arrived with my video camera and note pad and expected that we would launch immediately into a discussion about the research and move on to identifying participants as well as when I would interview them. I had my first experience of failure here. The principal here, was, however, very guarded and said that allowing me to come in to talk about the study did not necessarily mean permission had been granted. Tables were turned and the interviewer was interviewed- thoroughly! I had to put my equipment away and agree just to talk as well as answer questions that she had about where all this was going. Many points of clarity were raised by the principal who wanted to ensure that the school, which is one of the best performing in the country, was not impacted negatively by the study. It would be unfair to say that she wanted to hide anything from me. She had been here for over 20 years and built the school into a top performer that always had a huge waiting list for admission. It was obvious that she was not about to let anybody in that would project the school negatively at this point in their success. As we spoke about her journey, we compared notes about my experiences in turning around a rural school when I was a principal there. That conversation opened the gates. I was awarded the National Teaching Award for Lifetime Achievement for turning around a rural, dysfunctional school. She said "Oh, now I know who you are- I read all about your work at that school in the newspapers" and the conversation eased from there on. My work there had given me an unexpected reward here. The principal's attitude changed and we found some common ground in the type of work we had done at our respective schools. She pledged her full support and allowed me to specify who I wished to interview. Dates were agreed on and entry was secured. The third, Camalita Preparatory, as I said earlier was pretty straightforward from the first meeting onwards. The principal was agreeable to

participate and to allow her staff, learners and parent members to participate as well. She seemed enthusiastic about letting me find out the type of work they were doing there. We however, went through the formalities of explaining what the study was about and which type of participants I was looking to interview. Dates for the interviews were set and the process was able to move forward.

The formal aspect of the process had also to be dealt with. To safeguard process and procedure all three schools were handed copies of letters of permission to conduct research from the DBE. Together with this letter the principals were handed letters seeking permission to conduct research in their schools. After receiving a positive written response from the school, I then sent letters seeking permission to each of the participants. When these were returned indicating that the participants were willing to be interviewed I held a meeting at each school with the participants to outline the study, the process and check if there were any concerns. The importance of having the support of the gatekeeper cannot be overemphasised. Participants' positive responsiveness to being interviewed obviously hinged on the discussion the principal had with them. Availability on the dates suggested by the school was also confirmed. Once past this point, we were able to proceed to the interviews on the appointed dates and times. These are all reasonably well resourced schools with meeting rooms easily made available. As a result in all three schools I was able to interview participants at the school in a quiet room away from the humdrum of office activities. Through the principal I was able to establish that the parents whom I targeted, chose to be interviewed at school as well rather than at their homes or a quiet place elsewhere. This was confirmed when I met them.

#### **4.4.4 Data collection instruments**

I started off this study planning to use the semi-structured interview as the only data generation instrument. Literature suggests however, that qualitative research often thrives through the use of more than one data generation instrument in each case (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Employing more than one data generation instrument is also helpful in the process of triangulation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The semi-structured interview route was chosen after careful consideration of the other processes. Doing a document search would have exposed me to what persons had written or not written for various



reasons. These would have been cold facts that did not speak to me or my topic. What else could it tell me? It could not talk about history or reveal attitudes of people at the time. cursory discussion during the introductory meetings at each of the schools also revealed that there was little or no historical records kept on the arrival of drifters or the occurrences within the schools pertaining to challenges or successes in relation to integration of drifters. Observation too, would not have provided the kind of insight I was looking for. Observation of a lesson in an integrated class, for example, might have yielded some information about how people respond to each other but it would not have helped me understand why they did so. I needed people to tell me what happens in their situation and the observation could quite easily be garnered from participants through careful questioning. Another important consideration was that integration is an ongoing 'live' process that dates from the present and has a start in the year of democracy that had to be interrogated interactively. Having thought about it in depth, I finally made a decision that this particular application was the best way to pursue my research. I was quite happy about the quality it produced in relation to what I was looking for.

However, during my early visits to the schools I found that I had started to observe what was happening outside the school, within the campus grounds, waiting in the foyer and how learners interacted as they moved from one class to another during period changes. It played a useful part in forming a first impression of the schools as well. Realising that this could also add depth to the data I was generating through the semi-structured interviews I decided to bring it in as a supplementary instrument. The observation schedule (Appendix 6) and the interview schedule (Appendices 3, 4 and 5) were therefore developed to satisfy this objective. Later when reviewing interviews captured on my video camera I discovered that many things could be observed there as well such as body language, the charts on the wall and the expression on a person's face. However, I stress that the semi-structured interview remains the main instrument and the observations made were used minimally and mainly as supplementary and support material where necessary.

#### **4.4.5 Semi- structured interviews**

In qualitative research, interviews are regarded as the most important and main source of data (Merriam, 1998). Interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is central to

constructing the knowledge about the phenomenon as they interpret the lived world of the participants by an interchange of views and experiences (Kvale, 1996). As an instrument for data collection the interview is flexible, allowing the use of non-verbal, verbal, heard and spoken sensory channels to be utilised (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Unlike ordinary conversation, the interview is based on questioning and is specific, having been pre-planned and constructed (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Interviews differ in the way they are structured and are based on 'fitness for purpose'. The structured interview is utilised to formulate questions when the researcher is aware of what is not known while the semi-structured interview is used as a tool when the researcher is not aware of what he does not know (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Wanting to obtain individualised, unique and unregulated information I found myself leaning towards semi-structured interviews (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The schedule of questions I prepared was used as a guide to keep the discussion on track rather than letting it dictate the interview process (Smith, 1995). Semi-structured interviews, used creatively, enable the researcher to don the lenses worn by the participant and see their interpretation of the world in the manner that they interpret it (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). It enables voyaging with the participants as their opinions and perceptions are explored (Barriball & While, 1994). Having explored literature in this field extensively, I found that information on what actually took place at the confluence of drifters and the suburban school was scarce. I had to maximise this opportunity to interact with participants in such a way that I unlocked and let flow the latent data they possessed. Smit (2001) successfully used this interactive style in his study to understand how teachers engaged with change in policy. I wanted the story to lead me rather than to stick with a formally structured set of questions that would constrain free expression amongst participants.

Understanding that knowledge generation and data production are better served through interactions that are up close and flexible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in a more relaxed and informal setting, I was able to get gatekeepers to provide such venues for me. The exploratory nature of the semi-structured interview gives the researcher a better opportunity to gain a comprehensive picture of the participants' perceptions, beliefs or their situation within the phenomenon (Smith, 1995). Being up close and allowing width in the

process of interviewing brought out the unique story each participant had to tell, enabling them to say it with candour, honesty and authenticity while infusing it with their emotions that added depth and richness to it (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Careful preparation and comfortable settings assisted my process of data generation enormously. During the interviews emotions and sentiments that captured the essence of the story flowed easily once any early obstacles had been overcome, giving me a very real feel of what happened during certain incidents or time periods. It further allowed me to open up the interaction, following interesting leads by choosing how to use sequence, expression and subject matter to understand the phenomenon better (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). This kind of flexibility allows the researcher to pursue different angles and yield richer data (Smith, 1995). This was true of my interviews where the questioning order was changed when necessary to suit the storyline as it emerged, thereby providing greater depth to the core phenomenon being explored. Semi-structured interviews give the researcher the freedom to explore novel areas that result from concerns or interests (Smith, 1995). There were many instances during interviews when respondents would suddenly throw in a juicy anecdotal experience that, when followed up, unearthed a wealth of information pertaining to the phenomenon. At times some of the more senior participants would, on reflection laugh out loud and continue with the discussion thereafter. While the semi-structured interview may be less rigid in the way it is conducted, it needs thorough and careful planning (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). I found that the more thoroughly I was prepared, the more comfortable participants felt to open up and speak freely about various happenings within their situations. Listening carefully and deliberately, pausing appropriately during questioning, allowing the participant to break into a line of questioning and even to deviate when responding were things I had been preparing for. To this end I found open-ended questions particularly useful because their flexibility allows exhaustive probing of the participants' knowledge (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

The semi-structured interview actually eased any tension or anxiety among participants that had not gone through any interview process in their lives before except for the posts they were holding. This is especially useful if the participants are unknown to the researcher. Being prepared and properly organised, I was immediately able to settle down the participants and remove any anxiety that was there by starting with a few related lead

questions that allowed them to chat about their lives at the school in general. Establishing such a rapport assists the researcher to look beyond the story and explore beliefs, values, attitudes and motives which would not be possible in any other form of engagement such as a survey or formal interview (Barriball & While, 1994). This establishes a foundation on which to build an interview to match the circumstances and the respondent (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Once interest of the participant is established it provides confidence in the participant to contribute more naturally rather than be prodded on (Barriball & While, 1994).

The semi-structured interview gains its strength by the way in which it can be developed from observation of both the person and the environment (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Observation of some of the more senior participants brought to mind Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of proximal processing of how a person and the environment continually interact during the person's development. I was finding evidence of that at Roaine High: It became obvious that the potential participants had been briefed about the interview by the principal and given her interpretation of how it would probably go. I was able to easily move the participants beyond this paradigm and probe them in areas of interest to me. When sensitive issues come up for discussion, the close-up interaction assists in evaluating the validity of responses by detecting non-verbal signs such as body language (Barriball & While, 1994). Novel and additional data uncovered in this way, as discovered by Kilpatrick and Johns (2001) who used semi-structured interviews in their five case studies, can also be useful to enrich the study. Probing, as a strategy during the semi-structured interview, facilitates comparability of responses while it ensures that participants do not receive help from others when articulating a response (Barriball & While, 1994). In this context it became clear as I moved along that the response rate was higher and always provided something more than was expected at the start.

There is also a downside to semi-structured interviews. They could drag on beyond the timeframe set for the task and incur additional costs for the researcher or make it difficult to set up a second appointment with the participant. Sometimes, because of the dragging on or lack of skill on the part of the interviewer, there is also the danger of the participants losing interest in the process or even the researcher himself losing control of the interview

(Smith, 1995). A researcher has to keep in mind that showing complete interest in the participants' answers is only half the job- keeping the respondent interested is the main task. Another danger warns Merriam (1998) is the interviewer sending out unconscious signals that leads the participants towards what the interviewer wants to hear. Not everything went right in the course of my interviews although the process was largely successful especially through the flexibility that semi-structured interviewing brings to the process of data generation. At Camalita Preparatory the learner participants began the interview with many yes and no answers. The learner had to be coaxed into talking rather than answering questions until she was comfortable with what was her first ever interview. The deputy principal at Meraska School was extremely talkative and would constantly break away to relate stories about his time in his previous rural school. Although these were interesting to listen to, I had a timeframe to stick to as well as a schedule to deal with so it took careful manoeuvring to steer him back to the interview. At the same school a younger teacher who at first assumed that only good examples and nice sounding experiences would be useful to me had to be encouraged to speak of real life experiences as they occurred. At Roaine High it immediately became apparent that teachers were being extremely cautious about race issues and would couch their answers in carefully worded sentences at first. I worked hard at 'breaking the ice' and asking them to speak openly before the interviews started flowing smoothly again. Depending on the depth of the data unearthed and the personal nature of some experiences and situations it may lead to difficulties in organising and analysing data and generalising the findings. Another problem that can arise is when dissimilar data are gathered from different participants who are asked similar questions (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Those that occurred I found were not misleading but accounts of events or happenings as participants remembered them. A semi-structured interview is supposed to flow naturally once set in motion allowing for a rapport to develop between the interviewer and the participant (Smith, 1995). This can become problematic where particular questions do not evolve naturally (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Where such situations started arising I slowed down and allowed conversation to flow before I mainstreamed the interview again.

#### **4.4.6 Observation**

As soon as I entered the field I realised that some kind of observation was going to be inevitable. Instead of ignoring what was 'in my face' I decided to incorporate observation as supplementary semi-structured interviews. Chapter Five, which presents a background to the schools I visited hinges on information about the observations I made as I entered the schools, waited in the reception areas or walked to interview rooms and so on. There are other points of observation as well but I've allowed them to speak for themselves in the discussion and presentation. I must reiterate though that in the main it was the semi-structured interviews that brought in the most important and substantial part of the data.

Semi-structured interviews are often strengthened by the inclusion of observation helping to provide a 'brighter' picture of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). I did draw up a schedule as a guide when I found myself beginning to observe detail that I happened upon. An example of this was the first time I went to a school to speak to the principal I found myself studying the leader board in the foyer that showed the top performing learners over the years. An observation of interest to the study was that up to a certain year, all the names were of white learners only, thereafter showing names of learners from different race groups. The observation spoke to my opening chapter that posits that not all drifters arrive at suburban schools to receive quality education- some of them arrive to exploit their intellect and possibly end up at the top of the leader board. Another observation I made was how young drifters quickly acclimatised to the ways of the suburban school which showed in the manner they interacted with the clerks, greeted visitors and even spoke to each other. Cognisance had to be taken of the caveat posed by Merriam (1998) that observation had to be organised and systematic. I therefore ensured that I took down detailed, descriptive notes of observations that caught my eye and was able to separate trivia from the real data (Morrison, 1998). When utilised, the observation data were brought in as supporting material to the main feed from semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.4.7 Data analysis**

The main purpose of analysing data is to make sense of the data gathered by interpreting it and theorising it once the fieldwork is over (Vithal & Jansen, 2006). This entails getting the data organised, reducing it, describing and explaining it (Smit, 2001). In making meaning of

the data, the context of the participants in relation to the phenomenon must be a main consideration in order to extract categories, themes, patterns and symmetries (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Smit, 2001). There are numerous ways in which qualitative data can be analysed and presented bearing in mind that '*fitness for purpose*' should guide the researcher (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Important, however, is that data analysis in a qualitative study should be an ongoing and a developmental process (Smit, 2001).

Data analysis was an ongoing process that I started during the initial stages of data collection: reading literature, debating suitability of theoretical frameworks and methods and methodologies that would suit this study. The process was continuous up to the point of writing the final chapter. However, the analysis had to be supported by the mechanics of the process which I outline below.

Two main or broad stages of analysing data gathered for this study were established at the outset:

*Stage 1:* Each time after data were gathered. This could be after an interview or at the end of a series of interviews on that day. I would proceed to transcribe the data which was collected electronically after which a preliminary analysis would be done.

*Stage 2:* At the end of the collection process when all the data were transcribed and ready the final analysis would begin.

As posited by Smit (2001) data analysis is an ongoing process that develops exponentially. Early analysis of data helps to select out important elements for later attention to prevent data overload (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). In organising and analysing the results, data from each research question was dealt with separately during describing, summarising and interpretation to present a clearer picture (Murray & Beglar, 2009). I chose generation of themes and categories as my '*fitness for purpose*' when approaching the analysis. A three step method was adopted in the analysis which commenced with cleaning the data, moving on to organising it and concluded with explaining or re-presenting the data (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tesch, 1990; Vithal & Jansen, 2006). The three step method is not a straightforward linear process but rather an iterative one (Henning, Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). These steps are laid out below:

*Step 1:* My analysis actually commenced during the data collection process where connections, differences, similarities, themes and categories were reflected upon as a preamble to the formal analysis process. The reflections formed the basis of the structure for the analysis which started with transcribing the data each time they were collected. After transcribing, I proceeded to read the data, breaking them up into smaller expressive pieces which gave meaning to my research questions at the same time making notes. Trends were identified to meaningfully group the data. Selecting the rich, thick parts of the data units I noted my assumptions and perceptions alongside them. Data were also read and checked for any inconsistencies such as different dates from different participants about the same incident and inaccuracies. The process served as a useful pointer to pursue issues unfolding in the interviews which would then be followed up subsequently (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005). Where it was necessary to get further clarification or understanding of what I had selected, I would go back to the body of the data and re-examine them for additional material. These issues would become key drivers in the next session of data generation. This step, which had to be done thoroughly, was time consuming, sometimes frustrating and often could not be completed as planned at the end of each session or day.

*Step 2:* At this point data had to be read and re-read many times over, initially to 'get into the zone' and understand the crucial elements of the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants which is characteristic of a researcher pursuing a qualitative study within an interpretivist paradigm. Careful scrutinizing, highlighting key phrases or responses was important to enable me to differentiate subtle changes in responses to the same question to participants that may have nuanced the meaning of what each was saying. Using comparisons, I clustered similar bits in an effort to improve themes and conceptual similarities while searching for patterns. In organising the data selected quotations were reduced into patterns and categories, thereafter broadening them into themes which emerged from working with the literature review and the theoretical framework. Themes were abridged into codes and formed into categories with suitable headings describing them. Each category was then abbreviated and a code assigned to it. After constructing each category in this way, I proceeded to do a preliminary analysis. Generation of themes then followed. Careful choice of the theoretical framework which dealt with the impact of the environment on the development of a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the effect of



separation and transition on the integration of a learner into a new environment (Tinto, 1987) paid dividends here: these two notions permeated the findings, serving as a reflective background to the themes that emerged. In writing up the themes, care was taken to accommodate necessary overlaps as well as to let the voices of the participants come through. Miles & Huberman (1994) posit that in a system of coding, the codes represent important ideas and concepts which provide the researcher with tools to make sense of the data. The information was systematically sorted out using electronic categorisation and filing systems available on the computer in preparation for the final step.

*Step 3:* The objective here was to complete the data analysis against the background of what I had unearthed in the literature review while viewing the information through the lenses of my theoretical framework. In doing so I tried to bring connected meaning to the story I was telling. Data collected from participants was triangulated as best I could, given that I had used unstructured interviews as my main data generation tool although, as postulated in Chapter Five, observation did contribute to the data as well. Reasoning out the phenomenon while working with the emergent analysis was made easier through the lenses of the theoretical framework and close reference to literature which enhanced the meanings. The data were then subjected to interpretation before being reflected on to understand what the implications of the study were and if it was successful in contributing new knowledge in the field (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Henning, Rensburg, & Smit, 2004; Vithal & Jansen, 2006).

Although I worked with a structured plan as a continuum from description through explanation to the summation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007), I had to keep in mind that categories are flexible and subject to modification to ensure that the essence of participants' contributions were captured (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tesch, 1990). This safeguarded that the resultant description was an accurate construction of the stories and meaning of the social world of the participants within their context. Meaning plays a central role in data analysis while description forms the basis for analysis (Smit, 2001). When data are broken down in the quest to make meaning of them, there also arises the need, sometime for more interpretation, description, explanation and even prediction (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which I kept in my focus during the process. Classifying the data, interpreting it and

explaining it is the construction process that enabled me to paint the picture that reflected with emotion, the story of how suburban schools sought to integrate rural and township drifters. In qualitative research, the final picture is always based on facts re-conceptualised by the thinking and the perception of the researcher coloured by human situation and social processes encountered (Smit, 2001).

#### **4.4.8 Ethical considerations**

Researchers must subscribe to an ethical code (Murray & Beglar, 2009) that has to be balanced with the right of the participant to be protected from sensitive and embarrassing information that may be revealed by the research (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). I had to be mindful that participants knowledge about the purpose of data generation and how it would be put to use while protecting confidentiality is paramount to emerging with a clean study (Gibbs, 1997). To achieve these mandates, an ethical research plan (Maree, 2007) needed to be structured for this study to safeguard against problems that may have arisen as a result of the study sequence (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Central to this was building a quality relationship between the participants which hinged on trust (Merriam, 1998) based on transparent procedures which were followed to the letter to avoid any form of bias or controversy as work proceeded.

Ethical clearance was sought and granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal while the DBE granted research clearance to generate data at the specified schools. Gatekeepers were asked for written permission to do research work in their schools, to help identify participants suited to the study and to approach them to participate. Once contact was established with participants, they were written to, explaining the nature of the research and the research process. They were requested to sign consent forms attached to the letters. All aspects of the research process were clearly spelt out to participants prior and during interaction. Participants were not subjected to interview sessions that were stressful or impacted negatively on their self-respect neither were they embarrassed or caused any kind of shame. Strict confidentiality was maintained at all times and pseudonyms used for all names including those of the schools to ensure that participants remained anonymous and protected.

Drawing up and implementing the plan also took into account that this piece of work should also remain faithful to the research community in the way the process abided by the ethical codes and customs which include research purposes, approaches, substance, reporting and results (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

#### **4.4.9 Trustworthiness**

Demonstrating trustworthiness of a study is essentially establishing that findings are both reliable and valid. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, pg. 133) posit that “reliability is a precondition of validity, and validity may be a sufficient but not necessary condition for reliability”. Trustworthiness is key to the credibility of research findings. Of vital importance is whether the researcher portrays the viewpoints of the participants as they live out their social constructs (Smit, 2001). My test was to ascertain whether the research into the phenomenon was meaningfully interpreted and the degree to which it successfully explored what it set out to discover (Smith, 1995; Vithal & Jansen, 2006). Key considerations taken into account to safeguard the validity of the study were, amongst others, to recruit participants that would impart quality information, to remain objective, to collect rich, thick data and to report honestly and in depth (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Frequent and meaningful cross referencing as well as the profuse use of quotations from the data in this study was a strategy employed to confirm credibility of this research. The truth and correctness of a study are indicators of its validity (Kvale, 1996).

Internal validity is associated with credibility while external validity is equated with transferability (Smit, 2001). This report had to demonstrate that the data can actually sustain the way the phenomenon was portrayed in relation to its context (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is a reflection of the accuracy and authenticity of the report (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). As a qualitative researcher I also needed to demonstrate credibility of this study (Creswell, 1994) and that its objective of gaining understanding and knowledge the phenomenon was achieved.

Triangulation, the chief method supported by researchers to establish the internal validity of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Smit, 2001) was employed by this study. Drafts of interviews were returned to participants to cross check if the phenomenon portrayed was congruent to

how they saw it, thereby contributing to the consistency in the gathered data. Data gathered through observation was cross-referenced with data from semi-structured interviews where possible. The lengthy engagement with participants, being frank about my objectives, the richness and depth of the gathered data, the quality of the participants chosen for interviews and the rapport established with them all contributed positively to the validity of the study. These initiatives help confirm the truth of the findings for the participants within the context of the study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reliability is considered the fit between what actually happens in a natural setting and what the researcher has recorded as his data (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The consistency of the investigation conducted within the natural setting points to the reliability of the study (Vithal & Jansen), 2006). In other words reliability is an indicator of the index of correctness and depth of the reporting. An important caveat was that although two different investigators might research the same phenomenon and come up with two dissimilar findings, both their findings might be reliable (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Research findings are deemed reliable if they are able to stand the test of time; whether findings remain constant over time, whether repetition will not distort their consistency and whether the findings can be reproduced or duplicated by another researcher (Smit, 2001). Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that instead of consistency being judged by others coming up with the same findings it was more important that, presented with the findings, such persons should agree that they made sense and concur that they are both dependable and consistent. Acceptable research processes of inquiry were followed in this study to ensure that findings and data were consistent. As a safeguard to ensure reliability of the study an audit trail that allows for the data to be traced back to the source was made available; proper methods of processing data such as coding were also employed to safeguard reliability. Additional safeguards suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) such as being specific about situation and context, transmission of reality as it was experienced, furnishing adequate detail, depth of reporting and being honest were used as flags to guide the process of writing up reliably.

#### **4.4.10 Limitations**

Although this was a multi-site case study with 18 participants it is still a small number of participants who presented information on the world they lived in. Principals who

introduced participants did so after listening to what I wanted to investigate. I was dependant on their judgement to choose appropriate personnel for me to interview. Participants told their own story without any insinuations from my side to put a particular slant on it. Although I put in all the checks and balances to ensure that the instruments were accurate and I was objective, ultimately I was at their mercy when they related events or happenings. In the time I spent at each school, I was able to observe how things operated and how people interacted with each other. This, in some small measure helped me to cognise the setting and relate to the situation but it was an outsider looking in. These findings may not be applicable to other contexts.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the nuts and bolts of how the study was operationalised. It covered the strategies employed to undertake the study and the methods used. It detailed the key features of the research design which is a multi-site case study using the qualitative approach. I explained how I gained entry to the sites selected which were all former Model C Schools within the Durban metropolis that prided themselves on their consistent high quality learner performance. To harvest the rich, thick data necessary for the topic I chose 18 participants and reported on how they were purposively selected for the interviews. I relied on the 2 data sources *viz* observation and semi-structured interviews to get a real feel of how the phenomenon played out at the confluence. This brought me as close as possible to seeing the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants and relaying their stories. It is also worth noting that although planning was thorough in the run up to the observation and interviews, design features were adjusted to suit the study in the course of the fieldwork. I made a point of capturing everything on a video camera which was especially useful during transcribing because it gave me the added dimension to include body language in my findings. It allowed me, for example, to go back and review a portion of the interview to find out why a participant laughed nervously when giving a certain response (*Vide* Chapter Six, section 6.2). This helped tremendously in the 3 phases of the data analysis that I undertook. I rounded off the chapter with a discussion on formulating and implementing an ethical plan, ensuring trustworthiness and limitations of the design.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONNECTING WITH THE CONTEXT OF THE CONFLUENCE

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of a two chapter report on the presentation and discussion of data. It serves a threefold purpose: to introduce the reader to the target population, to provide a detailed background of each and to give the reader a feel of the schools' operational style. This part of the presentation is informed by my first impressions when I arrived at the sites, taking in the sights and sounds of the environment. Viewed through the twin lenses of the theoretical framework (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3), this chapter draws on the separation and transition phases of Tinto's (1987) student integration model as well as the contextual environment as systems of development which is drawn from Bronfenbrenner (1979). As a researcher aware of the various methods of data generation and the benefits therein, the option of employing observation to supplement semi-structured interviews did occur to me when I entered the field. Some aspects of the opening chapter based on my first impressions could, I thought, benefit from observation, which would enrich the study and supplement the main instrument which is semi-structured interviews. I found however, that semi-structured interviews allowed me to get into the inner-circles as well as the minds of participants and actually observe them from within. All names used in this study are pseudonyms.

A multi-site case study was undertaken that involved exploring how three former Model C Schools were seeking to cope with integration of drifting learners from rural and township schools. The three schools lie within the metropolitan area of Durban in Kwa Zulu-Natal. Meraska School, situated on the edge of the central business district, borders the western suburbs as you drive inland from the centre of the city. To the east and with a view of the sea lies Roaine High one of the oldest and most affluent suburbs in Durban, a prestigious school, once a bastion of apartheid education that catered for children of the wealthy. The third school, Camalita Preparatory lies on the outermost border of the metropolitan area as you head north. Although there are similarities amongst the schools, each one also displayed its own unique features that set it apart from the others. In my experience as a

teacher, principal and circuit manager I interacted with former Model C Schools and had a fair idea of how they were run. It is this experience that provides the information that follows. As a general background, all three schools formed part of the Natal Education Department, which controlled education for whites in the pre-democracy era. Government policy which was race based at the time permitted only white enrolment at these schools. Legislation at the time also ensured that only white teachers were deployed at these schools. Support staff paid by the state was also mainly white with the administration positions occupied by white females. This is what the demographics looked like prior to democracy although there was a minor difference with one of the schools which I shall draw into the discussion as the data were presented.

Class sizes were small, averaging around twenty five per unit while subject packages in the high schools were many and varied. To accommodate such variety, specialist rooms were available for almost every subject except the languages. Proper curriculum delivery was ensured by the placement of specialist teachers wherever they were needed. The predominant languages taught were English and Afrikaans with either one being the main language depending on which community the school served. Many of these schools offered a third language, usually French or German to prepare learners for global markets. Resources were plentiful then as they are now, the difference being that in the pre-democracy days, one hundred percent of the needs of the school in terms of infrastructure and other teaching resources were met by the state. Principals of these schools were highly paid and wielded a lot of power. Their sporting activities enjoyed phenomenal parental support motivated by the knowledge that school leagues were linked to upward movement to places in provincial and national sides within the different codes.

All these schools are situated on vast properties boasting at least three playing fields for sporting and other activities. Each of them has a reasonably large swimming pool to accommodate teaching large groups and at the same time allowing proper competitive race training. The schools are tastefully wooded according to horticultural plans to improve the aesthetics of the school buildings as well as to provide shade in the right places such as where learners congregate during breaks and where teachers park their cars. All of these schools have proper access control with designated parking areas for visitors and reception

areas to report to once you arrive. One of the schools even provides you with a little slip at the gate that you hand in at reception to show that you entered the school *via* the security controlled gates. Once inside, the first question you get asked is if you have an appointment. Unless it is an emergency, nobody will be available to meet with you whether you are a parent or a person with some other business at the school. Department officials are of course, treated differently since they sometimes make unannounced visits to schools. Reception however, is cordial and very professionally handled. Punctuality is key in these parts- people expect you to be on time, they see you on time and politely tell you when your time is over. Order and discipline are evident when one observes the schools from within. Teaching and learning takes place smoothly and according to plan. No learners are seen loitering around or out of their classes except if they are on an errand to the office or changing subject rooms. Movement from classrooms to specialist rooms are orderly and does not disrupt work in other classes. I shall now move on to give some background to the schools individually to provide a clearer picture of each.

## **5.2 Meraska School**

Meraska School is a primary school is situated on the outskirts of the central business district of the city where it borders a previously white suburb. It has learners from grade R to Grade Seven. On the suburb side of the school there are houses that date back many decades indicating that this is an old settled community. As you drive east of the school and deeper into the suburb towards the beaches, it merges with other more affluent ones that are dotted with sought after prestigious schools. To the west, where the school abuts the edge of the business area is a main road that connects the city to the outskirts. If you turn left as you join this road from the direction of the school it takes you to the heart of the city and if you turn right you are headed out of the city towards the township areas. The school which is a short drive from the main road is built on a hill that was cut away to flatten the land to accommodate the buildings and grounds. As you drive into the parking lot you notice that the buildings and their surrounds are well maintained despite the age of the school. Large, fully grown trees planted strategically are an indicator that this school has been around a long time. The reception area was abuzz at the time of my arrival; there were some parents waiting to be seen by teachers, some learners with little message books sent



by their teachers on some errand or the other while two administration clerks were engrossed in paperwork. The receptionist, who was black welcomed me warmly and indicated she was expecting me for my appointment with the principal. I toyed with the idea that integration had gone some way here because former Model C Schools still have mainly white females in their administration section.

This was a school that the apartheid government experimented with. Even before Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, the apartheid government was playing out scenarios of what the landscape of a democratic South Africa would look like (Mandela, 2010). Education was no different. They wanted to get a feel of the new complexion of schools post-apartheid. In the run-up to 1994 and democracy this school, which was previously all white and run by the Natal Education Department was chosen as a test case to see how non-racialism would work. The school was carefully chosen because of its geographic location. It was suburban, on the edge of a suburb and close to the main road. The bus route from the township to the city passed within walking distance to the school. Accessibility for commuting township learners would be easy here. During the time of the Multi-Party Talks prior to the 1994 elections, the school was closed down by the Natal Education Department and re-opened with a brand new identity to see how a non-racial school would operate in the new South Africa. Of the original staff that re-opened the school, two remain: the principal, Jolly Kotze who was then employed as a head of department and the deputy principal, Phineas Mkhonto who came in as a level one teacher. The principal explains:

*Previously, it was running as a white school and in December of 1991, they closed it and cleaned it out of every scrap of furniture. They took away every scrap and 2 weeks later they got a new principal- Petite Width and said she should restart it. We said fine. We had to find tables and chairs, we had nothing here. They had taken every book, every piece of furniture that they ever had here. And so we had to start all over again.*

Shutting down the school meant removing all traces of the white run establishment. At the end of that academic year, all school records, textbooks and stationery were uplifted from the school. Furniture and sporting equipment was also taken away leaving just the buildings,

the ground and the swimming pool. Staff were given two options: either be redeployed or re-apply for their positions at the school. Learners were given transfer letters and arrangements made to accommodate them at other Model C Schools within the area if they did not wish to return. A brand new start up process was put in place. All the posts were advertised as vacancies in the newspaper and interviews conducted to find teachers willing to teach in this new environment. Details of the selection process were not recalled by the present principal mainly because she arrived here with the new contingent and had no access to such information. The academic year ended with the closing of the school and the following academic year began with a 'new school' and new staff. The integration experiment was aimed mainly at learners since the majority of the staff selected were mostly white with the management team being entirely white. The principal said:

*The new staff was mainly white while there were two black staff members and three Indians. One black teacher from that group remains up to today and he is now the deputy principal.*

The present principal arrived at the school as a Head of Department and later moved on to deputy and then principal. Asked why she applied to such a school, she said she had been engaged in work done by NGOs amongst black communities and was involved in work in the townships between 1988 and 1992 finding resources for underprivileged schools. She explained her work in the townships schools:

*I worked as an education officer for an NGO at the time and was involved in mentoring teachers in the township. They were badly resourced and so through these trusts I was able to help them but it was a very difficult time. The first time we went there it was in a big group from the church and we were afraid. But we were received with such hospitality that I was ashamed. Sometimes roads were blocked but it didn't change things. I met some wonderful people. You go into a home you would always be offered something to eat. We had become reserved and lived in walled in gardens. In the township there is such movement and greeting. Amazing that when that advert came out for this school I knew that I wanted to be at this environment because of what I had seen and what the needs were.*

She felt that these experiences prepared her for this new challenge and would be a continuation of the type of work she was keen on. Phineas Mkhonto, the deputy principal was part of the first contingent of recruits that still serves at this school having started off as a level one teacher. His route to the school was different from the principal. He started his career at a rural high school with little or no resources but he was blessed with a visionary principal there:

*The principal I had there was fortunately a good leader and he used to say that whatever tools we had we must make use of it to make a change in the child. He made me keen to teach and contribute to the school but he also taught me respect.*

Mkhonto's early training at his rural school saw him work long hours after school, conduct science experiments where natural resources were available such as the river nearby and produce 100% results with his classes. It was here that he learned an important lesson that would serve him well in the future - he avoided the groups and cliques that operated in the school but was happy to interact with all his colleagues equally. He comes across as a hard working teacher who prides himself on his learners' achievements and soon caught the eye of the school inspector of the time who admired his work. It was the same inspector who approached him at the end of 1991 and exhorted him to apply for the vacancy here in Meraska School. Mkhonto explains:

*One day he said there is a school that is just about to be opened where I want you to go and represent us. So I came here as a keen learner who wanted to learn many things. When I came here, I just fit in- whether I was meeting other cultures did not matter. I was the only black person amongst Portuguese, Greeks (laughs). I remember for the interview they asked me how I would handle an environment vastly different from the school I came from and I said I will be there and see and also ask and fit in and focus on whatever my activities are in that school. I was nervous because I didn't have a clue about a school of this nature.*

While educational talk in the townships at that time revolved around schooling for children in posh suburban schools, Mkhonto was both shocked and surprised that as a teacher he was being given a chance to ply his trade in a former Model C School. Pushed by his

inspector, he applied and was duly selected to teach at Meraska School. Being the only black teacher in the school made him apprehensive at first but the welcome by the principal set the tone for the rest of his stay at the school:

*“The first thing that I want to talk to you about is that my school is a colourless school (raises his eyebrows and long pause). There is no Indian, black or white but there is an educator” and we held our hands together and we prayed.*

With that out of the way he joined the new principal and staff in the hunt for furniture during the holidays and they were able to scrounge desks, tables and chairs from neighbouring white schools. In the meantime word had spread in the townships along the bus route that a certain white school was admitting all races in the following year which was 1992.

### **5.3 Camalita Preparatory**

Moving to my next school, I found myself on the boundary of the Durban Metropolitan area in one of the fastest developing growth points in South Africa. Camalita Preparatory is actually a primary school with learners from Grade R to Grade 7. According to the principal the term ‘Preparatory’ was used to suggest that learners here were being prepared for high school. It started off years ago as a small white school serving a select and conservative white community. It later opted for the Model C status and experienced a growing demand for admission as development in the area expanded. With the advent of democracy and the free movement of learners being legislated it became the target of parents from the surrounding township and rural areas who sought a better quality education for their previously disadvantaged children. According to the principal, parents were prepared to send their children here despite long distances and the need to rely on public transport. The school, although situated on the edge of the metro is every bit a suburban former Model C School. It’s curricular and extra-curricular activity is linked to similar schools in the heart of the urban area and it belongs to the sporting leagues and competitions that these belong to. The school is a mix of older buildings and newer ones added to accommodate growing curricular offerings but not growing learner numbers. Neatly fenced and tastefully planted with trees and gardens, the school is well maintained and neatly kept. It boasts a multi-

million rand state-of-the-art multi-media centre that is a signature building which catches your eye as you enter the car park.

When you arrive at the school, the organisation and control impacts you at the gate. Separate parking areas, clearly marked, show where parents, and visitors enter as opposed to staff parking. The staff parking even has a reserved parking space for the departmental circuit manager. Each parking entrance has its own security guard who is in radio communication with the office personnel. Visitors record their personal details in the security register and are handed a permission slip which is requested when they report at reception. Outside the enclosed reception area, in the foyer, is an open plan office desk that is staffed by a parent volunteer that greets you warmly and politely asks for your permission slip. In response to your query you are directed to one of the windows on either side of the entrance door to the administration section or asked to take a seat on one of the luxurious couches provided in the spacious foyer. The administration clerk behind the window on the left deals mainly with internal matters such as queries from learners and teachers. On the right the office houses two administration assistants who deal with outside issues and correspondence and communication. As you walk through the entrance of the administration offices and down the passage, you pass the office of the bursar and the office of the personal assistant to the principal before arriving at the door of the huge office which the principal occupies. The deputy and HODs are in offices further down the passage until you reach the end of the passage which leads into the staffroom. The number of governing body appointed staff members is 25, which out numbers the state appointed staff of 21 teachers here. In addition the school boasts a large flotilla of parent volunteers who spend varying amounts of time at the school helping out with anything from reception work, sporting activities or attending to maintenance work. It buzzes with activity and children of all races can be seen walking in straight lines to or from various activity rooms such as the library or media centre. Everything here is very professional and business-like.

School principal Rosemarie Rutledge first worked here as a teacher in 1985, left the school briefly in 1995 and returned to serve as HOD and later principal. Level one teacher Gloria Goodfellow is the other long serving member of this staff and has been receiving the new learners into grade one for the last 12 years. Others like the Deputy Principal, Perumal

Munsamy joined the school later. He was the first person of colour appointed into the SMT at the school, assuming his post in 2008. For him it was a major change having taught as a level one teacher for the first 19 years in an 'Indian School' then for five years as a HOD in a black, rural school and finally moving to this school which is still a predominantly white school. By the time Rutledge returned to Camalita Preparatory in 1998 the school had undergone dramatic growth as a result of the doors being open to all. She was quite taken aback on her arrival because the numbers had grown substantially and there was a significant number of learners from other races as well. It was an overwhelming prospect for someone used to operating in a small whites only school:

*When I returned here as principal we had two Grade One classes of 16 each so it was quite an alarming prospect to consider if we were going to have enough money to pay for everybody. So, on the one hand we had this very rapid growth of the school- we had gone from 360 to 917 children and with that growth it brought us parents from all walks of life to have their children enrolled in this school and involved in a stable education and also wanting to be involved themselves. Obviously children of other colour were now coming into the school.*

Drifting learners started enrolling as the school complied with the new legislation that opened all schools to all children. The luxury of small classes and low numbers was revealed by the principal's comment that she was alarmed on her return that they now had 2 grade one classes and even more so that each class had an enrolment of 16. The comment sets the context for the privileged background that the school had up to that time of change. Important too was the mention of money to pay for everything which is what underscores many such suburban schools; she was making reference to ensuring that while the numbers increased, standards had to be maintained, hence the need for funds.

While drifters started arriving at Camalita Preparatory, the school still had a largely white learner population and an entirely white teaching and administration staff. Support staff such as the gate security, the cleaner and the tea lady was black. In the years since democracy, transformation in the classrooms has been evidenced by the increasing number of drifters arriving here but transformation in the staffroom has moved slowly, largely because the staff here is quite stable and most have remained at this school for long

periods. The other reason is that the large governing body contingent is also white which the school uses as a pool from which to appoint teachers should a state paid permanent vacancy arise. The argument is that it is beneficial for the school to appoint from the ranks of those it knows than from the outside. Vacancies in governing posts get passed on to friends and family of those teachers at the school and are usually filled without the need to advertise. However, there were times when the department appointed black teachers to the school through the re-deployment process but, according to the principal they left soon after of their own accord. Even a black deputy principal appointed here through that process stayed just one day before asking to be placed in a rural school. Today, there are 4 black assistant teachers and a deputy principal. Perumal Munsamy, who applied for the position of deputy principal, was interviewed for the post before his placement at the school. Except for the assistant teachers who are studying towards a professional qualification, all other teachers that the school employs either in a department advertised vacancy or governing body posts are fully qualified. Drifters form about twenty five percent of the learner population at the school.

#### **5.4 Roaine High**

Nestled in a leafy suburb of Durban is Roaine High, an imposing campus comprised of huge blocks of classrooms, office blocks, impressive sporting infrastructure and beautifully manicured grounds with at least three drive-in entrances. Bounded by four streets, one of which leads out of the suburb to the city, the school is set in a quiet part of the suburb in a residential area. It has huge soccer and rugby fields, an Olympic size swimming pool, a hall, gymnasium and various other specialist rooms that you would expect from a well-resourced, high profile school such as this one. Beautiful gardens and leafy trees complement the spacious campus and well maintained infrastructure. As you enter the school you are struck by the ethos that prevails here; it is a place which is in full control of itself, teaching and learning is taking place and anyone you see along the way to the office has a focussed look about themselves as they go about their duties. It's the kind of school a parent would like to place their child in. It reminded me of a brand new high end car, its engine gently purring underneath the bonnet ready to accelerate to top speed at the touch of the pedal. The administration centre is set apart from the staff room and the offices of

the SMT members. Glass doors lead to the reception area which boasts a huge picture of the former principal posing with Nelson Mandela. The picture takes pride of place amongst the others that depict various sporting achievements of the school. There is a huge leader board on one wall that lists the top performing learners for the past thirty years. The board tells a story as well; early names are all white with names of learners from other race groups slowly appearing in the years leading up to the present. Adjoining the reception area and fronted by a glass enclosure is the administration office where 4 administration clerks, all white, were busy at work. Being expected, I was warmly welcomed by the receptionist and asked to take a seat in the luxurious lounge suite in the reception area. I was offered a cup of coffee which arrived within a few minutes. When the principal came out to meet me through the adjoining glass door, we walked back through the passage that had offices for her two deputy principals. Her office was at the end of the passage.

Roaine High is a long-established former Model C School which prides itself on a 100% pass rate at matric level for the past 20 years. It has 42 teachers and 1250 learners of which four classes are Grade Twelve. The school boasts long established traditions and is a systems run institution that sees teachers communicated to by email from the office during the course of the day. Evidence abounds of things happening in routine fashion, obviously drawn from time-honoured practices that the school found useful to its smooth operation. When I arrived here for my interviews with staff members I was handed a copy of an email sent out to all the participants. It detailed time arrangements, appointments and even what I should be served tea.

It is still predominantly white with the majority of staff having served here for varying lengths of time, some over 20 years. There are educators of colour appointed here and one even at management level. Black, Indian and coloured learners are also enrolled here but are still the minority even if counted together. The present principal, Dee Alberton, appointed here in 1991 as deputy principal and in 1992 as principal openly acclaims the work of her predecessor who she says had a long term view that change was coming and set the ground work for it:

*I was very fortunate that my predecessor was very forward thinking. She had predicted that basically barriers would fall. In fact, she was a great believer that the*



*barriers should fall so she started educating the staff and preparing the staff before then for demographic change in the school and she also started educating and preparing the parent body for demographic change. I think it was the end of 1989 or the end of 1990 that the parents voted for the school to open its doors to all race groups.*

Having secured permission from the Department of Education to admit learners of colour the school opened its doors and began admitting drifters in small numbers prior to 1994. The school staff at the time was entirely white including the grounds man. Alberton says that it could be said that the school had planned for the process of admitting learners other than the white learners within the area. Resistance by some parents to opening the doors of the school out of fear that standards would drop at the school were dealt with by meetings to re-assure them of how the school planned to proceed. Recalling the early days of change when the drifters started dribbling in, Leonie Klopper the head of department who has been here 22 years says:

*I don't recall anything dramatic. I think we anticipated worse than what happened.*

The 'worse' she referred to was the fear of the unknown - how to interact with and deal with people you had not been in close contact with before. Obviously being a perceptive person and closely following the politics of the time the then principal went into action and started preparations for what was inevitable - the opening up of schools as South Africa headed for democratic change. Sensing the anxiety of the all-white, mainly female staff about the new scenario they were going to face, she enrolled all her teachers in an equity course run by an NGO and paid for by a sponsor. The course which was aimed at preparing teachers for non-racial schooling was run over a period of time and made up of several parts, including teachers from other black and Indian schools as well. Klopper said she is thankful that she was given the opportunity to attend such a course:

*That was probably the most life changing thing for me not only in the school but as a person.*

Besides being mentally readied for the change, the school did have a small taste of working with children of colour during apartheid times. The Nationalist Government which had

turned some of its *bantustans* into independent states prior to democracy allowed children of such dignitaries to attend its white schools. Children of consulate officials from the then Transkei had been here during the 1980s although they were a maximum of 4 at any given time. During that period a Taiwanese girl had also been admitted. At that time these learners were given 'honorary white' status and allowed into white schools on the instruction of government through the DBE. Conversation with Abrahams, a level one teacher here for 35 years indicates that they were merely tolerated rather than integrated at the time. Being a tiny number, the school made no special effort to ensure that the learners' needs were catered for. Rather, they had to rapidly acculturate to the dominant body of learners and teachers if they wanted to get on with learning. With talk of democracy getting louder in the late 1980s the school shifted gear and started preparing for nonracialism. Informal, internal discussions at first were followed by more serious considerations and extended to meetings with parents and departmental officials. As pointed out earlier, this eventually led to the school admitting small numbers of learners from other races prior to democracy.

How the schools uses their inherent leadership and strength to harness the three wider contexts of the school, family and the community as spheres of influence is posited by Epstein (2001) as that which will have the greatest impact on learner integration and attainment at their schools (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.3). In the next section I move on to look at how and what preparations, if any, the schools made in the wake of the coming change.

## **5.5 Crossing the divide**

The suburban schools exhibit many similarities drawn from their common past as white schools that belonged to the white Natal Education Department. The background shows that they adopt a business-like approach to their operation starting right at the gate as one enters. Professionalism permeates all levels of their activities. To an outsider looking in, the schools exude a hive of activity with everything in its place and a place for everything. They represented a smooth operation that was getting on with the core business of teaching and learning. In the course of my interactions with the participants during the interviews, it became obvious that despite unique features that differentiated the schools from each

other, they also shared commonalities. From these it then became possible to draw themes across the three schools and compare and contrast them while presenting their own stories as experienced in their particular environments. I shall therefore present these themes and offer comment on them along the way. As far as possible, an attempt was made to present the themes in a chronological order such as what experiences drifting parents went through on their arrival at the suburban schools, early planning that suburban schools had put in place to receive drifters or even coping strategies employed by the schools to integrate learners. This was not always achievable but as far as possible I tried to provide the information in a way that allowed the story to flow from the early days when drifters started arriving in small numbers to where they are in the journey presently.

After the initial visit to the first school I was more or less able to guess what would happen at the next school from the time I arrived there, such was the similarity in the front end operation of the schools. The difference showed in how they had organised themselves for change and their preparations for the arrival of drifters. In the absence of specific guidelines, a practical guide or policy handbook to handle the influx of drifters schools were left to prepare as they thought fit. Experiences in each of the three schools differed in the run-up to democracy and the subsequent opening up of the education system. Roaine High, which made an earlier start to prepare its parents and teachers for an influx of learners from other race groups was going to face unseen challenges in the years ahead and realised that preparation was only part of the effort required to ensure integration at the school. Meraska School had started differently; overnight it had been re-christened non-racial and started off with a brand new staff, supposedly favourably pre-disposed to non-racial education. Except for the infrastructure, they had to build the school from the ground up. Their challenges would be different from the other two established schools as they moved towards integration. Camalita Preparatory ironically did no preparation at all and was virtually caught flatfooted as the democratic tide brought in new and rapidly increasing numbers of learners of colour. This challenge was coupled with a new principal who had left the school as an HOD in its Model C form a few years earlier and returned as principal to find her tiny school overwhelmed by demand for space, especially from learners of other race groups. This school, it could be argued, went into shock at first before trying to respond to the challenge at hand.

Notwithstanding the fact that government policy on integration was made amply clear In CRSA and SASA, the reality is that up to the present as Jansen (2013) points out guidelines and support on integration are non-existent leaving schools to their own devices (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.6). I now move on to the next section where I gain deeper entry to the confluence both physically as well as through the semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews let me into the minds of the participants and allowed me to peel off the layers in the life of the school and look underneath through the framework formed by a matrix of the research questions, the literature review and the theoretical framework.

## **5.6 The lull before the norm**

Having contextualised the study by painting a picture of the background of the three schools and some early preparations I shall proceed with the story using 1994 to the present as a general timeline although, as will be evidenced by revelations at Roaine High, some inclusions took place prior to 1994. The chapter goes on to look at how the preparations that were made prior to the arrival of the drifters translated into action when the time came. It also examines how in some instances, the additional challenge of bringing drifters on board was dovetailed into the way the schools operated.

Drawing on one of the prongs of my theoretical framework by Tinto (1987), this chapter focuses mainly on separation and transition which, when considered carefully, refers both to the drifters as well as the suburban school and of course impacts directly on whether drifters integrate or not. The obvious deduction would be that drifters would undergo separation from their old or background environment and attempt to make the transition to the suburban school. When one looks at the process it also emerges that suburban schools, whether they complied or not, faced legislation such as SASA and the CRSA that meant a separation with the old and a transition to the new. The impact of the old environment on the development of drifters as they prepare to integrate into a new environment in the suburban school was viewed through the lens of the second prong of the theoretical framework by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Whether these were barriers or beginnings, the chapter will look at how the confluence grappled with change.

While two of the schools exhibited some attempts at preparing for the arrival of drifters their preparations were akin to offering a new course that was probably going to be

controversial with some of the parents and staff so they prioritised schooling as they know it and endeavoured to 'fit in' changes that democracy ushered in along the way. Unlike universities that used to have various programmes, both formal and informal as an induction and introduction to a new way of life, schools that did have an induction programme went about it as they would have done regardless of the new dynamics involved. The proverbial learning curve emerged along the way through incidents and accidents in some cases. The golden thread that ran through the findings and presented in the themes was drifters who arrived wanted to make a go of their new schooling experiences and in most cases were prepared to endure any kind of hardship or challenges that came their way. Most participants in all three schools spoke to me openly and shared their thoughts on a range of issues as soon as they had settled into the interview process. In Roaine High I had to break the ice with the interviewees who seemed wary of where the interview was leading and were circumspect about how they answered. It was obvious that there was some sort of consultation that took place amongst participants prior to my interviewing them. This probably emanated from a briefing by the principal after my meeting with her to ask for permission to gather data there. During my first meeting with the principal she also exhibited caution in her approach to the request to research her school by interviewing staff. The informal approach I adopted and the relaxed environment I had created quickly took down this temporary barrier and the information then flowed freely even from the gatekeeper herself allowing the probing nature of the semi-structured interviews to be utilised to its maximum potential. There was not a point where I found uniform activities or methods of operation that fit snugly into a theme or category that was drawn broadly from the data collection and subsequent analysis. What I did find however, were nuances that individualised the schools and the participants in similar situations and activities. In Chapter Two, section 2.7.1 I made reference to how leadership provided by principals in meeting the transformational agenda by allowing it to permeate their teams as posited by Chikoko and Magadla (2012) can make a significant difference to change they wish to effect. Notwithstanding how these schools were positioned in the run up to the new beginning, Voorhis and Sheldon (2004) stress that leadership would eventually signal their success or failure at integration of drifters (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.1).

## 5.7 New beginnings and old barriers

The dawn of the new era created great expectations amongst the previously disadvantaged communities who dreamed of a better life. Quality education, which was denied them, was something many parents wanted desperately for their children. Many understood that the turnaround time for such opportunity in the township and rural areas was going to be longer than the number of years their children had to complete school hence they cast their glances towards suburban schools that were well established and better resourced. The process of drifting was about to take off, challenging suburban schools on many fronts. All three schools recall the early days vividly but differently. Common to all three schools was the high level of interest in admission to them by drifters while the process of admission into them happened somewhat differently. Roaine High and Camalita Preparatory both reported similar tendencies although the rate of intake differed from each other initially. Meraska School on the other hand had a different beginning to the process of admission and integration of drifters. Parents of drifters, while holding high expectations for quality education for their children, arrived without any kind of preparation for the process of integration at the suburban schools. Other than knowing that the possibility of admission was there, they had no other expectations in regard to the nature of the process of integration into the new schools. Principal, Jolly Kotze recalls:

*They arrived here and waited patiently for admission. If the child was accepted they just felt relieved and left - no questions asked and sometimes only ever returned when you demanded they attend a meeting or appointment. Of course we had to change this.*

News of Meraska School opening its doors spread fast in the nearby township communities. The school, which was shut down the previous year and its name removed from the Natal Education Department's data base opened for business in 1992 with a new name and a new identity. Some of the white children previously enrolled at the school returned to the 'new' school the following year. Three hundred and fifty children were enrolled in the first year and according to the principal, a sizeable number of whom were township drifters whose parents moved them here because it was seen as a 'white school' where, they perceived, education was of a better quality than in the township schools their children attended. Sma

Mahlangu, a social worker who has had her child here for 6 years is not a first time drifting parent; her first child went to another Model C School but she came here because of the reasonable school fees. Her reasons for leaving the township and rural area schools (she has a home in the deep rural area and one in the township) are manifold. As a social worker she cites the social ills as her number one concern in the township: teenage pregnancy, lack of parental supervision, drug abuse and the values were amongst the reasons for moving her children out of the township. Her more serious concern though is teaching and learning or the lack of it in the townships. She explains:

*The schools, I don't know - they spend half their time in the hall; they spend the whole day voting for something, I don't think the priorities in these schools are good. The priority is not education- it's other things. At the slightest provocation there is a strike and they gone for ever. There is lots of absenteeism and the environment is bad for a child to learn in.*

Lamenting the poor quality output at township schools, Mahlangu says that had it not been for the high cost of schooling in suburban schools as compared to relatively free education in township and rural schools, there would be a mass exodus of learners from these schools:

*That's the only restrictive factor otherwise they will move their children out. We live there but I'm not going to educate my children there.*

Senior phase teacher, Majabulo Mngadi concurs:

*First and foremost it is the quality education that they would like their children to get from a school. There are many underlying factors like what is happening in townships and the parents could see what is happening. You would find that at 11am the school children are already out of the school and it is like it is the end of the day.*

That seems to set the tone for why parents 'rushed' to bring their children here when the doors were open to all and why they continue to do so.

Camalita Preparatory School parent, Bulelwa Mpisane a traffic officer who resides in a township area about 40 kilometres from the school values education greatly. Deeply involved in union activities in the past, he is acutely aware of the struggle to improve

conditions of work and can relate that experience to the struggle for quality education for his children. He does not hide his excitement about his two children being at this school. His children were attending township schools now travel the 40 kilometres a day each way to attend this school. He explains his decision to move his child to this school:

*My colleague had his children here and they were doing well and right now some of them have degrees and all those things. That inspired me and my last born is also here now. Because I did not get that quality education, I said let me try and help her to get a better education than me. Even if I know that I leave this world, where I sleep I will know that I have tried to give my kid the best because I left her with a better education.*

At Roaine High the process was different. While news spread of the school opening its doors, principal, Alberton recalls that there was no rush from the townships in the early days. Asked how the school went about its admissions in those early days, Tannie Abrahams, level one teacher here for over 35 years and long before the democratic transition said:

*There was no dash for the school. I don't know about that because the principal at that time would interview them and admit them. I honestly can't say how they decided who could and could not come.*

The principal, who had been on management at the time, concurs that there was a gradual drift to her school which was accompanied by wariness on either side:

*I don't think it was a rush. I think initially there was apprehension from both sides. There was apprehension from the child and the parents coming in from a township school into a school like this as well as apprehension from this side wondering how we would cope. I think for that reason it wasn't a rush. I think at that time even though the school fees were significantly lower they were also significantly higher than what it would have been in the township school so I think at that stage poverty may have been a barrier.*



Both Indian and black drifters made their way to Roaine High in the early days and though the principal says they were mentally prepared for the arrival of drifters, challenges they had not prepared for were bound to unpeg. Drifters too, arrived knowing that a new school life lay ahead of them but responded in different ways to such challenges. Sindisiwe Gama, parent of a Grade 12 learner, who has been involved with this school for five years says she approached the school to admit her child here because she wanted a better chance for her once she finished school. A shop assistant in the area where the school is situated, she says she used to read about the school's achievements in the local community paper and also overheard conversations from mothers who came into the shop from time to time. This convinced her that she had to move her daughter from the township primary school when it was time for high school. She is particularly scathing about the 'double standards' in township schools:

*Everybody knows what goes on in our township schools; there is a lot of talk but very poor results. Teachers just wait for disruptions and then make our children suffer. Also, they are not serious about teaching- we see it in our children's books. In this school everything is done to make the children learn.*

While she does not mind commuting daily with her daughter from the township to this suburb, she is considering a permanent move to the suburban area so that access to everything becomes easier. She is quite open about the early expectations:

*I am from the township but I worked in this area for many years, even before this school took our children, but I don't know how they work inside. What I know is that the white children from this school get good education. So when I got the chance to take my child there I just took her from the township and put her there and told her she must make it. I can't do anything else.*

But it was not just parents of township and rural learners that thought about the switch to the better quality education. Children, too, were part of the process and some lobbied parents to move them. Gugu Dlamini, a Grade 12 learner who hails from the township has been here for five years. Her mother, a domestic worker in the suburb adjoining the school, stayed in at her work place during the week and got to visit her family in the weekend. She

had been able to get Gugu a place here through her employer's influence. Gugu's brother remained in a township high school where he completed his matric. She was able to measure herself against him and thereby the kind of educational experience that each had in the two different worlds. On the occasional visit to her mother's workplace, Gugu would read the local community newspapers that influenced her to make the move to the suburban school. Her reason for seeking admission here is simple:

*Well, if you read the newspaper you always see that Roaine High has a 100% pass rate and now for 20 years they had a 100% pass rate and about 95% of the learners get a Bachelors pass, so it sounded good to me. I want to become a chartered accountant.*

Gugu had made up her mind that, despite her background and poverty she was going to take on any challenge to ensure her dream was realised. Seeking a better education and therefore a better future for herself prompted her drift to Roaine High. Rosemary Rutledge, principal of Camalita Preparatory reflected on the early days and how she saw the shift:

*The main reason for the influx was academic standards here, giving the children the extra opportunity of the sport, drama and the art. Of course, it was also the time when the big move came where English was recognised as the official communication language in the country and you know far and wide in the world.*

Although the national policy stipulates that English should be the language of instruction in South African schools for all subjects except the languages, parents and learners were faced with teachers in township and rural areas teaching in IsiZulu. Learner Lindani Masibuko was brought to Camalita Preparatory by her parents but she has no regrets leaving her old school of which she has some bad memories:

*My father said I was coming to this school. I didn't mind because I used to meet some of my friends who left already and they told me about it. In the other school they shout and keep you in during break and you eat after break. I used to play with my friends, listen to the teacher and sometimes he used to hit us with this big stick (holds thumb and forefinger together to demonstrate size of the stick). They only talk in Zulu. I am excited to be here.*

While she says she is excited to be here she has this to say about her new teachers:

*Some of them are really kind and some of them really shout too much.*

The statement is actually quite loaded because it leads on to the kind of experiences that both drifting parents and learners got at the suburban schools as well as what schools did in their efforts to integrate drifters. Unlike suburban parents, even if they were first time parents, who had a sound understanding of what to expect at the school, the drifters were literally at the mercy of the suburban school which was a different world from the one their children attended. All three schools had an unwritten macro plan to show drifting parents and learners how teaching and learning took place at the. How this was done differed from school to school sometimes greatly and at other times, marginally. Kolodny (2002) argues that power differentials based on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds that colour the reception that drifters receive, impact their integration into the suburban schools (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.2). Tinto (2007) posits that separation from one environment to another is stressful and in the best interests of the child there should exist a connection between the old and the new for integration to be smoothed out (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.2).

## **5.8 Grappling with change**

Preparing for the arrival of drifters was quite different from preparing for what happens within the school. There was no model that these schools could follow and the only experiences of teaching and learning they had was their own. Even though Meraska School started off afresh, the terrain was new. There was apprehension within the minds of staff, parents, governors as well as learners and sometimes surrounding communities about what would now happen within the school gates. The principal was however prepared to make a success of the new dispensation and set about creating a new, inclusive environment from the beginning. Willingness to take on the task was not sufficient to prepare the team and the terrain for the unknown as Mkonto, the only black teacher at Meraska School discovered. In some ways he was a drifter too albeit a drifter with a difference- he went to Meraska School determined to deliver the quality that township and rural parents and learners came to seek. But his challenge in the classroom was that, as a teacher from the disadvantaged background where education was perceived to be of poor quality and so

were the teachers, he was suddenly thrust into a multicultural classroom environment that still served learners from the existing establishment. He explains:

*I remember in my first class I had about five coloureds and ten whites while the rest were black and I was teaching Grade six. I didn't look at them but I could see that they were looking at me, probably asking who he is and so on. So I went on and imparted the knowledge and that's it. Then with the colleagues we worked together-hey it was really challenging I must be honest with you.*

His challenges however were not confined to the classroom. While he had a supportive principal who was clearly intent on building a non-racist school based on a strong team, staff room politics had to be dealt with. Some of the teachers would pretend to be friendly but showed another side when it came to socialising. He explains:

*You know Friday afternoons maybe when it was time to socialise. I'm the kind who wanted to join the other staff members but I could see their actions saying "You still have to learn". At other times some would speak in Afrikaans only to find out I knew Afrikaans. Maybe it had to do with stigmatising; maybe it had to do with something else I don't know. There used to be this tension in the old days but it was good that I was taught that I don't have to look up to a person to be appreciated. I knew that I must get the knowledge that they possessed and use it as much as I can and I would be appreciated.*

While the school supposedly opened a new chapter in South African education and started on a clean slate it had not been possible to change mindsets of both learners and teachers who used the past as a reference point for their present behaviour. Obviously the principal was aware of such tensions and was trying to keep the team together. Mkhonto is appreciative of the support he received from the principal in the early days. He remembers her advice to him:

*What made a big, big difference to me was the principal saying "I'm happy to have you as a member of this team but a lot depends on your approach to life at this school. Enjoy it, but if you are not happy my door is always open". Her policy used to be so nice; she used to say if you are upset and angry go to my office but at the end*

*of the discussion we need a smile and so you will ache and fume but automatically you will find a solution. When we finished that smile will say at least it was a win-win.*

Mkhonto nevertheless acknowledges that the principal's leadership set the tone for the way the first group of teachers interacted. He is convinced that they set the foundation for the way the school operates today:

*That team, the first team I met I'm telling you it was a grounding which is what Meraska School is today.*

That and his resolve to succeed as a teacher in his new environment as a ground breaker kept him focussed on the job as he negotiated his way through challenges that came his way from time to time.

Township children too had to overcome their own challenges in order to attend Meraska School; young as they were, they were taunted at bus stops and in the townships for attending what was perceived as a white school. Mkhonto remembers that racial and political tensions were high at the time and it was the incubation period for the worst political violence that the country experienced just prior to democracy. KwaZulu-Natal bore the brunt of that violence and it probably explained why certain factions were still driven by the bitterness of unequal opportunities. Mkhonto recalled how a child came to him and said someone at the bus stop accosted their group saying "You are like mamparas. Who is doing this to you?" At other times they would be picked on for communicating with each other in English with comments like "Oh, now you think you are clever because you are rolling your language because now you are in a white school". He said there used to be many instances of intimidation reported but he would always comfort the children imploring them to ignore such remarks, not to change and to understand how important it was to stay focused on studying and to make a difference to their own lives.

Encounters of a different kind were being experienced by Jolly Kotze (at the time a head of department). All the township learners now at this school had never been to any other school outside the township. They had grown up far away from other race groups and not had the opportunity to interact with them. Being up close to other race groups also brought out the curiosity in them. Kotze interpreted it this way:

*When the kids first came here you notice that they would get quite close. They would stand right here (patting her left shoulder) and stroke my skin and I would stroke their skin. They would smile because they were testing to see if I felt the way that they felt. Amazing because they used to be afraid; I asked the kids in the higher classes and they said their parents used to warn them that you don't ever go close to a white person because they can kill you and would do very bad things to you. So there was this warning that whites are like monsters (holds out her arms); and they would come and play with my hair and I would touch their hair. You know there was this fascination with all the similarities although there were some superficial differences.*

Somewhat intimidated by a new experience and mindful of exclusive policies of the past, drifting parents at first would drop off their children and pick them up later in the day avoiding interaction with the school and its staff. This also extended to attendance at meetings to discuss issues that were brand new to them such as their child's progress as well as in governance matters and decision making. There was no set plan for how things would unfold at the school. School personnel had to figure out the way forward at each step of the way. Important however, was the leader's resolve to tackle the challenge of setting up and running a non-racial school. As a result processes ran concurrently, some overlapped and others had to be re-engineered or refined because they did not work. Mindful that integration was important to her plans for the school, the principal and her team also understood that many things had to be done at the same time while the school did not shirk its main responsibility of teaching and learning. Having been thrown into this melting pot together, the success of this newly established school hinged on the integration of teachers of various cultures and backgrounds as well as integration of learners. Not everything was going to work smoothly or even work especially because policy generation under the new government providing direction and support to non-racial schooling only emerged a few years after the school started functioning.

Schooling experiences of black parents had, in the main been at rural and township schools up to now. Drifting to suburban schools where education was perceived as being of better quality was an exciting proposition for many parents who had missed such opportunities in

their own lives but wanted to afford their children the chance of a better future compared to where they were at present. Change however, comes with its own challenges and many parents, although keen on sending their children to former Model C Schools were apprehensive about becoming a part of the process as well, choosing rather to drop off and pick up their children at these schools. The school understood that integrating the learners at classroom level was intrinsically linked to integrating the parents into the school programmes. Integrating the drifting parents into the process of educating their children was a daunting task and the lead had to come from the school if there was any chance of success. This barrier had to be dealt with and the school set about dealing with the issue of absentee parents in the child's education and growth. Tinto (1985) noted that the transition phase is punctuated by numerous factors such as norms, values and behaviour brought in from the old environment that might clash with those of the new environment in the integration process (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.3).

Dan Jordaan, a senior phase teacher here since last year is already up to speed with the school's programmes. Starting off his working career as a businessman he studied PGCE during that time and taught in a previously all white school in 2004. At the end of that year, he had another shot at a business career once again before coming back into teaching 2 years ago. Driven by a passion to teach underprivileged, disadvantaged children he was reluctant to go to a township school so he came to teach at Meraska School last year which he said seemed to him as a kind of in between school. He explains that identification and detection of problem areas helps with how the school positions itself to bring on board its parent community:

*In the main have parents meetings that's once a year but I start my contact with parents way before that happens. If there is any issue that I'm worried about- just to find out what it is- just to have a chat with them or if I need to setup a meeting with them because I think the parents are vitally important. Especially, you see the parents who care, are here at the meetings.*

Jordaan's actions are not unilateral but part of a process that starts at the beginning of each year. What it demonstrates though is that as new teachers arrive they are quickly aculturalised into the way the school operates and get up to speed immediately. In this

regard the school seems well organised. It was an indication that the school was well geared up to deliver teaching and learning from where it viewed the process. Collaboration with parents, especially the drifting ones was pre-determined by the school and ran the course. The process of bringing parents on board starts with a main meeting at the start of the year. This was a tradition set from the outset in response to encouraging parent participation in schooling. Majabulo captures the essence of those meetings:

*I wish you could see the AGM that we have at the beginning of the year. Our hall is always full and there are many parents who are outside.*

Mkhonto is equally ecstatic about parental support:

*Ooh! When there are meetings, the hall as big as it is, is always too full. They support us very much. We are lucky.*

Meraska School capitalises on this support and draws it out into further interaction between parent and school. Intermediate phase teacher, Eugenie Lalsing who arrived here in 2007 straight out of university explains:

*We have our parent teacher interviews that take place in the 2nd and 3rd week of the second term and prior to this at the AGM we have 'Meet the teacher' programme.*

At each step the school uses situations relating to learner attainment to capture parent interest in the life of the school and to remove obstacles to their participation in school activities. It was a process of acculturation into the school and how it operated. The school obviously based its model of operation on that of the former Model C School that it was familiar with and expected that all parents and learners would then be merged into this system. Most drifting parents, eager to get their children a 'better education' tried to fit in with the processes, rules and procedures presented to them. As things moved on beyond the first level, parents, teachers and learners were challenged in many ways. The school always led the way in responding to challenges and devising ways to ensure continuity. Bronfenbrenner (1992) advises that the context of the environment is dynamic and interactive which allows for development (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.3). Response



from teachers and learners to the new dynamic inside the classroom and on the ground varied according to individual perceptions. The principal took a studied view of the situation and accepted that a new journey had begun for which she was prepared to do her best to contain her suburban parents' anxieties while quickly bringing the drifters up to speed.

At Roaine High there was an attempt to proceed with business in the way they had done every year prior to the arrival of drifters. According to the principal no special preparations awaited either drifting parents or learners although some planning took place:

*Gradually we started admitting children of all races to the school. So in doing that I could say yes we did plan for it. Obviously you cannot plan for everything because the one thing that you can predict about people is that people are unpredictable.*

Alberton however said in the initial period meetings held traditionally continued in their usual timeslots and on the dates planned in the school calendar. Beginning of the year meetings carried the same agenda that they had in the other years. Having had objections by some parents to opening up the school to all races prior to the democratisation of education in the country, the school wanted to pursue the cautious route and continue as 'normally' as possible so as not to rock the boat.

In an attempt to pre-determine which drifters got admission to their school, Roaine High also tried another method to ease into the new scenario. Mindful that drifters had to be merged with their own learners and attainment levels needed to be maintained, the school participated in an intervention project that was run by an NGO. Called the SMILE project, started at an independent school elsewhere, the NGO operated independently from the school where they raised funds and they twinned primary schools in the township with high schools in the suburban areas. They ran English tuition lessons. How they did it was they raised funds from corporates and then approached suburban schools, so Roaine High was one of the schools that participated. A teacher was assigned to the project and a group of Grade 11 girls served as English tutors. The funding was used to bus the township learners on a designated afternoon each week from about one o' clock onwards. They would come to the school and would be given a classroom with a professional teacher teaching them for a while and then after school they would be broken up into little groups and the Grade 11

learners would do tutorship lessons with them. In this way the school paved the way for drifters who were being prepared for the journey at the suburban school. It also afforded its own learners to interact with potential drifters in a controlled environment. Whether the project served to improve learner attainment at the township school and encourage parents of those learners to keep them there or to get them ready for admission here is unclear because the selection process did not include a survey amongst township parents to indicate who was able to afford the transition to a suburban school such as Roaine High. The project which had limited success is recalled by the principal:

*We decided to be proactive by reaching out to schools in the township and groom children that wanted to come here. So we picked up a couple of children from that project.*

As time went on more and more drifters arrived, some even having come through the ex-Model C Primary Schools in the area. The twinning project ended when the NGO exhausted its funding and was not restarted in any form again. There was no evidence here as well that the school had a special programme to bring on board drifters that were admitted but were rather treated as all the other students that enrolled here. Teachers were left largely to their own resources to work on integrating learners that came from rural and township areas. This was to have implications for relations within the school which will be discussed later.

Camalita Preparatory makes parents the main targets for its beginning of the year programmes. It is a plan that has been formulated some time ago according to the deputy principal and gets rolled out when schools re-open. Its philosophy is if the parents are brought into line then everything else will fall into place. Drifters and learners from feeder schools as well as their parents arriving here are expected to fit in to the practices at the school. The school makes no secret of its intention to instruct all parents about how it operates and how they are expected to interact with the school. Meetings which were traditionally held in the evenings during the pre-democracy years are still held in the evenings and every parent for whom the meeting is intended is expected to attend this despite the fact that there are now parents whose children commute by public transport from surrounding township and rural areas and many do not have their own vehicles. Level

one teacher Gloria Goodfellow, who has been at all the meetings here for the past 12 years emphasises the point:

*We expect a 100% attendance and we get a 100% attendance from both parents and we go right through the grades like that.*

Goodfellow teaches Grade Ones and is obviously responding to the attendance at meetings by 'her' parents who usually exhibit a higher interest level than parents who have had their children in school for a while. The principal quotes a figure of 80% to 85% attendance at a general meeting of parents.

Each year the school starts off with what they term a 'Policy Evening' where parents are inducted into the way the school runs and the way they are expected to co-operate. This is a general meeting where the principal outlines the broader issues of schooling with the parents, who then move on to meet with class teachers for further information as the deputy principal explains:

*What happens there is we have a general meeting of all the parents in the hall and thereafter the parents will move to their register teachers. So when they go to the class teacher he or she will give them requirements specific to their child and that teacher such as communication procedures, homework etiquette and all the processes that take place at classroom level. So I think we cover that quite well.*

Goodfellow however, considers the policy evening an opportunity to get parents to comply with the rules and regulations of the school. She says:

*So we actually lay down the law.*

I get the impression that from the school side that the first phase of integration is to ensure that the drifters, especially parents 'fit' into the culture of the school and comply with how the school operates. Aware of her role as a principal in a multicultural school with drifters the minority here, Rutledge works hard on the second phase at trying to build up trust with them to ensure compliance:

*First of all we build up a trust with children. You know, when I went out as a junior teacher we taught all white classrooms. Obviously the children of other colour were now coming into the school so we had to build up that trust with the children and 'they were children' (emphasis) and they were not different.*

She uses visits by parents to find out more about their backgrounds to let them understand each other better. These trust building meetings, according to Rutledge, broke the ice and eased the way when learners had to be disciplined. Brendtro (2006) posits that trust is the most powerful tool available to effect positive development in children (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.1). It was obvious that such trust was educed as part of the strategy to help with bringing drifting learners in line as quickly as possible. This school as well as the other placed placed a high currency on getting on with the job of teaching and learning as they were used to. The main concern raised by drifting parents was whether their children would be victimised if they came to school to discuss a problem. She acknowledges that building up that trust with drifting parents was a long and slow process which also delayed their involvement in school activities. As a relations-building exercise she uses every opportunity to engage with the drifting parents:

*I always, always make it my duty- we have matches here on Saturdays or we have evening functions- I always make sure that I go and find the black parents and chat to them and show them appreciation for the fact that they have their children here. You would conduct yourself in such a way that it was embracing to everybody- you made everybody feel comfortable. When they come in for policy evening- the deputy and I will stand out in the driveway and greet everybody and thank everybody for being there because parent involvement is so important.*

There is no doubt that there is a genuine attempt to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable to be part of the school although it seems to say you welcome here as long as you can fit in. In the past, as a Model C School the school used its formula successfully and with the full cooperation of its then parent component to maintain high learner attainment and produce budding sportsmen and women which they did successfully. This has to be seen against the background of positioning the school as a strong foundation for higher learning. Furthermore, the focus in this school is to prepare learners for the global market

and to accentuate both academic proficiency on the one hand and sporting and artistic skills on the other. Learners are encouraged to do well academically even if they lean more strongly towards sporting codes. The principal, who has the goal of the school uppermost in her mind, explains:

*You know I say to the children you can be a famous cricketer or famous musician but if you can't do your communication to write your book and you can't do your maths to write up your book keeping records to make your money then you are going to be a failure.*

In trying to keep the status quo the school has stuck to its well-used formula of bringing in mostly white teachers from familiar backgrounds that it knows and understands better and who have experienced Model C Schools either as learners or teachers. It has dabbled with staff integration in the past but it quickly reverted to its tried and trusted formula which explains why all the level one teachers here are still predominantly white.

Deputy principal Perumal Munsamy believes that there is still a long way to go in terms of staff integration at the school. While the staff is predominantly white the school has in the past 'experimented' with bringing in teachers from other races besides those re-deployed here and who subsequently departed of their own will. This has been problematic and did not work for the school. Others, employed on a temporary basis did not have their contracts renewed at the end of their terms. Munsamy says he was the last person of colour appointed here and that was five years ago. He says many black and Indian teachers arriving here left because they couldn't perform the duties at the level expected by the school:

*And why the white teacher is successful at that is because he went to a school like this that would have organised on that basis; for example he would have played organised sport at primary school level, he went to training where he was very involved in extra-curricular duties and he is used to that. So for him going home at 4pm or half past four is normal. The non-white teacher went to or taught at a school where everyone went home at two thirty. He never played sport in the school thereafter so he wants to leave school at 2pm. Your friends are going home at 2pm so you want to also. So, it's a complex thing to address.*

Transforming the school has been a matter of concern for the deputy who, as the only black member of the SMT continually tries to play out scenarios of how the school will go forward in a few years when the present principal retires. He feels the isolation but knows the need for transformation and integration is an urgent and important challenge. Asked how he managed the transition since his arrival here he replies:

*My biggest challenge was to fit in. I was conscious of the fact that I couldn't come in and make changes but I was able to come in and support whatever was already in place and either improve or add value to whatever was in place. I was really challenged to acclimatize to the way the school worked. It took a while but now my opinions are respected and they value suggestions.*

In Munsamy's opinion the school is challenged by slow pace of integration at staff level mainly because they fear a drop in the academic standards if they bring in teachers who had not gone the route of the former Model C Schools from primary school through to teacher training. But he adds immediately that he does not think that teachers of other races are being deliberately kept away from teaching at this school to protect its academic and sporting excellence:

*I am not saying that because it is because of the white factor that the excellence is here- no, it's not about the race issue. It's about the resources; it's about the level at which things get done and the fact that there are no unqualified teachers at this school. We do not employ any unqualified teachers so even for any governing body appointment the teacher is fully qualified and competent enough to be in the classroom.*

The school has done excellent work in forcing parents especially those of the drifters to take responsibility for their children's work and involving them in work done at home. Bulelwa Mpisane recounts some of his experiences:

*Now I am more involved in her education. I used to be a union representative and I was not worried about my other kids. Now I must come back home, she arrives at 2 and she must do homework, I must assist her, she must do other things as well. My mind now is starting to open up and I say 'No, we need to do that'. She had come*

*from the other school where, not that they were irresponsible but teaching is different there and she was not doing well. Here if she is not doing well in anything you just get the note and you called into the school and you must answer as a parent (laughs).*

The school's philosophy is to get the parents on board and acculturated as soon as possible so it can continue on its trajectory of producing high attaining Model C learners.

Unlike Meraska School which planned to start a non-racial process and Roaine High where there was an attempt to engage with township schools, there were no plans here to address the issue of drifters coming into a new environment. Goodfellow's words "lay down the law" defines the approach adopted by the school. I found no programme of readiness for either the drifting parents or the learners at any of the three schools. Absence of such programmes does not mean a deliberate attempt by the schools to disadvantage or disregard the drifters consciously but rather an absence of careful consideration of the new dispensation and its implications for their schools. As I delved into other aspects of these schools lives the impact of such oversight became more and more evident. The discussion here centred on the trials and tribulations faced by all or most stakeholders at the confluence of the drifters and the suburban school. It is by no means conclusive which indicates that as a process of transformation it will take a long time. Tinto, (1993) argues that any kind of support in the form of activities or other forms will only be successful if the individual is willing to endure the isolation and stresses of the period of transition (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.3). Uncertainty on the part of the schools in dealing with their changed circumstances as their engagement with drifters began led them, in the absence of proper support, to fall back on the well beaten track and rather get drifters to conform. In many cases such a strategy works for the short term while but, as was illustrated by Meraska School, with a will to explore changes and make adjustments accordingly, a lot can be achieved to ensure long term sustainability. Bridging the gap between the drifters and the suburban school is vital to build a successful culturally diverse school. Reeves and Bylund (2005) contend that suburban schools ought to move away from the 'rural inferiority' complex which delays creating an inclusive environment to speed up integration (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.5).

## 5.9 Conclusion

At first glance through the lenses of the theoretical framework, the confluence would probably appear as a battleground as different role players tried to stake their claim. Tsujita (2012) as well as Zhu and Blachford (2012) record that drifting parents exhibit a tenacity to try and overcome all odds to get a shot at better education for their children (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.6). A closer look at the three schools as they tackled the new challenges they faced reveals that they were using their own ingenuity and their past practices as their fall back positions. In so doing, they responded to change differently and were similar in meeting the transformation agenda slowly. None made any references to policy or policy support from the DBE as the yard stick they used in the challenges they faced. Conchas, *et al.*, (2012) found that there exists intransigence on the part of education authorities around the world to action their well-meaning policies on integration of drifters into suburban schools (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.6). Despite such challenges the transformation agenda at Meraska School is ahead of the other two because it continually works at it as we shall further find out in the next chapter. Roaine High also had, through some challenges started the process of examining itself and making minor changes. South Africa leads the world in education policy production but as Jansen (2002) posits, policy gets churned out as political symbolism but government lacks the will to make things happen on the ground. Suburban schools, sometimes impatient to get on with the core business of teaching and learning would rather press ahead with processes as they deem fit and worry about repercussions later which is revealed by conflicts that become publicised in the media much to their chagrin (Premdev, 2014). Tinto's (1987) 'Anticipatory socialization' has relevance here because a successful integration process requires all the players at the confluence to demonstrate a willingness to collaborate (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.3).

In the next chapter I move on to look at the attempts at integration both inside and outside the classroom and how it contributed to shaping the environment and the stakeholders. In doing so the chapter also discusses the effect of the culture of the school on the drifters as well as the how the drifters' own cultures impact on their integration. The shaping of the confluence and its consequences are presented.



## CHAPTER SIX

### ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE

#### 6.1 Introduction

Having discussed the experiences of drifters and their suburban hosts as they came together in the initial period, the discourse now assumes a nexus between the role played by culture, sporting activities and co-curricular activities to colour the integration picture that emerges. In so doing the chapter views, through the theoretical framework (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3), how drifters have responded to the *proximal processing* of their new environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and how they have moved along from the separation and transition stage to the incorporation stage of the integration process (Tinto, 1987). The chapter then moves on to engage with the learning gap between drifters and the suburban school and how each stakeholder seeks to cope with integration. In the closing section of the chapter I examine how the factors interrogated in the earlier sections of this chapter function in a broader matrix as these schools ponder the integration context in the road ahead as seen through the chronosystem aspect of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) student integration model (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.8).

#### 6.2 Culture, sport and co-curricular influence

Most suburban schools possess a very strong sporting culture. Related co-curricular activities are also steeped in tradition, examples of which would be the annual school play or market day. This was an area where the rules and regulations of the school, laid out before drifters and their parents, was tested against the backgrounds, expectations and preparedness of the drifters. How drifters were socialised in their previous school environments and their susceptibility to change would be tested by the new environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Tinto, 1987) and new codes of sporting conduct. Break time behaviour on the school grounds, games and sports fixtures provided useful windows through which to peek at the form and shape of integration taking place and how the various stakeholders and role players are interacting in the process.

Soccer and netball, traditionally the main sporting codes that are played in township and rural schools are not offered competitively at the three schools I visited. Drifters to these

suburban schools are confronted by 'new' sports such as swimming, rugby and hockey that they are forced to offer if they wish to remain at their chosen school. Passionate as many drifters may be about sport such as soccer, many drifting learners and parents endure the absence of these codes to earn themselves a quality academic education at these schools. Culture and sport being intertwined therefore have to be dealt together.

The cultural challenges were not confined to culture attached to race and ethnic background but went deeper and wider. The culture of teaching and learning practices, staffroom and classroom behaviour, punctuality, respect and sporting activities were only some on the cultural smorgasbord. An understanding dawned on the leadership in the schools that learners and adults needed to be engaged in the process of understanding each other's culture if they were to work together. This realisation didn't happen in the same way and the same time at the different schools. One of the schools began the process consciously at the outset while certain occurrences made another school hasten its process of bridging the cultural divide. Adults referred to included teaching staff; service staff, administration staff and parents who were eventually all impacted in some way or another in the process of adjusting to changes within the schools and within themselves as will be evidenced in the following paragraphs.

Anticipating these challenges, the principal of Meraska School chose to start work on her teaching and administrative staff as a point of departure; for the first five years according to the present principal, specialists were hired by the school to conduct equity workshops with staff. It had a positive impact on everyone said Kotze because it cut to the heart of the matter which was how to work at understanding each other. She recalls:

*We got somebody in from one of the companies dealing with this whole shift that was running equity courses. She was brilliant. We had her here five years in a row and we dealt with the issues of presumption and assumption of cultures and so on. Things like "Ah but you do x. Yes but that's my culture and I would have to say that. But you know this is not done in a school". So that was enormously beneficial and very, very important. Remember our black staff were coming from a very intimidating background and were sort of feeling that they were inadequate so we*

*did an enormous amount of work on each other's cultures and loads of staff development around that.*

Mkhonto concurs saying it was that process that built the team into the effective family it is now:

*We did equity and we cleared up all misunderstandings about each other's cultures so I learned an enormous amount at that time. That is what this school is about today.*

Kotze was particularly thankful that while these processes were underway, Mkhonto was available to help explain certain cultural practices such as a child not wanting to make eye contact during conversations with teachers as a mark of respect. The outside agency intervention process gave way to the regular staff development workshops which, according to Mkhonto allowed people to share their values while they found out more about each other's backgrounds, homes and families. He added:

*So at these events we learn more about each other because it's an open area where we are together with the brother and the sister and we are able to find a solution for each other. That to me has been an instrument that has helped thus far.*

It is obvious from the conversations I have had that there are no reservations from either person in the top management about dealing with difficult matters including the race issue. Mkhonto explains that in the early days it was a challenge for him to approach a teacher just because he belonged to another race but today because of the work put in by the school everyone has been able to break through that threshold. The principal made some particularly revealing comments:

*You know we all thought none of us were racists on both sides of the line. You know you grow up in your own environment; you grow up in that society and by osmosis you inherit some of those things and assumptions. Yes, you have to unlearn that... I thought I was not racist, not colour conscious because I grew up in a family where my mum was always involved in work across culture. But even then, because of the society we lived in I still had some prejudices. You don't realize that until someone in*

*the environment in which you work says you are prejudiced. And I was horrified. But I can honestly say today after 20 years, I have no prejudices.*

That was an important lesson for her because it wized her to de-linking race as an issue from creeping in when things got difficult between any of the stakeholders. New teachers she says are the ones who sometimes have to be acculturated into what she calls a mixed school and its ways. She clarifies her response to such situations:

*Initially people would raise some thing as racist. But we identified it as personality-not your culture. So take the race out of it and then say to each other as adults what is about each other that you find it difficult to get on with? It's got nothing to do with race at all. It's got to do with personality.*

While this process unfolded, clever manoeuvring by then principal Width allowed her learners to mix with learners from other schools in the area where learners were all white or all Indian. She invited these schools to send their sports teams to play at her school. Noticing reluctance by drifters to participate in the regular Model C activities, she introduced both soccer and netball to the codes carried over from the previous line up. The sporting activities, though limited allowed children at Meraska School to interact with other's race and cultural groups in informal settings as well as to display their sporting capital. These occasional opportunities helped build the confidence of drifters. Mkhonto observes:

*They would be grouped together on the field and now they started to see the difference. (Laughs heartily and moves head from side to side). That was good. It was exciting.*

Regular sporting codes such as cricket and swimming continued and drifters were expected to participate in these activities as well. Drifters were introduced to these codes in programmes organised particularly for them. In swimming for example, drifters would attend start up coaching clinics until they were up to speed with their white colleagues and then compete equally in competitions and galas. The galas too had their own spin offs that took down some taboos. Interesting observations by Mkhonto convinced him that the process of 'normalising' the children in the school was under way. He recalls:

*You know these children, if there was like a swimming gala or something they will run to a white lady or whatever and try to sit here ( indicating the lap of the person) and then slowly the hands of the lady will go around the child and hold the child (laughs) which is amazing.*

Today, drifters also represent the school in codes across the board. Whether this can be viewed as socially engineered or the product of leadership initiative to integrate learners is difficult to estimate although drifting parent Sma Mahlangu, a member of the SGB is excited by these achievements and talks about this passionately:

*For instance our children now play cricket. We now have a child here (emphasis by banging her fist on the table) in grade six that is representing KZN. You see they nurture the talents, they nurture the talents.*

Learner, Masada Ithly who hails from Umlazi and has been here for 7 years and is in grade 7 says in impeccable English which shows the effect of her schooling here:

*The school is practically like home. Here in our school they try their best to understand different cultures like during Heritage day we dress in our traditional clothes according to our culture and let other people know more about it. We also perform dancing and singing. There are teachers of all race groups here and for me a teacher is a teacher.*

Some learners who started off as drifters have since moved into the suburbs according to the principal and regard themselves and are regarded by the school as suburban. Be that as it may, Sma Mahlangu agrees that the school continually tries to build cultural bridges:

*They have activities for the children where they show off their culture. They even dress in Zulu attire or whatever. Yes, the school encourages cultural tolerance. On days such as those different cultures bring the food that they eat. It's not that they close the other cultures out; they do accommodate the other cultures.*

According to the principal, nowadays, the school goes further and deeper into creating a better understanding of all the cultures that exist at the school. Open days, talent shows and concerts, speech and drama classes and assemblies are exploited by the school to

emphasise an understanding of multiculturalism and tolerance. Heritage Day celebrations last year took on a different form where teachers were sent up front and learners asked to identify their cultures and talk about their traditions, dress and events that were associated with each of the cultures. Interestingly the school was able to get its Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu teachers to identify cultural practices unique to each of them. Principal:

*They were like hauuw, wow and ooh! That sort of response was really positive because we all need to value each other. We all look the same here (points to skin) but we are different in our cultures. We all have to understand that and value it. They were very appreciative.*

While endeavours to enable learner integration go on in the sporting and cultural spheres teachers too are engaged in trying to understand each other's cultures. Senior phase teacher Majabulo Mngadi taught at a rural and a township school before she took up a post here in 1999. Coming from a monoculture background she is excited about how African culture has enriched the teachers at the school:

*You will find the Indian, coloured and white teachers have bought into African culture so much so that it is hard for you to tell this is a white one and this is a black one. So the culture of the children has in turn made us like this (motions a coming together with her hands).*

Her response indicates that efforts by school leadership to get teachers to understand cultural differences as a tool to improve teaching and learning is working by positively impacting on integration. Eugenie Lalsing who did her practice teaching at an all Indian school before her arrival here agrees that the cultural experience started off as a bit of a challenge but she is now on board but still on a learning curve:

*It wasn't an issue for me because I come from a Christian home and our values taught are to love and respect and to be kind to each other. Maybe at the beginning, maybe getting adjusted took some time but I mean they are very, very friendly. I had to find out things like why they wear the goat string.*

Nuanced responses such as the one from Eugenie Lalsing suggest that while work might have begun on integration in this area, there is still a long way to go before these stakeholders become immersed in it. In fairness to the school, its leadership has been making genuine attempts to understanding each other's cultures and in so doing build a multicultural school environment. Support for each other as staff is strong, as Jordaan points out:

*We have a lot of team spirit; there is a real family vibe about Meraska School I never realised quite what it was. Being here there is such a family environment that I think number one is the personal interactions- people are very open and honest. They will tell you when they have seen something that you shouldn't be doing and it may not be something hectic but it might be a soft word you are saying that's culturally unacceptable and so on.*

The current principal has done an excellent job of continuing the good practices her predecessor introduced one of which is to hold on-going internal workshops for staff to understand each other, their parents and children better and the other is where phase meetings serve as forums to discuss anything that challenges a teacher, not just academic attainment of learners. Jordaan continues:

*In-house training happens; it's something the school does really well. We share our expertise so people aren't scared you know for example my colleague, the Grade seven teacher is not scared to share with me when there is something fragile culturally. It's not an offence- nothing; there is this freedom to say what you see. An example is when you speaking to a child in western culture you expect him to look at you in the eyes whereas in Zulu culture it is considered rude to look at someone especially an adult in the eye. But that is changing also because to get the message across we have to connect. The other is that if I'm standing on one side of the corridor and talking to someone else on the other side it is wrong in Zulu culture to walk through. But there are interactions often you know; it may not even be a cultural thing. They give you the freedom to help you improve who you are.*

Understanding of deeper cultural meanings and working within those to accommodate such learners, brought out an unexpected response from the parent. While she agrees that schools should work at understanding the culture of its parents and learners, she displays a deep understanding of parents' roles in such a school:

*I think in order to interact we also have to understand why some things are done. For example in my culture a child should not look at an adult when he is speaking but in order to interact we must do that. So, cultural observance doesn't work in certain circumstances. Even if it is our culture we are going out of that; it is only in the deep rural areas where that would apply but in the townships- no, we are moving away from that.*

Sma, however was at pains to explain that this did not mark a total departure on the part of parents from observing cultural practices. Although living in the township, she like many other parents still had ties with rural relatives and often visited there where there was no question about cultural observances:

*Yes, for instance if I had to go to the deep rural area of my husband's birthplace, I would wear a doek, I would never wear pants. Yes, you do it just to satisfy them and it's just for a while because I don't live there. It's just for one or two days and then I come back to my comfortable zone.*

While that act may sound like a departure from cultural ties, Sma shows a deep sense of longing for such schools to appreciate the cultural background of black children saying that her attendance at functions where learners performed in former Model C Schools made her miss what black children had to offer because in many instances these functions were completely in English. She was implying that the content of those programmes should be increased to accommodate more black items. Nevertheless, she was appreciative of the opportunities that this school offered all children:

*You see, a black child can act and sing. Oh (face lights up), I enjoy that. This school gives them that opportunity and they excel. That reminds me of the olden days (broad smile). That makes you feel you belong and I feel part of it. It brings out the talent in the children too.*



Bit by bit extra-curricular activities in and out of the classroom started showing signs of a multicultural school becoming a reality, much like how bits of green would appear on a slope of a mountain devastated by fire. Mkhonto recalls how at first the people were sceptical about the success of the trajectory chosen by principal Width adding:

*(Almost in a whisper) The words “We are a family” were introduced by the principal. At first it was a theory. (Louder) Slowly, slowly we started working as a team and eventually ended up being a family. Up to now there is this family here but people are individuals- they have their own characters and so on.*

This was not the case at Camalita Preparatory where I found that drifting learners basically live two lives; one is the life they lead in the township or rural area they live in and the other is in the school. At Camalita Preparatory drifting learners are expected to fit into the existing extra-mural programmes the school has had in place from earlier days. Unlike Meraska School that initiated programmes to integrate its learners on the sports field and to play codes that they were engaged in at their rural and township schools, at Camalita Preparatory there was no attempt to ease drifters into the school’s activities or to bring some of the drifters’ previous activities into the programme. This was akin to asking a child that has not swum before to dive into the deep end of the swimming pool. Confronted by new sports codes, activities and routines while acclimatising to the school at the same time are some of the challenges faced by drifters in their first few months at this school. While they might have been attracted to this school for a better quality education they sometimes have to work doubly hard at everything to become part of their new school. Many leave home early each morning, some as early as 4 o’clock and travel long distances by taxi to get to the school in time. Sporting and or extra mural activities which are compulsory take place after school and during weekends. Drifters form the minority here while the extra-curricular programme was designed around the needs and wants of the dominant white parents who place a high premium on such activities being part of the curricular programme and are willing to allow their children to remain after hours and weekends. While the principal is aware of these challenges, the way the extra-curricular programme has been structured has remained unchanged. Instead, more attention is given to trying to make a success of those

drifters who show interest in the dominant codes at the school. Drifters that attend are given full support to become proficient at the new codes. She says:

*Our teachers help build them up, showing them what to do. We try our best to bring them up to speed, especially if they show interest.*

Sporting codes offered at the school are the traditional rugby, hockey, tennis, netball and swimming with a smattering of other codes that are not run as full competitive leagues. Camalita Preparatory, like its suburban counterparts belongs to leagues that these schools have formed themselves into and a controlling body set up by themselves that operates outside the jurisdiction of the DBE or the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. These codes then align themselves to university competitions as the learners move on and eventually the road leads to national selection. Reluctance to include soccer stems from the fact that it is not organised at school level nationally and is mostly linked to premier league sides. Munsamy explains:

*Looking from the outside it would seem that we don't cater for black children because we don't have soccer. You must understand that we are a traditionally white school that plays in organised fixtures throughout the year and we associate with the suburban schools that are former Model C Schools and it's been the tradition throughout. So the sport that's been played here is because of those reasons- the controlling body has not made the changes to the codes and soccer is still not played. For that change to take place the Sports Convenors Association will have to make the change at that forum and then it will filter down to the schools then only will we play it. We tried it and it didn't work. We had teams but no opposition to play.*

As an internal arrangement the school offers soccer up to Grade three which then switches to rugby and cricket from grade four onwards forcing learners to choose one of those codes. Former Model C Schools prefer to participate in sports that lead them to the upper echelons of such codes; soccer does not afford them such connectivity which probably explains why their controlling body is reluctant to offer soccer. From an organisational point of view the school prefers to interact with the former Model C Schools when playing sport because their sport calendars are synchronized hence they do not engage with other schools nearby that

may be playing soccer. Those not offering rugby and cricket get to choose other activities such as tennis, art or marimba classes. Principal Rutledge believes that the drifters are fitting into the programme and making progress as well:

*Wherever we've had black children in our rugby teams and they've gone on to trials they really have gone and proved themselves on merit because they were taught here in a really nice way. We had several children here where the rugby coach will just make sure the child gets a game. The same thing is done for hockey where we make sure that the child gets to the event and gets them home again because there is potential in getting them through.*

The system has worked in producing drifters with the capability to land places in prestigious schools on sports scholarships although these were but a few compared to the suburban children that have similar achievements. Drifting parents, many of whom make great sacrifices to send their children here, overlook some of these difficulties when they see their children learning new sports and other activities such as music and art. Mpisane says in reference to his daughter:

*In terms of sports I am happy. She will come and say I want to play hockey. We used to think that hockey was a white people's sport but she will say 'No, no, I want to play. I want to do hockey'. Now she wants to do gymnastics and swimming as well; she was not used to swimming but now she teaches me how to swim.*

Drifter, Lindani Mazibuko is excited by what she finds at this school which was missing in her previous school:

*We do lots of sports and physical education which I like. I take netball and academic support and sometimes I do drama. Sometimes we also do swimming.*

Increasing interest in new activities and making some proficient in some sporting codes has had its success here. Asked if such activities and programmes are contributing to integration of drifters and the dominant group at his school, deputy principal Munsamy says the programmes offered are 'value for money' but he is forthright about what is not happening at his school:

*The problem here is that we are not getting enough integration. The children here are predominantly white and speak English mostly. The children are still learning- they are basically still in their own world; it's not the South Africa that's happening out there. You have to look at a scenario where there are a fair number of white and non-white people amongst both staff and pupils in school for better integration to take place.*

So, while the school uses its systems and resources to produce some top sportspersons from amongst the drifters, sport and extra-curricular activity show limited success in bringing learners together. Real integration is still a journey the school has to undertake. This is not just confined to the school grounds as the deputy noticed:

*You will find Indian children sitting together, black children sitting together and the odd integration taking place here and there. I also noticed that when birthday parties come around and a party is organised at home in some birthdays only a certain cultural group is invited to the party and others will not be invited although it is a private thing held outside the school. That also depends on the thinking within the family unit. If a family only wants to associate with a particular culture then they only invite children from that culture although you do get the odd occasion when everyone gets invited which is the 'liberal' thinking parent (shows inverted commas by raising his fingers in both hands).*

School principal Rutledge acknowledges that learners do sit in cultural groups during breaks but is quick to point out that you do get mixed groups sitting together as well. She points out that such groupings disappear once learners are in class and relate to each other as one group of peers. The school believes, though, that they are adequately catering for all the cultures in their care although they make it known upfront that they are a Christian based school. In this regard the principal says teachers had to build up an understanding of all the different cultures. For this aspect of their development, teachers were left to their own resources. The school, while aware of courses offered to bridge the multicultural divide, choose to learn by practical application as the new scenario unfolded. Here too, when asked about understanding the culture of drifters, the example of the child not looking you in the

eye is proffered. This is symptomatic of a superficial understanding of cultural differences and an indicator that integration on that level is largely un-explored.

Cultural programmes are not given a high priority in the school calendar. There are no regular or ongoing cultural programmes during the year although the school concert and musical concerts are held from time to time as events. Once a year Indian learners hold a short Diwali Programme at assembly to celebrate the festival and are allowed to wear traditional clothes to school. The principal explains that such programmes, held at assembly are not threatening and the school allows learners such as Jehovah's Witnesses to exclude themselves from watching if they so wish. The school however, holds a Christian assembly each Friday where groups such as the Muslims and Hindus are not compelled to attend. She adds:

*But you know what happens - they join in.*

Parent Bulelwa Mpisane however, laments the lack of cultural activities for black children. He had this to say:

*In 2011 when my other child was here I saw some things happening like black culture day when the children wore traditional clothes and all those things and then the child will come and say today is a Hindu day and can you organise me a sari or something I can wear. But last year there was nothing. There was no cultural day.*

The school had dropped these cultural days without any explanation to the parents. Mpisane, who was quite excited when they did take place feels they should be re-introduced. It emerged that such days were acknowledged in passing and did not take off as part of the school's calendar of activities or pursue other objectives such as integrating the various cultures. These are treated as one-off events during the year and there is no hype about it. The reason according to the deputy principal is probably this:

*Because the dominant culture is 75%, it's very difficult for the other cultures to take over the situation; staff is predominantly white and we have very few non-white staff members in this school. Such activities have to be driven by individuals who have an interest in them and need to be supported by the others.*

This was in stark contrast to what I discovered at Meraska School where even the staff was beginning to be influenced by each other's cultures.

It is the one thing that learner Lindani Mazibuko expresses regret about:

*They don't have cultural activities for us. I would like it to happen because I miss that part.*

While the school does not appear to have a macro plan to address multiculturalism and integration of drifters, other programmes and events it has in its normal school calendar do bring people together albeit informally. One such event is the mums' and dads' picnic day, once again drawn in from activities of the Model C days, where socializing with other parents is encouraged. The other event is the grandparents' day when learners first do a performance in the hall then the grandparents meet staff and see their grandchildren's work before heading off to the ground for a picnic. This goes well for the school says the principal:

*I think we have had lovely integration especially on grandparent's day. Its just lovely- we provide the tea and the fairy cakes and they sit in their chairs; there are blankets, tables and stuff and it's wonderful to see that. More and more grandparents of other colour have been coming because they can see that there are no hidden agendas here- it's just come in and join the school and come in and enjoy being with your grandchildren. It's also interesting that there are children of all races who don't have grandparents and another parent will say 'come and join up'- it's lovely.*

Another event aimed at understanding each other's culture says junior primary teacher Goodfellow is healthy eating from around the world when foods from the different cultures and around the world are featured to promote a healthy lifestyle.

What probably explains the status of integration at this school is the Show Regard Programme that the school has adopted. Principal Rutledge explains that it was a programme originally adapted from Australia and has evolved into a full programme here over the years. It deals with respect, cultural tolerance and discipline. The principal explains:

*So the parents know it before hand and when they come in for an interview they always know that we are a Christian school but through our Show Regard Programme we respect everybody and everyone gets a copy of the Show Regard Programme and yes it's a tolerance of everybody's cultural beliefs as well.*

Asked about how the school deals with such cultural practices as wearing of red strings around the wrist by Indian children and goat strings by black children, the principal says parents are asked to keep it covered and remember that the school is Christian based. This she says helps to keep the school focussed on its work rather than use up unnecessary energy on such issues. In her emphasis of the Christian based school the principal seemed either to ignore or evade SASA that explicitly declares that schools should be free of any religious bias. Level one teacher Goodfellow has the last word on the Show Regard Programme:

*You know this is a Show Regard Programme School and in order to respect each other we have to respect what you believe in, what I believe in and what you do and what we do. But when we come together in the classroom we are a family. But we respect each and every person - yes. It's not a drawback. Definitely not because it's something we respect and we relate to it.*

It's the point up to which the school is prepared to go - respect who you are and what you do as long as you fall in line with the school's policies and programmes and understand that it is a Christian based school. Whether it is the effect of the Show Regard Programme or not is difficult to assess but the drifters who arrive here seem to fit in easily amongst the other children. Colour, race or different cultures made no difference to Lindani Masibuko when she arrived. Asked if she took note of any differences she replied:

*No. it was nothing.*

Asked if she noticed any difference in the teachers since she had come from a school with only black teachers to a school where the majority where white she said:

*They talk the same. Sometimes they ask about what is happening at home if you didn't do your homework but some get angry and shout.*

Sometimes, the school's pre-occupation with getting parents to fall in line has caused some distress where parents felt they were not being understood by the school. Parent Mpisane gives an example of such an incident:

*The teacher was always complaining and I will say the attitude that she had towards black children was not good until her mother approached the teacher and said 'No, this is not right- you cannot do this and this and this'. And the message book- the way they were communicating you can see that between the mother and the teacher- the communication was very tough. The way the mother was answering and the way the teacher was sending back with the same message it was showing that there was friction between the two of them. I ended up intervening, telling the mother don't get involved. Unfortunately, I am not married to her mother but I am married to someone else. I said by reading whatever is written here in the message book there is something wrong here.*

Mpisane was very circumspect about addressing the issue because he feared his child would be victimised by the school and even failed at the end of the year. He did request a meeting with the teacher, though and was able to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction:

*So I contacted the teacher and we sat down and discussed it and I informed her about her behaviour and told her it was not the right way but I believe that as a teacher you won't do something wrong to a child but I'm not happy about what is happening but I want to resolve it. The teacher was understanding and accommodating.*

His fear of victimisation was allayed and the child passed into the next grade at the end of the year. It was also an 'aha' moment for Mpisane because he came away understanding that the angry interaction played out between mother and teacher stemmed from the poor quality homework the child was producing:

*But the child was also coming from a background where the school work was not right but we tried and we resolved that.*



Cultural differences seem to have led to the misunderstanding; the teacher was used to dealing with parents that helped children with their homework and monitored their work as well while the mother, from her experiences with the township school did not engage the child when it came to homework. Misunderstandings such as these, according to the principal and deputy, continue to crop up from time to time challenging the *status quo* at the school. Such incidents are not flagged by the school as opportunities to create platforms to address them and thereby build a rapport between drifters and the school. Despite such challenges drifting parents continue to support the school and endeavour to participate in its programmes to ensure that their children get the quality education they came here for hoping that at some point the school will also consult with them about how cultural and other integration can be speeded up. Mpisane sums it up:

*Sometimes, especially in these multicultural days, sometimes you see something and say 'This is not right'. But if you are a new person in the school (nervous chuckle) you remain quiet and say no, if that is not right then next year I will talk about it.*

He was expressing his yearning to be involved more meaningfully in the school he had become part of by moving his children here.

At Roaine High teachers and SMT members make no secret of the fact that their primary reason for being there is to teach and that they wish to get on with it. Sports and other extra-curricular activities are part of the curriculum which follows a set programme drawn from their past school calendars and traditions. Initially, this seemed to work for them. Level one teacher Abrahams said it was business as usual after the initial colour change she experienced in the classroom:

*It was a bit strange at first because you had not seen brown faces before and it didn't matter whether they were Indian or African and if they were prepared to work that was important. To me they were just children. If they showed interest in the subject that was enough- doesn't matter what colour they are.*

Abrahams who says with a laugh that she knows a 'smattering' of Zulu recalls how she would attempt to use it with hilarious effect as she warned learners that she could understand what they were saying when speaking to each other. These little nuances

helped her to ease her interaction with them. She remembers that most were shy at first because there were very few of them amongst all the white learners but things got smoother once they settled in as the year progressed and they realized that their suburban peers were just the same as them and then everything was fine. Head of Department Leonie Klopper found that as a science teacher who had no knowledge of any African language says she had to respond to the English gap between her and her learners by morphing into a teacher who used a lot more diagrams and visuals choosing her terminology carefully to get her message across.

*I had to say things in a number of different ways, perhaps childlike at first and then develop it into scientific language.*

Asked if this did not frustrate the learners whose first language was English she said:

*I can't say I was aware of that but obviously I had to take cognisance of it. I don't think I slowed down to the extent that it would have frustrated. In fact, when I think about it now, it might even have helped some of them. Maybe in the past I had gone too fast anyway. So, I'm not aware of any that were frustrated.*

This was in the early days when there was only one Grade twelve class but with increasing numbers the school streamed its learners, especially in English and mathematics according to their grades and levels of attainment. This also came with its own problems because some teachers had their own ideas about how learners, especially drifters should be placed and how integration worked. Julie Stander, deputy principal, who says she has been here 'for donkey's years' started as a part-time teacher in the 1980s and worked her way up into her present position. She was asked to teach drama some ten years ago, got the shock of her life when she took over from her colleague:

*I said how do I divide the kids and she said "No just put the black girls in the bottom two classes" and I asked her why to which she said "No, no that's where they will fall, you'll see that- that's where they will fall". While a lot of them did, I was having kids who's aggregates on the system that we used to grade actually made them fall in a B class or an A class. So I spoke to principal and I said to her "Now what do I do" and she was horrified. She really didn't know that that was really going on because you*

*trust your HODs to do the distribution fairly so we changed that so that the child fell into her ability group rather than just her colour - we didn't really have like a black class.*

Preconceptions and cultural differences were deeply ingrained at this school and it nuanced how they interacted with drifters. Stander reflects that the school did not have the smooth start it thought it had prepared itself for. Efforts to prepare teachers for change and the advent of drifters it seems fell short as experiences revealed gaps in such workshops that were held. Practices like streaming incorrectly came from the perception that all drifters were academically weak and had to be placed in classes for such learners. She attributes her ignorance of the situation because information did not flow smoothly between management and teachers in the early days:

*When I was a level one teacher here I really was not involved in things at management level which made me disconnected with the whole decision process.*

Strict application of the disciplinary code of conduct was also misconstrued as discrimination by sections of drifters. Although applied correctly, according to Stander it brought tensions which led to anger amongst drifters who felt they were being unfairly targeted as offenders. Sometimes such anger manifested itself as aggression leading to unpleasant situations within the school. Drifters had come from township or rural schools where, in some cases, discipline was lax and didn't permeate every aspect of the learners' life at school.

Over the years Roaine High developed its strict code of conduct that it applied judiciously to keep errant learners in check and in so doing preserve its prestigious status. This became a culture of the school. Coupled with this were problems that some drifting learners experienced at home. Alberton recalls that you could see that some of their home lives were damaged while others practised what they did in their old schools like bring dagga to school. This led to discipline problems because drifters felt challenged:

*We had patches of that yes. It manifested itself in aggression (takes long pause) and things that we hadn't confronted before like bringing dagga to school. But particularly aggressive behaviour and it was mostly anger.*

She relates the story of a girl whose mother decided to become a sangoma and how it affected her work and behaviour at school:

*One girl I can think of for example her mother just decided to become a sangoma and where the family was quite stable before suddenly the mother started doing things like-because she was a single parent- she would just leave them alone and go off to the Eastern Cape to do training or whatever. The children would be left to their own devices and then the child started manifesting a lot of anti-social behaviour. So we had to deal with a lot of that.*

The school did not revise its disciplinary code nor did it back down in the strict manner of dealing with errant learners whether they were drifters or not. Rules and regulations, the code of conduct and school policies which were applied in the same way the school had done for years were not unpacked for the drifters leading to clashes which were now beginning to occur more often. Disciplinary measures and the conformist rules of the school were building a pressure-cooker situation. Klopper observes that Indian drifters sometimes wore red strings on their wrist while black learners would wear goat skins on their wrists. These learners were disciplined for breaching the code of conduct and asked to remove such 'adornments' even if they had a religious significance. Such insensitivity to cultural observances had even in recent times created turbulence in other suburban schools such as Curro Helderwyk Private School causing a standoff between parents and the principal who ordered a drifter to remove the red string (Premdev, 2014). Klopper believes that drifters innocently committed such transgressions:

*Their faux pas was more ignorance of the way Roaine High would have done things because it was that different from where they came from. The lack of knowing what was expected here rather than deliberately contravening things and for us to also know where they were coming from.*

However, the *faux pas* was not based on ignorance - the school obviously ignored the CRSA and SASA, instead trying to impose its code of conduct imported from the pre- democracy era and applied it unchanged. Pressure mounted and the confluence became heated as drifters were disciplined for such innocent 'misdemeanours'. While having to deal with such

‘injustices’, drifting learners were also largely left to their own devices when it came to acceptance and integration. Drifters felt they were not being understood. Stander recalls that drifters in her early drama classes expressed themselves strongly about what they felt and what they experienced:

*In fact one of my matric girls - in those days they had to do what they call a matric open assignment and they had to study an area of drama and she chose an area of study using Rotovsky’s poor theatre and the workshop method with a group of black girls who were in the school as a minority group to explore what the challenges were for them and how they felt about it. It was actually interesting because it gave us an insight into how the children were feeling about being the minority in this former sort of bastion of white education and their experiences at school, their friendship issues, the language issues, the hair (emphasises with forward head movement) issues and some of the other issues.*

This outlet for self-expression by one department in the school didn’t go down too well with some of the suburban parents who saw the production. Stander explains:

*The fact that they put it on, one of the parents got so upset that she got up and she walked out because it was very honest and it was quite brutal and it really articulated how those girls were feeling.*

Suburban parents were also contributing to the dilemma the school found itself in. Being deeply involved in school activities, they were quick to make their feelings known about anything. After watching a school production or choir parents would sometimes carelessly comment on the composition of the production saying things like “I didn’t realize that there were so many black girls in the choir” which says Stander angrily, undermines their work as teachers trying to work with children as children and not race groups. It was actually a *faux pas* on the part of the school. It was an interesting paradox; drifters arrived here and found no induction programme or system to facilitate smooth integration with the majority suburban learners who happened to be largely white whereas the school also did not have a formal programme that prepared its existing learners for what was to come like it did with its teachers. Neither did I hear about any attempts to bring parents together as had been

done at Camalita Preparatory. It had not occurred to the school that it may have been necessary, the thinking being that the teachers had been adequately prepared by, in the main, emphasising equality. It was not to be so and the downward spiral into chaos continued until the inevitable confrontation along racial lines exploded.

A nasty incident where an Afrikaner learner shouted a racist profanity at a black learner blew the lid off the pressure cooker situation and made the school sit up and take notice but only after it had caused much anxiety and hurt to all stakeholders. The incident polarised learners into the drifters and the suburban group largely along racial lines, something the school thought they had worked hard at for it not to happen. Drifters demanded action against the perpetrator and the situation got tense. Grievances that were kept aside now surfaced and learners demanded action. Some teachers were afraid that the story could get to the media and embarrass the school. Although a long time ago, Klopper has a clear recollection of the incident:

*They gathered together, they were militant, they were angry and they were quite frightening - something that I had never had to deal with. So that was the probably worst thing that I had to ever deal with. I was terrified (laughs apologetically) and I had visions of this ending up in the newspapers.*

The incident was a wake-up call and alerted the principal to other little capers on the school grounds and classroom incidents that also manifested themselves in aggression. On reflection, Alberton says there was much anger in drifters in those days. Lane, Menzies, Oakes, Lambert, Cox and Hankins (2012) found that 'undercontrolled behaviour' presents itself in such acts as arguing and fighting (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.8). Immediate action was necessary to protect the image of the school and to maintain its status quo as a respectable high performer in an upmarket suburb. Alberton realised that these incidents were indicative of a need for a deeper understanding of what was going on and the school had to respond responsibly and appropriately. While the school stepped in and dealt with the profanity incident effectively and decisively, it also initiated a move by the school to dig deeper and delve into the cause of drifters being disgruntled and come up with solutions that would help with the process of integration. Klopper gives her perspective on that period:

*So it was by listening and by trying to understand and by giving them a chance to talk, get their anger out I think that solved that. It could have gone either way. But we dealt with it by booking a room taking them out of lessons- and in this school we never take children out of lessons (laughs nervously)- gathering them around in a circle and trying to be as open as possible. The principal ran the meeting and I was present. Trying to be as open as possible and to hear from their point of view firstly what it was that had angered them so much. Tried to get from them if it was reasonable for them to be angered so much when there were people there that hadn't even heard what happened in that incident. So it was about who was hurt, why does it hurt you, going back to stories that grannies had told. We spent hours sitting and talking through this thing trying to come to a solution and in the process the incident opened up the meeting to a whole range of grievances that they placed on the table.*

A gap in the process of integration had been exposed. The school realized that learners, especially the drifters, had to be given the space to express themselves and be part of the solution. Discussion forums and focus groups for learners were created, which, says Alberton got learners talking and helping to find solutions. Cognitive dissonance, Alberton said had a lot to do with the anger and the associated aggression displayed by learners. It was also symptomatic of minority learners being challenged to integrate in a new environment without support. The school now worked hard at creating ways for learners to express themselves and feel a part of the institution. Besides the talk shops that emerged after the flare-up, the school started introducing other forms of expression that drifters and suburban learners could use in the process of integrating each other. One such initiative was the introduction of a cultural hour once a week when they didn't teach but focussed on activities to integrate learners. There was no turning back for the principal whose primary aim was to ensure that her school's excellent academic record did not get undermined while she ran a smart and disciplined ship. An induction programme was introduced for all new Grade eight learners. Dlamini describes how it works:

*Grade eight comes to school a day early so that they can get to know everyone else so that when school opens they have made friends already. We spend a night*

*together, we watch movies and we have fun together. But we also have picnics during the year where it's the class and the class prefect so we can get to know our classes and our prefects. Its little things like that - yes, so we all get to know each other and see what we have in common. Then we also get mentors to help us along the way.*

Understanding the need to express their identity and the space to infuse the school with their culture as well, the school, in consultation with its learners facilitated the formation of several societies. Abrahams recalls that the Ama Gugu Heritage Society, the School Christian Association, the Hindu Society, the Muslim Society and the African Contemporary, an eccentric dance club, formed later came into being as a result. These, together with an additional choir to the existing one that allowed it the flexibility to let learners determine what they put on, eased the way for integration and the associated challenges faced by the school. Abrahams considers the development of these various groups and societies as a big step in the right direction when it comes to accommodating the cultures and practices of the various drifting groups in her school and allowing cross-cultural integration to take root. She refers to the success achieved with the Ama Gugu Heritage Society:

*I do know that over the years it has developed so that it's not only the African girls that can belong to that. Some of the white girls have joined and they learn to do African dancing. But in the early days it was not. I said to them one day, 'the Ama Gugu- is that for Africans only?' They said no, anyone can join.*

These and other challenges that came along pushed the leadership at the school to continually evaluate where they were going and to make changes if necessary. Determined leadership and hard work by a dedicated team salvaged what could have been a dark period in the school's proud history and turned it around into an institution that continually works towards inclusivity. To the school's credit it had allowed and encouraged dialogue and exchange of ideas in various forms which started the journey to full integration. The important question that should be asked here is whether formation of such groupings and societies have had the desired effect of breaking down barriers and bringing learners closer. Drifter, Gugu Dlamini feels very comfortable at the school and considers herself a fully-fledged learner at Roaine High:



*Teachers and learners are normal. They treated me like everyone else when I got here. I don't even think anyone of them even knows that my mum is a domestic worker. Life for me at Roaine High has just been like normal. I feel like one of them. There is not any kind of discrimination. Teachers have been helpful in the way like they are to every other student.*

Dlamini lists as her friends two Zulus, a Swati, an Indian and a coloured while she is Xhosa and says they all look out for each other. Bronfenbrenner (1992) suggests that close and personal relationships as well as external factors impact powerfully on a child's development (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.1). She usually has transport problems to get to school dances or weekend events so her friends work out a plan to make sure she is able to attend. In the same way life has levelled out for other drifters too. There are no more problems with compliance and the code of conduct although she says transport is still a challenge:

*So I don't think learners from outside have a problem with rules anymore except to come to extra murals or dances at night or plays at night or maybe coming late to school because of transport problems but apart from that- no I don't see a problem.*

She loves dancing and her passion is catered for in the school's extra-mural programme:

*African Contemporary is a dance society to which anybody can come. This guy Musa- he teaches you how to dance. It's mostly like freestyle but it's not freestyle. It's kind of eccentric dancing.*

Principal Alberton had this to say about creating societies such as the Ama Gugu and African Contemporary:

*So it gives them the space to express themselves within their culture. We think that that has made a difference by giving them that space, by recognizing them and by also showcasing them. We showcase them at events such as prize-giving, school show or whatever we give them an opportunity to sing and dance. I think that has helped them a lot in that it validates them. I wouldn't say that that is the reason but I think that it might have contributed to that change in terms of validation.*

As to whether this has led to real integration, Stander considers her learners to be privileged because they attend a 'multiracial school'; her argument is that while all schools are allowed to be 'multiracial', not all have taken up the challenge. She quotes the case of her colleague who teaches in a Cape Town high school that has only white children and just a few coloureds. She expressed this to her learners:

*I was saying to the girls that they have taken it totally for granted- they don't have to think about it- they've got whites, blacks, Indians, coloureds, Zulus, Xhosas and they don't know the difference - they don't see it and in fact in a school like this we mostly don't see colour either. I think we've really grown beyond it.*

Alberton has a world view on what has happened at her school. She sees it against the backdrop of the social changes the country is going through and believes that schools should keep pace but have to strike a balance between learners becoming acculturised at a school and allowing the space for 'multiculturalism':

*Basically what our policy is that we try to find a balance. If you are living in South Africa you have multiple identities. So what we do is we look at Roaine High, you are a pupil at Roaine High so you have an identity as a Roaine High girl. We have Roaine High values, we have a Roaine High code of conduct and equally within Roaine High we have Hindu culture, Muslim culture, African Culture and amongst the whites we have a spread of different cultures too. So the idea then is that everyone has to practice respect and tolerance and in our mission statement one of the aspects mentioned is mutual respect. That's actually what we try to work on every day.*

The painful experiences of the early days have taught the school to try and understand various differences or challenges that show up from time to time. Differences in culture, religion and traditions that were earlier ignored in pursuit of pure academic work came back to haunt the school. Multiculturalism needed to be understood and accepted. The school decided that the strategy would be to accommodate drifters' cultures. Alberton explains the strategy adopted by the school to deal with the issue:

*I would say the challenges were minor and to begin with they began as a result of a lack of understanding. Things like the Luxmi string and the goat string just took*

*education on our part. It was a matter of establishing relationships with experts. Fortunately during the 1990s we also started to employ multicultural staff. I say fortunately because I consulted them a lot and got a lot of insight into various cultures. One of the Indian teacher's husbands was a lecturer at university in religious studies and he was an expert across the board. It was really very helpful. I used to consult him quite a lot (smiles). So once one becomes educated in different cultures and religions I think one overcomes all those hurdles. So I would say if anything, the school is enriched.*

The effect of the school's employment of teachers of other race groups is evident in how the school responds to cultural challenges. Teachers of colour however, form a tiny minority amongst the majority white teaching staff. Amongst the Indian teachers, one of the HODs is a Muslim who helps the school interpret certain cultural practices peculiar to this group. Cultural items such as the goat string worn by black learners and the Luxmi string worn by Indian learners at certain parts of the year are understood and allowed. Klopper admits that it has been a learning curve for the school as well:

*Black children wore a skin type of thing. Again I think it is a certain type of ceremony and we had to accept that so it was a case of modifying our rules to suit what came in and a bit of give and take on both sides. Then you also have those who have very sincere cultural beliefs- which one has to respect- you also got those that want to chance it because now they want to wear this fashionable thing around their neck.*

The principal consults widely to keep abreast and informed of cultural beliefs, cultural dress and cultural activities. Sometimes, as recorded earlier, tolerance is chosen over confrontation such as the 'loudness' of drifters in the grounds and corridors. Abrahams recalls that in the early days this was a point of discussion in the staff room:

*It was something we were not accustomed to and we decided to tolerate it rather than try to deal with it.*

While this version of events is slightly different from Dlamini's perspective, the investment in accepting multiculturalism has paid off handsomely by improving cooperation and trust

from drifting learners and parents. The knock on effect has been improved discipline as well. Alberton comments:

*I have noticed that the level of anger amongst the black children has diminished significantly.*

The principal is also mindful of a court case involving a drifter and another high school nearby who was asked to remove her nose ring. The drifting learner's parent won the case against the school in a highly publicised case. Alberton is eager to avoid such unnecessary negative publicity and rather seeks to run her school through an integrative process rather than a 'rule by law' process although by her own admission there remains a lot of work in the integration process.

On the sports field drifters are afforded additional coaching in codes that are new to them. Swimming started off as such with the school holding special sessions for drifting learners who had no swimming skills and were slowly brought up to speed with their suburban counterparts. Today the school's swimming team is representative of its diversity. The policy in the school is to provide the additional coaching, allow the drifters to draw level and then compete equally for places in the school teams.

Dlamini says she adopts a dual identity to smooth her passage through life at home and life at school because the school will never really understand her culture. She is not bothered that it is tantamount to double standards because she understands it is necessary for her survival and success:

*I have always separated Gugu from school and Gugu from home because at school in a way I have to act a little different to how I act at home with my mother. An example is like at home my mother and I speak Xhosa and at home I'm not allowed to look at an adult in the eye but at school I have always been told that I have to look at an adult in the eye so that they can believe you and trust you.*

Regarding fitting in with the Roaine High code and its practices she said:

*Yes but I don't have to try because I have been doing it for a while now. I think even if I didn't fit in I would have to. Even if school was a nightmare I would still have to*

*come because I know why I'm here. I know (laughs gingerly) because if I don't make anything of this that will be harder for me because on my mother's side I'm the only child that goes to a Model C School - that's privilege.*

But try as hard she would to fit in there are still things that Dlamini would dearly love to see change. These are not as confrontational as the earlier ones but nevertheless challenges that she feels need to be met to complete the process of integrating drifters. One of them is the School Christian Society which makes her think of the churches back home with nostalgia:

*How we praise God is different from how they do it. When I first went there I found the songs are different, everything is different. If you went into a black church you'll know how- it's like wow! So it's not like that. In a way I wish that they would accommodate our religion in that we sing different songs, we sing life songs.*

The other thing that she feels claustrophobic about is the need to talk softly. Black people she says are naturally loud and to speak softly is really difficult. All learners are expected to speak softly wherever they are on the campus. This is a major challenge she says:

*You just hear us screaming from miles away. I try. Sometimes maybe my voice if I get too excited but sometimes I try. But you have to try. That's the only way you can kind of fit in. I don't know if it's like culture or what? It's hard, especially in class when someone says 'Oh my gosh! You people are so loud!' And then I think 'You people'. What does that mean?*

She is bemused that even her Zulu teacher who is black and speaks softly says that she and her drifter friends are loud. But, she says, she and her drifter friends have to try and comply because they have their sights on getting good results rather than challenging such issues. Teachers too have been wrestling with what to do about the 'loud' challenge. The school however, has not attempted to quieten drifters with an addition to its code of conduct but individual teachers like her Zulu teacher have either tolerated it or from time to time ask these learners to tone down. Abrahams:

*One thing I do know is the African children are so loud but that's their culture- you got to get used to it. One thing, we didn't complain about it although we didn't like it but it was understandable.*

What is not understandable to the school is when learners speak to each other in Zulu in class. Teachers see every speaking situation, especially for drifters as an opportunity to practise their English. In the early days says Abrahams, a teacher could pick up when learners were saying something nasty and would chide them for using Zulu during lesson time. Nowadays such occurrences are few and even if it happens, the words of the principal- respect and tolerance are uppermost in teachers' minds. Asked a direct question about whether she thought that drifting learners and the suburban learners have integrated, she replied:

*There is mixed success for that, it's not perfect. I would say in the classroom it works best, extra-murally it works well but at break times the girls seem to have a tendency to sit together in their cultural groups. Although they quite fluid, I noticed. They will sit and chat with each other and then they'll move.*

Alberton has learnt to be proactive and took the situation to her focus group for discussion, asking the learners if the school should be concerned that they were sitting separately during breaks. The response she says with a laugh was that the school should not be unduly worried because they said:

*We like different music and when we want to talk about our music its different (bursts into laugh) or we did different things over the weekend or even socially, we talk about social things - what we have in common is different.*

The principal is satisfied that in their eyes what is happening is not a problem. There is obviously a natural tendency for learners to seek the company of friends that share things in common. Other teachers have noted this behaviour as well and have begun to understand the dynamic. Abrahams has been equally observant:

*In class they were fine but in the playground they would sit in groups. You would see the African girls sitting together, the white girls sitting together and the Indians*

*sitting there but they were quite happy to talk to each other. You will see a white girl walk past and talk to her friends in the African group, they would laugh and she would walk on. They are all friendly to each other.*

Responses from the three schools seem to suggest that cultural sensitivity was one of those challenges that came into play since 1994 although in the past they did have many different cultural groups from the white community within their schools such as Afrikaners, English and Jews. Working at integrating these groups into a single learner body was not high on their agendas. The results of such inaction probably still lingers on the sports fields of the new South Africa; Afrikaners dominate rugby while English players are still side lined in the national team. Limited progress has been made by the three schools in exploiting culture to integrate their learners. Roaine High may claim that it has introduced focus groups and allowed learners to introduce such things as indigenous dancing and singing but these are events or activities that drifters had asked for to be included in the extra-curricular activities. They have achieved little success in creating an understanding of each other's cultures and allowing greater participation in such activities. On the contrary, most drifters are absorbed into the mainstream activities of the extra-curricular programme that are still based on the old school traditions of the institution. Camalita Preparatory on the other hand emphasises differences with its Christian based stance an example of which is its Christian assembly to which other religious or cultural groups are told they may stay away. Its token Diwali Celebration is an example of letting one group practice its tradition explaining that this is part of its Show Respect Programme but not using it as an opportunity to engender integration amongst its learners. As Mpisane bemoaned earlier, it has even dropped its cultural day that could have given expression to its multicultural learner body. Lots of good work started by Meraska School and supported by the teachers of all races has provided the school with a useful platform to build on. This could be rewarding in pursuing academic excellence as well which forms part of the discussion in the next theme. Sma Mahlangu, who is wholly supportive of the school however, did express the desire that the school allocated more time for black children to express themselves culturally.

Francis and Roux (2011) argue that for integration to take place in a school, learners must participate fully and equally to shape their learning environment to meet their needs (*Vide*

Chapter Two, section 2.7.7). Ford (2004) contends that suburban schools should contribute to the process by restructuring their outlook to reflect their multicultural enrolment thereby bringing a sense of belonging to drifting learners and promoting integration (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.7).

### **6.3 The learning gap**

Parents of drifters and the suburban school share a common concern- the learning gap. Suburban schools know that drifters are likely to have some catching up to do when it comes to knowledge and content while drifters' parents send their children here because they find schools in their areas lagging. This section therefore will focus on suburban schools' strategies to close the learning gap and how drifters cope with the demands made on them to comply. Teaching and learning is dependent on a good grasp of the English language which in turn determines learner attainment.

Most drifters were partially competent at speaking English while most teachers in suburban schools couldn't speak a word of IsiZulu at first. Learning in English was the first hurdle that faced learners in all three schools. Learner attainment is prioritised in former Model C Schools to attract potential high flyers and bring on board potential investors and sponsors. It is part of the worldwide trend of branding and marketing of schools that began in the 1990s (Bush, 1999). Schools realized that early interventions had to be implemented to ensure the process of teaching and learning amongst all learners took place evenly. It is important to reiterate at this point that in each of the schools various programmes were instituted to cope with differences and sometimes deficiencies to level the learning field. In the same way, as the competency in English communication was dealt with, other programmes would overlap or sometimes run parallel to such support programmes. Schools quickly felt the need for drifters to be made competent in English for them to engage in their studies at the suburban schools because code switching, practised in rural and township schools, was absent. Improving drifter attainment to the level the school set for itself was a priority. All schools targeted English proficiency as the gateway for proper teaching and learning to take place and the way to improve communication between the drifters and their suburban counterparts.



Meraska School did not start such a programme immediately. Kotze sees the humour in the situation as she recalls the early days:

*It was hilarious, because most of the kids couldn't understand English and we couldn't speak Zulu. I can remember teaching in grade 4 in the early days and the deputy at the time, Mrs Width walked past and I was speaking pidgin Zulu because they couldn't understand what I was saying so she poked her head into the classroom and said "Mrs Kotze, speak in English." So it was a huge challenge. We had to take urgent action to fix it.*

Doing things piecemeal was a hit-and-miss method that would not guarantee steady growth in learner attainment. Acting on the one front alone was going to be insufficient as well. Boosting learner attainment needed parental involvement in school and support at home. A wholesome plan was needed and drawn up. Controlling how the plan unfolded was easy for the school and its team because the principal and many of the teachers were from a culture of high parent participation in school activities. Being a start-up school with a large section of parents not schooled in the support system that suburban parents were accustomed to, the plan was rolled out as the school went on. Kotze was insistent when she enrolled drifting learners that she interviewed each parent, thereby ensuring that she captured a quick background of the parent and got them to agree on attending the AGM that this school called at the beginning of the year:

*Initially when they came we said to them we do not want your child just enrolled in this school, we want you to get involved. That happened from day one. We brought them on board immediately although they responded slowly at first.*

That kind of brokering was engineered to break the culture of indifference that was shown in township and rural schools that was known to the principal and her predecessor because of their work in the townships earlier. The AGM though, is actually a front for various plans that need to be floated to ensure the successful running of the school. One of the main purposes it serves is to draw parents into the learning world of their children.

Important to the teaching and learning process is the connection between home and school or as Epstein (2010) suggests the *three spheres of influence* made up of the school, family

and the community. Knowing what goes on at home was important for the school because it would tell them what type of support the child had there and this in turn shaped the working relationship between the school and the parents. Jordaan works extremely hard trying to get to know his learners:

*(Takes a deep breath) It's not easy; for me it's all about knowing each individual. I spend a lot of time trying to get to know my children- I know that sounds clichéd- every teacher says that but to actually get to know what their background is, to get to know their character, what their circumstances are, who they live with and their strengths. So I try to develop a special relationship with and get to know what happens at home because when you know somebody then you are better equipped to help them. My focus then is to get to know my learners long before the AGM so that I can ask appropriate questions when we meet them.*

That however, is only part of the battle; his challenge, like that of his colleagues is trying to get a better picture of what happens at home. He suggests that 3 groups of drifters are in his school:

*We have three groups of children in this school; we have parents who have better jobs and have moved into the affluent areas and they have a solid family that has a mum and dad, then you have children who live in the township and have a solid family that has a mum and dad and then you have children who live in the township but their families are still broken and each one comes with a different set of circumstances.*

According to him the challenge is not parents who come along in the afternoon willing to discuss learner problems and listen to what the teacher has to say but:

*...parents who think that it's their job to watch over the child at home and it's your job to look after them here and they don't actually feed into the idea that it's a triangle that we work together through here. And so you get different feedback from parents. Parents mostly from the township and rural areas feel like it's just telling the children what they must and must not do as opposed to working with them.*

Integrating such a diverse drifting community challenges the school to explore new and different ways to ensure meaningful parental involvement. The mainstay it seems is the open door policy that the school adopts which gives parents learners and teachers confidence in the way the school sets out to do its work. Everyone interviewed made reference to the effectiveness of that policy. Holding the AGM at the start of the school year sets the tone for the rest of the year and allows the school to communicate important information to parents regarding how teaching and learning takes place at Meraska School. Eugenie Lalsing finds it particularly useful as a level one teacher:

*That's where we introduce ourselves and discuss with them the school rules, the code of conduct and matters regarding their involvement in the child's work. We do get a good response for the parent teacher interview. This year I didn't get a reply slip for just one child.*

It is obvious that the AGM process here at Meraska School is more interactive than the Policy Evening at Camalita Preparatory where they 'lay down the law'. Some of the communication methods designed by the school to keep the parent involved in the child's work are also launched here. It's not all smooth sailing though; this is the point at which some drifters recede says Mkhonto. Such parents would say the distance is too far or the change is too big and just disappear. After the AGM parents go into one-on-one meetings with teachers and the system of working together is unpacked as explained by Majabulo:

*Parents are made to feel welcome from day one and the expectations for the parent are clarified. Then there is a procedure where the teacher has a homework book so the parent and teacher can liaise with each other and the parent can see what the expectations are for that particular day as far as homework for the child is concerned. Newsletters that go out on a weekly basis inform the parent about everything that is happening in the school and the extra-murals that take place and if there is going to be a delay so that the parent can make suitable transport arrangements for the child.*

Cooperation is good with about 85% of parents signing the homework books every day. The school however, wants to improve that by understanding unique challenges of township and rural parents so that it can plan better. Jordaan highlights some challenges:

*Nowadays because so many parents have so much going on and many work so far from home and you think about these kids that have to travel long distances to and from school every day. The parents that are working a long way from home may be leaving before the child wakes up and are back when the child is ready for bed. You know, you have a homework book that needs to be signed and sometimes you get kids that say my mum is not around and I don't get to speak to her. So it's a difficult dynamic with the parents but I think you still have to try regardless of how difficult it is to get the parent who is desperate to play a part in their child's life and the ones that feel it's really not their responsibility.*

At the beginning of the second term the school embarks on the second part of its learner attainment strategy involving parents. One-on-one interviews are again held with parents regarding learner performance and parents given guidance on what needs to be done where intervention is required. Eugenie Lalsing explains:

*In the second term we discuss behaviour, results and strategies for improvement of results for the bottom performing learners and what we can do as a team to help the learners so we basically work together. So there are learners where some parents have no involvement or they will not return the reply slips.*

Majabulo reflects the school's hard work put into keeping parents engaged:

*Also if the parents have questions we deal with that so that, at the end of the year the child passes. We also work on what kind of assistance is needed at home so that we follow the proper channels so that the child can be helped because at the end of the day it's about the life of the child. Even now as we are calling the parents for interviews, I probably have 4 out of 36 parents that did not pitch. But we have to chase up and see to it that those that did not pitch do come and explain what happened. But these are rare cases.*

These efforts are beginning to bear fruit as is evidenced by the one battle on a teacher's hands where the parent is currently engaging her to say she favours one of her twins over the other. Hilarious it may seem but the desired effect is there.

Having placed these big rocks in the schooling landscape the school had to ensure that their work inside the classroom did not turn these events into rhetoric. Bringing the drifters up to speed and maintaining the school's attainment standards called for specialist and specific interventions at various points in the curriculum delivery process. Working out the point of departure was quite easy: the greatest effort was placed in the foundation phase where additional staff is employed by the school to assist teachers there to provide the new ones with the best possible springboard. Kotze said:

*We found that that is a big plus in getting them integrated and getting them started when they come here because when they come here they only speak Zulu.*

So that was the plan. Taking action meant finding a way to boost the drifting learners' English capacity while keeping them in the mainstream classes. While foundation classes had additional staff to assist teachers with proper grounding of the young ones, the school also had a wholesome plan to assist learners that were admitted in the higher grades. The principal explains:

*We created a reading room from day one and it is still going today. There was a full time teacher in attendance there. It worked very well because it accelerated the kids. The main focus was doing the big books then getting the kids to act out the stories, telling the stories, rewriting the stories in sequence and doing artwork around the stories. It was really consolidating, consolidating- just the reading, oral lessons to get English going.*

Majabulo having experienced the disadvantage suffered by learners in rural and township schools as a result of a lack of proficiency in English elaborates:

*We always encourage reading. At our school reading is the first and the most important aspect of our learning because everything depends on reading with understanding. So, first and foremost we ensure that the reading part is done.*

Teachers also have individual plans that they institute to supplement the general catch-up plans of the school. Jordaan is particularly concerned about his learners in the senior phase falling behind in English:

*I created booklets just for English which is most important in terms of people falling behind. These booklets gets people up to speed so if I find a learner has fallen behind or they are behind where they should be in Grade 7, then they receive a booklet that is basically work from Grade 5 and Grade 6. These are short exercises in each area of English that just kind of assist to close the gap and helps with catching up to where they should be.*

Mkhonto concurred saying extra lessons and spending more time on deserving children helped to raise the self-esteem of the township learners as they became competent in English:

*Yes, it was a challenge but we did it by doing the extra work.*

Standing at the reception earlier that morning I was struck by the fluency in English amongst the learners who arrived at the office on errands. The collaborative efforts of the whole team were now evident to me. In the same way the school runs a complete remedial programme for all subjects while prioritising English and then mathematics. Learners are however, selected to attend aspects of the programme according to their needs. Majabulo explains:

*We have remedial classes that the child attends if he or she has been identified as a case for attention. Then there is a learning programme for that particular child so that when we liaise with the parent and talk about things that the child needs to do to progress like reading. So, first and foremost we ensure that the reading part is done and then moving to maths we try to help the parent to assist the child so that he must study the basic concepts of maths which is addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. So if the child masters bonds that child then feels that he is able to cope. But what is important is that we provide the learning environment so that that child learns effectively. So when that child goes to the class, other learners must welcome the child fully and then most of the time because of the kind of school*

*we are we find that there are many learners who are keen to help other learners who are struggling.*

Understanding the importance of mother tongue learning, the other important step the school took was to introduce Isizulu from day one in grade one. Today, 20 years later the school still employs the same successful formula to improve language comprehension. Integral to the curriculum is art which the school uses to encourage free expression by the children and thereby understand how they feel. It has become a useful instrument to glimpse the mind of the children here. As far as academic work goes the school has an established programme of support to bring the child up to speed during school time, call in the parent and discuss areas that need attention and the support required and send home additional work for the child to do with the support of the parent.

Camalita Preparatory is acutely aware of the learning gap amongst the drifters and its own learners and works very hard at closing that gap. Compared to the other two, this school also gets learners who had previously attended deep rural schools and are sometimes out of sorts in many aspects of their academic work when they arrive here while they may not have engaged in any form of formal sports activities or physical education. Parents of the drifters are very clear in their intentions when they arrive here - they are in pursuit of what they perceive as better quality education. Rutledge suggests that added to the academic standards here, the extra opportunity of participating in sports, art and drama draw drifters to her school. Camalita Preparatory had, prior to democracy, been a school of excellence with a high academic profile. With the influx of drifting learners from schools outside its past catchment area it had to contend with a new challenge to maintain these high standards mainly because of gaps in the drifters' knowledge and the inadequate grasp of the language of teaching and learning which is English which are prevalent for various reasons. This is an area in which the school excels; it has an excellent system in place to bring the learners up to speed in what it suggests as the two most important areas of learning- Mathematics and English. For Camalita Preparatory it is a straight academic task and is not linked to background, culture or any other aspect of the drifters' lives that needs to be infused into the process of teaching drifters. This must not be confused with some difficulties that drifters may have such as poor infrastructure and learning opportunities at

home which teachers deal with as and when they encounter them. You feel the urgency in everybody to get on with the job of teaching and learning with a special focus on allowing drifters to make up for gaps in content knowledge and mastering of the English language. You know immediately that in this sphere of its activity the school has *all* its ducks in a row and is its machinery geared to bring drifters up to speed. Deputy Principal Munsamy is on top of things so to speak; despite identifying the main barrier to learning as proficiency in English and competency in mathematics, Munsamy says teachers are backed up by upper management support as well. Upper level management interviews the children, see that they settling in, talk to the parents and ensure that they are able to come up to speed in terms of the programmes of the school. He adds:

*There are settling down problems when children come here; some of them take very long to settle into the ethos of the school and the way the school runs because other schools don't maintain homework diaries and that kind of thing. So we have a lot of support for those pupils. They come in, we identify them and they get support immediately from their class teacher and then they have management support as well.*

It is a process that everyone takes seriously so that both drifting parents and learners fall in line as quickly as possible and teachers waste no time in bringing learners into the culture of the classroom at Camalita Preparatory. The principal is quite focussed about their purpose in this regard and constantly keeps her eyes fixed on the next phase in her learners' academic lives:

*It is to give their children the opportunity to be here in the environment and in a sense helping them to manage at high school and at university (nods assertively).*

The purpose driven approach is reflected in teacher initiative; Goodfellow, who has been here for 12 years, begins her day at the school at six o' clock each morning to start off her additional reading classes. Learners who have no knowledge of English or cannot read in English are targeted for these early morning classes before school starts. Not only Zulu speaking children come to these classes but Afrikaners too. She explains how it works:



*I am a school teacher that gets to school at 6am in the morning. I have parents bring children in early so that I can do extra reading with them and extra phonic work. My class work starts from about quarter to seven. It's my own initiative but there are other colleagues of mine that do exactly the same thing. Our school doesn't start when the reading starts. By the time my school starts I have listened to 15 of my children reading already. An entire reading book is covered every day - that's the only way.*

In this arena it is obvious that the vast experience of the school team works in unison to ensure academic success once the child is placed here and individual teachers are willing to reach out to drifters to pull them up, giving them a chance to catch up with the suburban peers. Some poor parents such as domestic workers also have their children in this school. Such Drifters backgrounds in particular are taken careful note of and the teachers work to ensure that this does not hamper their learning. Goodfellow explains:

*A teacher who is aware of the background of a child who is in a predicament must make sure that he is not made to feel different; for example you may hear a child talk of their bathroom in the backyard. You've got to make sure that he feels equal. A child that is upset cannot learn. He has to be settled.*

In this regard teachers are willing to go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that drifting learners receive assistance to the point where they compel the parents to participate in the child's learning at home and to know what is happening at school. Goodfellow relates a warm story about the son of a domestic worker who arrived at school and could hardly read or write in English:

*Andile was struggling with his spoken English. There is a little boy in my class called King who reads well. Now, King's mum is lovely. I called her and I called the domestic. They live near each other and I asked them if they could please let the two boys play together in the afternoon. With Andile playing with King he is going to pick up the language so much better and then that mum also lets them do homework together so she can help with that homework. In that way I also bring my parents on board so*

*that they can assist those who are in need. We have super parents in our school - we really do.*

Parents are put on terms from the class meetings on the policy evening where expectations are meted out and are held to account while at the same time receiving lots of support to supervise children's work. Checking homework, signing homework books and getting the child to school on time are areas in which the school works hard and consistently. In class, weaker learners are placed next to those who are able to assist them. Sometimes two Zulu or Afrikaans speaking learners one of whom knows English well are placed side by side so that in the early days he or she will be able to bring the other along by code switching. A system of monitoring and evaluation keeps close tabs especially on drifters to safeguard them from falling behind and at the same time maintaining the attainment levels the school projects. Results of every learner are tracked each term and management together with teachers arrange for parent interviews and recommendations. Thereafter a support programme kicks in. Rutledge explains:

*The teachers are so good at recognizing the gap that they would immediately put into place extra support in the classroom and the child will get extra attention.*

Additional academic support is intensive and provided in every grade and learners identified by analysing term end results are asked to attend these additional classes. These classes are given names such as 'Readers are Leaders' for English classes. In mathematics a programme called Camy Maths which is computer driven is used to help weaker learners.

This year, after the introduction of CAPS which requires learners to achieve 50% in English and 40% in mathematics to secure a pass, the school introduced an additional interview to engage with parents to assist learners who did not attain the requirements. Not all drifters were in this category as the principal explains:

*There was a range of parents because you know we also have Afrikaans speaking children; with the transition to an English speaking school it's also difficult for the Afrikaans speaking parent. Quite amazingly, quite a lot of the fathers came in and they listened; they seemed to have a deeper understanding of what we were trying to get across to them.*

This has led to support programmes for parents to teach them skills to help their children at home. Workshops on how to help with reading have proven very successful especially with drifting parents says the parents. It goes beyond that too; the school workshops them on parenting as well, such as insisting that the younger ones get to bed by 7 pm each evening after homework, phonics and the homework book is signed. Sleeping time for younger ones is an outcome of feedback from teachers such as Goodfellow who find children dozing off in class. The school is aware that there are those that leave home at 4 am and travel by taxi to get here on time. It is therefore eager to get involved in finding solutions to such problems because they tend to stymie the school's academic programme. However, there is no indication that such a process of consultation to resolve the problem has in fact started. Management at school keeps a watchful eye on academic progress across the grades. Teachers teaching the same subject in the same grades are expected to network with each other informally or at the compulsory grade meetings each week where all aspects of each teacher's class are discussed and recorded. Minutes of the meeting are submitted to management after each session for additional input and support if necessary. In this way the school leadership keeps tabs on academic progress in general and related problems that may be hampering teaching and learning upon which it will act if necessary.

Drifting learners fit into the academic programme smoothly explains Goodfellow. She relates stories of how drifters help each other with compliance, pronunciation and understanding English during lesson time. Allowing drifters to assist each other especially with English is a strategy that the school developed during its grade meetings and is now widely used in the junior classes. Lindani Masibuko who arrived here with a poor English background says she was assisted both by teachers and fellow learners both inside the classroom and during the breaks in this way. Lunchtime lessons and additional afternoon academic support was supplemented by her friends whom she says corrected her whenever she used incorrect words or grammar:

*I could not speak in English properly when I came here. My friends, they would help me, sometimes in the break time and sometimes in class. If I said something wrong they would correct me.*

Parents too, once they have crossed the threshold, open up about their new found involvement in their children's work. Mpisane, who had a long history of neglect when it came to his children's education, had this to say:

*Now I am more involved in her education. I used to be a union representative and I was not worried about my other kids. Now I must come back home, she arrives at 2pm and she must do homework, I must assist her and she must do other things as well. My mind now is starting to open up and I say 'No, we need to do that'.*

He is also wary that the school does not hesitate to summon him if there is evidence that the child is not supported at home:

*Here if she is not doing well in anything you just get the note and you called into the school and you must answer as a parent (laughs). They say to you if you don't check your child's homework and all those things she will just forget about it. Now she has become responsible and I am following up too.*

But homework and results are not the only things the eagle eyed team watch out for. Learners, especially the drifters' physical and mental health are closely monitored and responded to if necessary. In the junior classes the usual give-away is learners' tendency to fall asleep if they had late nights. As Goodfellow says:

*When they drop off the child I say to the parent in the message book: 'Child was tired. What happened last night?' And if you do it once or twice then they back in line and I'm happy.*

Another form of support is professional assessment of learners with barriers to learning. Rutledge explains that this is an area that is essential to ensure that the learner is identified early and assisted:

*There have been instances where the child comes from a very poor background and we would find a sponsor or apply to the school governing body to send the child to have an educational assessment done. We work with a psychologist who has dropped his rates for our school and because of this we can have an assessment of the child done and we can then call the parent in and discuss the way forward.*

Sometimes such assessment leads to difficult situations and difficult decisions; the recommendation may be that a learner might have to be retained in the same grade for a second time to improve his or her grounding. Such situations though uncomfortable, are dealt with compassionately, allowing the parent time to absorb and understand the importance of such action. It has also led to confrontational situations as well with some drifting parents disagreeing with the school's suggestion that the learner is retained in the same grade for another year. Learners are also taught to take responsibility for their own actions as they move on into higher grades. If homework is not done as the learner reaches the higher grades, parents are informed and the learner stays behind to attend additional classes or complete his or her homework.

Such investment in drifting learners, the systematic diagnosis and the accelerated support and backup they receive has paid dividends. Camalita Preparatory has been able to maintain its high academic standards and learner attainment is continually improving. Last year Munsamy took his mathematics learners to the international Mathematics and Science Olympiad in India which was comprised of drifting learners as well. The cherry on top, which the principal prides herself on is how the school was able to finally get underperforming drifters with barriers to learning into scholarships at prestigious schools. She relates passionately the story of Marvin a drifter who was a neglected child, had discipline problems and fell back in his studies:

*I had a child here - Marvin who came to our school in grade three and he really was neglected. Parents just rallied around and you saw so much (pauses) unselfish love and support coming. That little boy just grew and grew and grew. He always in all our sports teams and parents would give him a lift home. And we are so proud of him because we were able to get him into Ashton on a scholarship.*

Another such case that she speaks proudly of is a child that arrived at her school from a remedial school and had been diagnosed with a learning disability:

*The little boy had just come here from a remedial school and the parents were incredibly worried about him coming into our school because he had been diagnosed with a learning disability and now he was going to come into a big school like ours.*

*Through everyone's support he became a prefect at the school, improved his grades and also got into Kearsney College on a bursary where he became a prefect as well. He was later invited as guest speaker at the school's sports awards ceremony.*

Her favourite story is about Sipho, a drifter with serious discipline problems that rose to be head prefect at the school, outshone his grade academically and became head of the choir. He went on to a respected institution as well, having received a top scholarship where he ended up in the top 20 students academically and was selected to join the rugby team and the choir. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that a child needs ecological niches to cater for his individual needs to be able to develop and integrate into his environment (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.10.4). The principal also considers it an extension to what the school is presently achieving in terms of integration:

*I wish we could do more of that with our learners and I have this vision that as a school governing body we just don't go far enough to go and find those children with that potential who find themselves in difficult circumstances, bring them into school, find a sponsor to pay for their fees at this school and be able to provide them with those opportunities.*

Closer examination of the academic performance of drifters reveals that it is linked to the educational assessment reports. In some cases the educational assessment of poorly performing learners by a psychologist, paid for by the school advises that the learner be retained in the same grade for another year. This can be viewed in two ways: either to give the child a better grounding in the present grade and making sure he or she is better prepared to progress or to keep the school's excellent record of learner attainment at the top intact. Drifting parents, used to learners being passed from one grade to another in rural schools despite the ability levels sometimes have difficulty in understanding why this is not the practice here. They accept the practice with trepidation in some cases because they fear victimisation if they do not cooperate.

Alberton, principal of Roaine High makes no secret about ensuring that her school produces the best results every year. Everything the school does is part of a larger plan to support

learners to score maximum marks in their subjects and so boost the school's percentage pass each year:

*Every year the matric results are a highlight. We score a hundred percent.*

Teachers are constantly reminded of this and understand that part of the challenge is to get drifters up to speed as soon as possible. That work ethic has been infectious and has spread around all stakeholders at the confluence. Roaine High is today is a hive of progressive activity with teachers, parents and learners working together to keep the school's attainment level at the 100%, strengthen sporting skills and prepare the youngsters for life after school. I must add hastily, that amongst the parents there are both drifters and suburban parents who do not form part of this cohort and will come to school when called or to attend meetings they deem important. The principal is very clear about the school's focus on preparing its learners for the global village. Many learners, both drifters and suburban ones come here to earn good scores with the intention to study and work overseas. In fact the school is so geared to sending its learners to the best universities that besides the departmental examinations they expose their learners to the National Benchmark Test as set by universities to prepare them for entrance examinations. Many of the learners here, both drifters and suburban ones take either German or French as an additional language while opting for Afrikaans instead of Isizulu as the second language. This includes a large number of learners whose mother tongue is Isizulu. Integration South African style is absent here- learners know that they are being prepared for a global market hence they are told by the school that Afrikaans will stand them in better stead than Isizulu if they go overseas.

When you walk around and observe the school in motion you are struck by the business-like environment and work ethic that pervades the campus. Parents are visible throughout the school day, engaging in support activities and duties other than academic work. They help to run the tuck shop, the uniform shop, assist with catering and come in to take up various duties when the school puts on extramural activities such as concerts or sports days. A support committee other than the SGB has been formed by the parents who then meet, plan and carry-out the activities for which the school needs assistance. Stander speaks glowingly of the committee:

*We've got black parents, Indian parents and white parents- they are all on board but its run by our Indian parents. Indian parents have a very giving spirit, they are very community oriented, very community minded. Education is very important to them and they are very supportive. But a lot of parents are supportive.*

Parents have also moved on to assisting the school with discipline issues by understanding what the school is trying to achieve. Stander is especially appreciative of the parents of drifters who she remarks are wonderful and will help to resolve issues quickly so that the culture of learning is not unduly interrupted. The majority of parents here, she says understand that the school policy is to work as a team which involves the school, the parent and the child when resolving issues. Gama, who was called in a few times since her child was enrolled here, agrees. She said that at first the way the school handled learner discipline matters seemed harsh, but she later realised that the discipline code was applied fairly to all learners. Now she appreciates discipline because she can see the difference in her child's attitude and scholastic performance. A section of the drifting parents who are drawn from the working class are not able to be part of the support programmes during normal school times. Parents like Gama who have to hold down day jobs are not in a position to offer help on a regular basis but endeavour to avail themselves when the need arises and if they are not required to be at work. Gama explains:

*I am not able to attend meetings especially at night because I must be at my job but I am very happy that my child is there and she is learning well. Sometimes they call me and talk to me about her work that's all.*

Compared to the parents in the other two schools, Gama had very little to say and was less conversational but implying that she was satisfied that her child was finally getting a good education although she cannot check her child's work as the school expect parents to do. Drifting learners are always challenged by the knowledge gap as Dlamini is very much aware of because of her constant comparison of her work with that of her cousin in the township:

*Like if you look at my cousin at the township school- we in the same grade now- she's also in Grade twelve; if I look at her notes, she does not have any notes. Then physics*



*alone gives me like six text books you know, notes and everything. I think that that's what makes me realise I am lucky.*

The school has been both proactive and sensitive in regard to closing the knowledge gap. Abrahams remembers the early language challenge but says the school approached the issue sensitively:

*We did have learners from the township that really struggled with English. What we did was did have extra English but we didn't target only the African girls. We didn't want them to stand out as being different so we had to make it for everybody.*

English, says the principal was targeted as the point of departure in the catch-up programmes aimed at drifters:

*We mainly concentrated on English. Once we fixed the English then the others followed through. We provided the English support through extra classes. We timetabled English support classes so that they could go to them during school hours. We didn't do that in the other learning areas because it would have been overwhelming for them in terms of time. But they did catch up once they overcame the language issues.*

Even in the later years when learners from townships or rural areas came to Roaine High via a suburban school they were carefully assessed by the schools own instruments and placed accordingly in classes says Abrahams:

*I do remember some of the first black girls to come from a little school on the other side of town where they were taught in English. One was very good. Two of them were put into the A class but their standard was lower than here because even though they were placed in the A class at their school, they did not fit into the A class here or in some of the other schools around here. One of them was placed in the B class the next year and the other was placed in a lower class. But they managed.*

Abrahams goes on to emphasise that the way in which the school placed incoming drifters into classes helped them catch up with their peers and also gave them confidence to assume positions of responsibility:

*One by the time she got to matric she became a prefect. They weren't they only kids- there were kids in other classes as well.*

Additional classes are available to all learners who need assistance in all subjects with English and Mathematics areas most targeted for support. Parents are summoned to school after examinations if learners are performing poorly and plans are put in place to get them to improve. Parental involvement in monitoring such learners is a vital part of the school's learner attainment programme. Abrahams explains:

*We send letters to their parents and they are required to come. If they achieve below a certain mark they are required to come. So it's not only the black and Indian children who are required to go there. Many white children have to go too.*

Abrahams goes further to explain that the additional lessons are structured this way so as not to discriminate against drifters. She says that she understands that it was not their fault that they did not get a good education therefore closing the gap should not compromise their integration at school. Many drifters struggled with English so the school found that by targeting English as the primary learning area for improvement, learners were able to cope better with other subjects. In so doing the school created a safety net for its attainment levels as while giving drifters a better chance to improve on their academic performances. A support programme is also in place that serves all learners; each week the management team meets to discuss among other things, counsellor and head of grade reports says Kloppe:

*That is our opportunity to mention and discuss particular cases of difficulty whether they are creating a discipline problem or whether it is an academic problem or a social problem, death in a family, illness- kid in hospital- being burgled and the child's going through a traumatic time. So the counsellors and head of grades have a chance to discuss individuals with problems no matter what they are.*

Each matter is given individual attention and followed up by the person responsible until a satisfactory resolution is reached allowing the learner to proceed smoothly with his or her studies. These interventions are meant to 'catch' the learner from falling back by quickly resolving issues together with the parents. Another level of support unearthed during

discussions is that offered by some suburban learners to the drifters. Certain suburban learners since the early days immediately befriended drifters, taking them under their wings and showing them the ropes. This is a process that started without any prodding by the school leadership or through the efforts of any clubs or societies established within the school. They were spontaneous acts of friendliness by individuals. Support is provided in the form of what to do about school rules and regulations, socialising, help with sport and extra-curricular activities and academic work. In some cases these friends part ways as the drifters find their feet and sometimes this early relationship progresses into strong friendships where suburban learners would go out of their way to support and help drifters throughout their stay at Roaine High. Dlamini is an example of such support from her circle of friends:

*I know that a few of them know that my mum is a domestic worker but it's like they don't care. They just understand that if, for example we going somewhere I'm gonna need a lift so they always trying to work out who's going to get me there and who's going to get me back. Yes, like this weekend we going to a dance and they have been organising how I'm going to get there and how I'm going to get back.*

Dlamini in return works hard at integrating herself into the school. She wants to be part of what happens at the school, whether it is social, sports or academic activity. She is one of those that had a circle of friends when she first got here and has since moved on to other friends although she maintains her links with the old circle. Her relationship with the school is also her priority:

*I think I have a very good relationship with this school (smiles) because I never do anything against the rules; I always try and maintain the school pride and everything. I always try and get as much as I can get.*

This process of all stakeholders looking out for each other has borne fruit. Drifters have risen to the top in many of the school's activities and achievements. Dlamini herself is a senior library prefect and monitor while the head girl is a drifter and is well accepted by all learners. The principal relishes in sharing a highlight in the integration of drifters at the school:

*I think the biggest highlight, though, was when three of our girls were selected to present a paper at an international conference in Cape Town on their adjustment to a school like this, coming from different backgrounds and challenged to find a common identity. All three of them were black girls. It was the International Conference of Principals. It runs every 2 years and each time a different city gets a chance to host it. It's a lovely chance for cross pollination of ideas.*

All three schools exhibit academic excellence and have demonstrated their ability to equalise the attainment of the drifters with the best of the suburban learners with some drifters even going further on scholarships and bursaries based on their quality performance at their respective schools. It is evident also that their extensive networking is helping to improve access for drifters who so not always have the support and resources to lobby exclusive institutions and bursars. What is clear is that once drifters demonstrate that they have crossed the line into academic and sporting excellence at the school and fall in line with the code of conduct, the schools immediately identify them and support them to perform well. The reason for this is twofold: In the first instance suburban schools would like to demonstrate that as traditional white schools, they are also producing excellent black learners and secondly they understand that communities judge schools by their academic achievement upon whom they rely for their survival in the face of the increasingly competitive independent schools. Compared to all the aspects discussed thus far, it is evident that integration is most profound in the academic arena. I say this after consideration of results of the learners at the three schools in their final year which indicate that while they produce high flyers from amongst both suburban and drifting learners, the results of the other learners are also above average and the schools maintain excellent overall pass rates. However, such achievements also come at a price as we find out below.

Tinto (2011) posits that in order to ensure integration as well as maintain academic success the focus must shift from the related programmes and rituals to increase the classroom experience of especially low-income and under-represented learners (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.4). Meador (2005) warns though that suburban schools should always be guarded against instituting programmes aimed at assimilating its drifting learners rather than attempting to improve their attainment (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.9). Epstein and

Voorhis (2010) maintain however, that schools need to continually evaluate and re-engineer the character and quality of goal-driven agendas for teaching and learning contexts to find better ways to close the content knowledge gap thereby continually facilitating the path to integration for drifters (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.9).

#### **6.4 The passage to progression**

This section looks at the progress made by these suburban schools in the areas discussed in the chapter against the question of integration and the wider transformation agenda of the country.

If progress is measured by the ability of suburban schools to improve attainment of drifting learners, then both the schools and drifters would get top marks for their achievements. Integrating the drifters into the academic mix has been achieved with a high success rate amongst them and they have the results and achievements of drifters to prove that. At the same time one must add that failure was reported in the culture section which would be commented on as the section progresses. In the schools' attempts to integrate drifters it will be inevitable that all stakeholders at the confluence will be drawn into the process and will become players. Such a process is dynamic and involves a cathartic transformation and developmental outlook for the whole school and its stakeholders. In such a process the change leadership is changed in its outlook as well. While there are indications that schools did show clear signs of moving in such a direction, the absence of effort on the part of the Department to energise its school policies on integration and the lack of will by the schools to mitigate the entire integration space, it has hampered the schools in their attempts to bring wholesome and lasting change. Kneejerk reactions and spontaneous responses are evident in some instances, pointing to the lack of a macro plan or blueprint that these schools wish to follow in the coming years. It is obvious that in times of challenges, schools would fall back on tried and tested responses from their traditional base to bring things back to order. On the superficial level, the schools, it would appear, have made significant progress in bringing stakeholders together in pursuit of integrating drifters and creating a new identity for themselves. Delving deeper, one is confronted by numerous untied ends and new challenges that have sprung up as time progressed. Sometimes such a thing would happen by stealth, creeping up on the school and suddenly raising its head to confront it on

a totally unexpected front. Each of the schools has had such experiences as they try to move on from the initial phase of getting the academics right and finding a new broader platform to operate from.

To date Meraska School is continually challenged in its efforts to integrate its drifting community of parents and learners, maintain its learner attainment trajectory and continue to build a strong team around which a winning school is built. So the school had set out from the beginning to make itself an inclusive entity and has obviously continued up to now. Parent member of the SGB, Mahlangu has this to say:

*There is a lot of respect for parents as well. There is a very good relationship between the body of parents that are governing and the teachers. The governing body is very representative of the parent component. The SGB is representative of the demographics of the parent population as well. Meetings are scheduled at times that are convenient for the parents. The times are very convenient and even the co-opted members attend. It's a wonderful SGB. I no longer enjoy meetings because I'm 69 now but I enjoy this one because it keeps me involved in the education system.*

Of the three schools this is the most sensitive when it comes to scheduling meetings to accommodate drifters. It is easy to see that the involvement of the drifting community is not a token one but one that creates opportunities for valuable contributions to the school and its programmes. It is obvious that not only the parent meetings are well attended but so are the SGB meetings as well. Sma explains why:

*I look forward to the meetings. This school gave me the opportunity to come into the education circle and see what is happening and be able to influence where I can. The fact that I was voted in as an SGB member which not every parent has an opportunity to do and the fact that I have also learnt while I'm sure that I've also contributed, makes it worthwhile. I've gained quite a bit of experience being here. I have thirty four years in social work, 14 years at a teachers' college in Swaziland and four years lecturing at Unisa. It's a joy to be able to share it with other people and contribute somewhere.*

Unforeseen difficulties arise from time to time and known problems like racism, rear their heads every now and then. The principal emphasises that academic, professional and governance processes in any institution are in continual need of support and interventions if they have to operate at optimal levels. Experiences in the years since transition have at times been difficult lessons for the leadership here that sometimes thought they were well on track to doing the right thing. An early challenge was where incoming teachers pitched their lessons. The process of improving English competence was, according to the principal challenged almost immediately by a gremlin that crept into the system: black teachers were falling behind in curriculum delivery because they would code- switch and therefore take longer with lessons while white teachers had no option but to teach in English. Uniform testing of two or more classes in the same grade became problematic and scheduled work was not on track. Kotze explained how they responded:

*And then we were very clever - we paired teachers because we came from such vastly different backgrounds. So we put a black teacher with the white teacher- there would be two classes so that the planning would be done together. Everything was done together- all the worksheets were done together, all the work was done together. In fact most of the black teachers were below the standard of what we were used to. So it was a case of bring up your partner. Not that they were lazy- they just didn't have the training. So that was part of the mentoring that we did because you worked together like you were twins and we still do that.*

Although such ingenuities were sometimes received with caution by the black teachers they succeeded because the team spirit that served as a golden thread holding the school together was strong. The process was always in a state of flux because of staffing changes as time moved on. New teachers arriving here had to be supported as they absorbed the environment, acculturalised themselves and started delivering on their interview promises. Perceptions had to be changed. Jordaan, who had been at a white school prior to his appointment here said he expected a township style school battling to manage its responsibilities:

*I have never taught at a school like Meraska before. My expectations when I was coming here were well below what the school is actually doing. It's a place where the*

*children were receiving quality education, the teachers are dedicated, the school is dedicated to education and it's got high standards.*

Mentoring and management support are therefore prioritised by the school which offers additional training and guidance to teachers to maintain stability. Kotze appealed to the SGB for additional support which helps her keep the team operating up to speed:

*The department gives us three HODs but we have acting HODs here so we now have five. The governing body pays a little extra and the management are a larger group which makes it easy. They can manage the mentoring and they can get to know the people quite well because most of them manage about six or seven. In this way you really do get good management, you really get to learning what the person is like and guiding and mentoring them.*

Staff development and mentoring is on-going at this school. It gives teachers the opportunity to deal with a range of issues bugging them from problems arising with learners to issues with each other. Teachers have taken to looking after each other too and guiding each other when necessary. Both Jordaan and Majabula quote incidents when one or the other has been insensitive without noticing, saying that they have gotten to a stage where the staff looks out for each other. But Deputy Principal Mkhonto says that while the majority of staff quickly becomes team players, sometimes people find it difficult to come on board at the school and this needs to be worked through:

*Up to now there is this family here but people are individuals- they have their own characters and so on. But it might be that it is only the one percent that remains as an island- until when? Then they say 'Let me move from that position because I thought I might win some over but that's not happening'. Those people, when we have staff development it's where we share values and find out more about their backgrounds, homes and families, so together with the brother and the sister we are able to find a solution for them. That to me has been an instrument that has helped thus far.*



Sometimes that approach has been successful but there have been times when it was obvious that teachers have been struggling with the environment whereupon the principal has intervened in a head on approach:

*So if the person wasn't willing to change and aspire to adopt our values and norms that we hold dear here then I'd call the person in and ask 'You have actually got to consider if you really want to teach?' This is when a teacher is constantly shouting at kids for not giving their work on time or there are other problems. I say but you do them a disservice. You should not be in this job unless you are passionate about it. Don't come here with half a heart when you shouldn't be teaching. My staff know that and that's why you see passionate teachers here.*

Straight forward talking seems to have worked for the principal who invites inspection of learners' workbooks and teacher's records adding that she has got teachers past the stage of window dressing. There have been dark moments too when drastic action had to be taken despite perceptions at the time. Kotze describes how everyone was horrified when she had to dismiss a black teacher who had molested a child. But she was convinced she had acted fairly and in accordance with department policy. The second occasion raised eyebrows again she said, when she had to terminate her white administrative clerk who was in her words 'absolutely racist and revolting'. She said it was important also to demonstrate to everyone that fairness was part of the values the school stood for:

*We don't have different rules for the different race groups in this school. As somebody in management in this position you have got to be so careful that you are seen to deal with the same hand with the people.*

That's the advice she gave to her deputy principal, Mkhonto who is due to take over the school within a few months when she retires. Understanding backgrounds and environments of especially the drifters was crucial for teachers to succeed at her school. Bronfenbrenner (2011) emphasises the need to understand synergy between each of the contexts which are referred to as being nested in each other and the way each one gives effect to the other as the individual moves from the initial microcosm outwards into the

bigger contexts (*Vide* Chapter Four, section 4.1). She recalls hair raising moments when staff would forget the background of children and almost cause disastrous situations:

*There was fascination with all the similarities but there were some superficial differences. When we took our learners many of them from the township and rural areas in the early days to the beach, you know that some children had never ever seen the sea and the one white teacher was saying to the kids go and swim. I nearly flipped and next thing I took out my whistle and called them back. It was too dangerous. But it was exciting times. We learnt from things like that and now we can laugh.*

Learners too, push boundaries and sometimes make it difficult for teachers to get on with the job. Jordaan suggests that because some drifting learners' homes may not have strict control and rules those become troublesome when they are faced with the boundaries at school and retaliate. His particular difficulty comes with not having a deeper understanding of the cultural aspects of some of his township and rural learners and that makes it more difficult for him to achieve a breakthrough sometimes. He is quick to add though, that his black counterparts will tell him how to handle such situations. Jordaan has started a course for boys to understand what it is to become a man. Commenting on his challenges, he says:

*I think the culture is a huge thing. We have to respect culture. That's the bigger of the values of the school you know; the school needs to recognize the learners that it has and it needs to set its standards of morals and rules and boundaries to fit within the culture. So it has to be considered within the culture. I think that's a must.*

Eugenie Lalsing uses a points system based on merits and demerits to control learners with discipline problems while Majabulo says using empathic skills to win children over also works. The deputy principal suggests that teachers ought to dig deeper when considering discipline problems. His philosophy is that when a teacher encounters a 'naughty' child the teacher should look deeper and not write off the child as one that lacks discipline. He says teachers who treat indiscipline symptomatically are entrenching themselves as those that do not 'like' a certain learner who is troublesome and therefore make the problem worse. Mkhonto is in charge of learner discipline at school. He says the school however has a

holistic approach to controlling discipline problems and inculcating good values in its learner population. One such approach is constant training and sharing each other's experiences which is a regular feature of the staff development programme. Regarding other features of the programme in place he says:

*We have counselling here that I am in charge of that addresses these issues. We have a group that comes here for life skills programme. We also have a super human day where a church comes from outside and addresses these issues. As well as those life skills addresses we also have lessons and in my case I also manage behaviour problems and anger management. We also have Unisa students who are social workers who come here and do their training here so that we are able to refer some of our learners to them. But if there are major issues, they are not dealt with by me but go to the headmistress who then uses the proper channels to invite the parents to school to deal with those issues.*

Drifting parents have also moved on to become more involved more deeply in the school's affairs than just attending meetings and monitoring their children's progress.

Mkhonto recalls what set the trend for parental involvement in decision making:

*You know I think what made things so workable was policies which were implemented that will cater for the parents and also the learner. Principal used to say her door is always open to whoever comes to school.*

As demographics changed over the years and vacancies arose the school brought in teachers of colour as well as started the process of transforming the SGB. Petite Width, the principal that started off the school brought in drifting parent members to participate in the SGB but as the present principal explains, in those first 10 years the SGB was merely a figure head allowing the principal to run the school with their support. In the next 10 years Jolly Kotze, the present principal stepped up the programme of involvement and allowed real contributions to begin and build up gradually to the present where the SGB is a competent body that is capable of taking responsible decisions and lead the school in the direction of their vision. It took some work as the principal explains:

*I have made sure that they get training. Initially none of the men were interested- it was all domestic workers, mums and stuff like that got on to the SGB but we actually needed expertise- we also made sure of that and as a result there's a lot more expertise around today. So in the last two SGBs I had very competent people. Some of the mums are still there because they are the ones that get down and do the hard work when it comes to fundraising and stuff but just the running of the SGB and the finances especially. In the past my predecessor she did all the running of the SGB- I don't do that. Right from the start- I prepare everything- we have copious meetings to go through. I even prepare what they have to report on so that they understand what is happening with the finances because at the end of the day I'm actually running the finance as well so they got more and more competent at looking at that. So my main thrust has been training.*

The training of the SGB and insistence on parental involvement in the school is also reflected in the way decisions are taken at the parental meeting level. Kotze is chuffed at the way the SGB is able to handle parent meetings and take responsible decisions. There is generally no complaint about the curriculum delivery, assessment policies and the extra-mural activities. School fees are usually a sore point with parents who are battling high costs in their daily living as well. Kotze marvels at the way parents from the drifting community raised her school fees in the last round:

*But I'm amazed that at the budget meeting I thought they wanted a lower percentage. We went into the meeting with a proposal of either 3%, 11% or 7%. So they voted for 3%. But the one man said the principal must tell us if 3% is sufficient. So I got up and said no and eventually they voted for 7%. That's how my parents are - they really brilliant - they fantastic.*

There have been clashes between drifting parents and the school as well, sometimes leading to serious problems. Eugenie and Jordaan, like their colleagues were challenged by parents on issues of learner progress which they resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the school and the parent. So, despite the AGM, the one on one interview afterwards and the parent teacher meetings at the beginning of each term, the school is still continually challenged in its endeavour to maintain attainment standards and make parents understand

their role in this process. A new initiative is to be rolled out soon according to Jordaan and they hope it will further help the process. He explains:

*One thing which they advertised last year which I think is still in the pipeline of happening is parenting skills where the school provides an arena where the parents may learn how they may help their kids in terms of education and motivation.*

This will probably be the most significant step in the direction of integration of drifters and to increase understanding of their roles as parents. It is also in response to a new breed of affluent parent from the township areas that has moved on from being a silent partner and now questions the schools actions from time to time. Meanwhile, the challenges continue and sometimes get pretty tough on the school as the principal explains:

*Yes, just in the last couple of years, parents see themselves as having rights but sometimes it's not just the rights- it comes with responsibilities. That's where we've had conflict. It's usually the newer generation of parent. They are now well heeled and they are getting like well-heeled white parents. They come in with 'I pay therefore I own you', you know that sort of attitude. That's been a bit of a problem. I think that maybe this year I had two of those and in fact it eventually it involved lawyers.*

Important deductions can be drawn from the challenges to the school by parents. The principal's open door policy was mentioned by everyone including herself; this has started paying dividends in that parents feel confident enough to go in and argue and debate what they perceive to be truth of the matter. The school on the other hand does not relent and give in to every challenge but rather deals with those challenges from a professional and academic point of view that is also policy driven. This indicates that the process of integration has moved up a rung in the ladder and will probably influence positive change as well. In this school when a parent has an issue with a teacher concerning his child, the school lets the teacher set up an appointment at a suitable time for the parent and allows the teacher the first bite at resolving the issue with the parent and only moving the matter up to management level if the seriousness of the problem warrants further intervention. Meraska School works hard at preparing itself for such eventualities and constantly meets

with its team and engages in training workshops. There are systems in place that protect both the rights of the school and its learners. As the principal says:

*Rights come with responsibilities.*

In this area of its work the school endeavours to deal with such matters efficiently and effectively so that any negative impact on its core function of teaching and learning is minimised. The payoff has been big; today the school is targeted by former Model C High Schools in the area to send their high-flyers over, many being offered bursaries as well. Kotze is proud of her teacher's achievements:

*Most of our kids are grabbed when they leave here. Two girls were head hunted for Oprah and one got a full scholarship to a private high school and university. Last year our top boy got a scholarship to go to Durban High School. Most of the learners here get into the top high schools in Durban although the places are tight here. I implore the high schools nearby to take these kids since they know what they getting.*

Not only is there a deep sense of commitment from this team at Meraska School but there is also a sense of satisfaction from the team that their work is appreciated, the results of their work shows especially in the drifters that arrived here and they are a part of trend setting new South African school. Quick quips from some of the interviewees provide a glimpse into life at Meraska School:

*Sma Mahlangu: I like the discipline, I like the values, I like the dedication; I love every minute of it.*

*Mkhonto: You know when I compare this place with the rural schools where I taught, I wanted to work but I was not appreciated; teachers would want to bunk lessons. Here I am appreciated. We are a family.*

*Masada Ithly: I'd like to tell learners in my township to get to a school like this faster.*

*Majabulo: Basically it's the kind of environment that makes you feel welcome at all times to say whatever you want to say.*

Principal Kotze had this to say in closing:

*I retire next year having spent the best 21 years of my life here.*

Teachers, especially those that have been here for longer are deeply passionate about the trajectory the school has been on and are also deeply satisfied that they became part of this project even though some joined along the way. Here was a new South African school coping with many challenges and pulling together its stakeholders in the process but still with a long way to go.

Despite the tremendous strides made in achieving academic equality for drifters, Camalita Preparatory still has many issues to deal with from drifting parents' perspective. The school makes no secret of and offers no apology for the way it pursues academic excellence. Everybody associated with the school is made acutely aware that the school is positioned in this particular direction and has its focus fixed. Meetings are infused with this message and used to reinforce this stance. At the policy evenings the rules of procedure are presented clearly so that all stakeholders can implement them without difficulty. There is no forum for policy review at the school which dictates the pace from the leadership. But it is not the school that has feet of clay; the majority white parents want to see the school retain its culture and tradition in the way they have known it all these years. Decision making is firmly in the hands of the governing body made up mainly of suburban parents and indirectly the benefactors of the school who pump in millions here to upgrade the school such as the media centre built recently at a cost of R54m. SGB elections and SGB meetings like all other meetings are held at night which makes it difficult for drifters to attend. Mpisane, like the deputy are lone voices that would like to see transformation at the school. As a drifting parent he would like to see changes take place at the school and be involved in making inputs for change, especially to integrate drifters into the life of the school. He acknowledges that attending meetings are one way to do that and that most of the drifting parents do not attend but would like to see some changes being initiated by the school:

*I think it should start from the SGB. Although most of our black parents don't attend meetings I think by having representatives- because right now if you go to the SGB its only white, there are no black parents- we can make a difference. There was one Indian guy but I don't know what happened to him. By having a person coming from*

*our background, understanding our culture, understanding as well that we like to bring our children here but we do not have money.*

He says that drifters are overwhelmed by the wealthy and better educated suburban parents therefore they tend to shy away from these meetings:

*I have noticed most of them here are those who have email and are wealthy. It's difficult to be in the same meetings as them.*

Mpisane would like to see other changes made that would help integrate drifters into the school community. Communication he says flows easily at this school but the drawback for him is that it is in the medium of English only. He would love to see some Isizulu in newsletters and maybe a few articles written in Isizulu in the school brochure as well so that drifting parents feel accommodated. He feels certain processes favour the educated sector of the parent component more such as the budget meetings:

*Especially when it comes to budget meetings; now budget meetings- thina where we come from the principal must stand there and explain it to every cent and so on. But here they put it up there and say no 1, 2, 3 and 4 it's fine; do you agree? Agreed and gone (laughs)! It's not like where we coming from; we want to see why this R2-00 is here and so on. So? (Moves his head from side to side).*

But there are changes he is exposed to here as opposed to in the old school that he is thankful for; his child is a diabetic and requires may require treatment during the day. He is thankful for the care his child receives here:

*Even if I am not here I have a peace of mind. I say no, if anything happens, that teacher who is teaching her will assist her, test her and if her sugar levels are up she would administer the insulin and all those things.*

The same goes for Munsamy, the deputy who would love to see transformation move faster. He is extremely thankful for what the change to this school has brought him in the way of professional development and broadening what he has to offer as an academic:



*It's a fantastic school that helped me to continue the work that I like to do. The opportunity to develop new ideas and engage, to improve is what it's done for me. There has been a lot of professional growth and the opportunity to go to professional growth workshops. I went to one last Saturday and I'm going to one this Saturday. Going to principals' conferences here, in Gauteng and around the country and overseas has provided me with a lot of professional development.*

Principal Rutledge is convinced however, that the path she has led the school along is the right one and has brought satisfaction to *all* parents saying:

*We have always been recognized for our sport but now we are beginning to be recognized for the academic support that we give our children. It's so gratifying to hear from past parents, 'Our child is gone to high school and has settled so well'. We have got to find ways of pushing that all the time- we have to make academics our priority. I would like to leave here in five years' time knowing that the academic standards are top notch.*

The next five years will be interesting as the principal pushes even harder to leave a legacy here as a top sport as well as academic school and the deputy grapples with how to resolve the integration pace at the school.

Principal Dee Alberton of Roaine High is an astute leader who keeps a careful watch on the educational environment, making adjustments to her ship to stay at the forefront of the leadership battle amongst schools of this type. Schools like these need financial support for the kind of facilities and opportunities that they provide for their learners. If that financial support is not forthcoming then they can't have the belief of the community and the faith of the community in what they can provide. For her it's an on-going challenge to keep community commitments to the school by maintaining the school at the top of its game in terms of academic achievements and whole school education every year. On the horizon is the rise of independent schools that increasingly attract those willing to pay higher fees to educate their children. She explains:

*In this kind of neighbourhood a big challenge is marketing challenges which, I wouldn't say consumes every aspect of my energy because it can't you know-*

*curriculum has to take most of my energy. But we are constantly competing with independent schools in the neighbourhood to try and keep the community supporting the school so that it can survive financially.*

Confronting this challenge is one of the drivers of change in this school. It also needs to show that it is a leader in change. This is happening, but sometimes at a price. With affluence, a new type of drifting and suburban parent is emerging. Whereas in the not too distant past drifting parents were largely conformists and submissive when it came to matters concerning their children, some have now begun to be confrontational, challenging the school in various ways. Klopper says:

*I think in the beginning we had more of a humble parent trying to do the best for the child and therefore generally they have been very cooperative. Now as all parents- black, white and Indian have got more sense of their rights and they more willing to challenge things on any spectrum not only on racial issues.*

Stander says the emerging middle classes across all race groups sometimes present a test for the school. She gives an example:

*Sometimes the helicopter parenting is a problem where the parent is so pre-occupied with a career that they- not that they neglect their kids- but they feel guilty and then anything that goes wrong then the school gets jumped on.*

Alberton has also noted the change in the type of challenges nowadays:

*But again with the emerging middle classes occasionally we get problems but we get problems across all racial groups and you get dysfunctional families across all economic groups as well. But I have noticed that the level of anger amongst the black children has diminished significantly. I think for a lot of them a more stable home life and a lot of it has to do with a sense of identity. In fact one of the reasons we did that study in 2004 (referring to an unpublished paper handed to me) and our girls presented that paper in 2005 was that we had a small group of girls who were angry and we wanted to get to the bottom of what the problem was. A lot of it had to do with cognitive dissonance- trying to find their identity and being confused.*

The school is careful to mediate the issues at hand which parents might bring to their attention and not get drawn into any other agenda that the parent may have in mind. In some cases parents try to turn disciplinary cases into race issues, something the school is quite prepared for and has learnt to deal with in a non-partisan way. Asked if the school is planned to handle such situations the principal replied:

*You would always come up with problems as you work with people but I think mentally we were prepared for it and we were able to handle the challenges as we came across them.*

It has come a long way towards bringing drifting parents into the school system and trying to involve them in the work of the school. Unlike Meraska School that demonstrated an intent to empower parents to become functional in the SGB, here at Roaine High the emphasis is on participating in a SGB that is already functional and other structures that have been established some time ago. The principal is quite happy with the participation from parents but says she understands why some others exclude themselves.

*But otherwise generally, if you look at my governing body it is fully representative. We work very well together. We have a parents' support group which is a 100% fully representative. But it has a very strong mix of Indian and white but we have a very small minority of black parents in the parents support group. The parents' support group is our mothers group basically. I think the small number of black parents is because of transport difficulties and they might not have the time to offer for support. I think also with parents like the domestic workers it might have to do with self-esteem. They don't have the confidence to participate.*

The governing body is made up mainly of professionals and businessmen who also act as the connection between the school and donors who support the school. With the growing middle class and the affluence of some drifting learners a new challenge has emerged here: the move away from their mother tongue and culture. In preparation for the expected increase in the number of Zulu speaking learners, the school employed a second Isizulu teacher. As the years went by, however, and with growing affluence, more and more Zulu first language speakers were taking Afrikaans as their second language at school. Some cited

studying and working overseas as the reason- Afrikaans is drawn from Dutch and German and can be of use in these and other European countries while Isizulu has limited usage outside KwaZulu-Natal. Westernisation is also starting to impact on drifters cultural activities as well. Abrahams said:

*I know some of my matrices last year were saying all those things they do on the farm they do just to keep their grandparents happy.*

Stander also notes that as drifters settle into the Roaine High identity, some of them who get caught up in Westernisation which has the effect of watering down their respect and knowledge of their own cultural heritage. More and more speak only English and don't talk about going to the farm any more. She shares a current story:

*I was saying today that most of our Zulu speaking girls speak English at home. In fact some of them can't speak Zulu and they were saying how offended some of the older people were because they speak Zulu to them and they can't answer. Our head girl is a black girl and she was saying her mother had to give her extra Zulu lessons at home because she can't speak Zulu (laughs lightly).*

Mastering English has given drifters confidence and allows them to engage in all kinds of extra mural activities and academic events. In fact Stander said a friend from the Royal Shakespeare Company that was a visiting drama tutor to her learners remarked that if she did not look at learners when they spoke she would not be able to tell the difference because they all sound the same. But, as Dlamini pointed out earlier, she is not totally immersed in the western culture but keeps a balance between the both as a survival tactic. She seems to have found the right recipe to keep her identity while she takes advantage of this excellent school to get herself a quality education. More importantly, she does this with ease and is comfortable with herself for the stance she has taken. She explains:

*But it has always been easy because I've been able to fit in everywhere. I've been able to fit in with the black people because at home you know I get the culture but I've been able to fit in with the other races as well because I've been learning with them for some time now.*

Roaine High has come a long way since the flare up of the race incident and the subsequent upheaval in its early history. Drifters and suburban learners mix more easily now and there is a definite attempt on the part of the school to work at integrating activities of minority cultural groups at the school. But as the principal said earlier and what Dlamini realised, it's a case of understanding that in schools such as this everyone has multiple identities. The principal has the last say about where the school is going:

*There is a saying that the road to success is always under construction. I do know that we are not there yet because there is always something to improve on. We have come a long way, as I said we certainly don't have that level of aggression that we had earlier, we have discipline problems it's the odd discipline problem that happens across all groups. We have racial incidents that end up being not racial incidents-learners call each other names anyway. In the early days, there were pockets of resistance amongst suburban parents and the resistance to us opening our doors which came more out of fear than anything and I would say this perception that standards would drop. I think that's the greatest fear and I think to some extent it still exists which is why we have a battle with the emerging strength of private schools. I think there is a little bit of that still.*

The school depends heavily on marketing and branding itself around its suburban community to stay in the race with the independent schools. In this regard, it has not delved too deep into bring the drifting parents aboard in its quest to reflect a new, South African, multicultural school which opens itself up to more inputs and influences from the drifting stakeholders. She however, is confident that the school reflects what the landscape will be like in the future:

*Especially with children I think their generation will be in far more harmony once they start understanding prejudices. With this generation where they worked together and the way they do their extra murals together, there is no hesitation in their interaction. So I think from that point of view it's a major advantage for the future of the country.*

The statement is supported by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory which argues that extended periods of interaction which occurs fairly regularly between children induces *proximal processing* (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.2). Thus, besides the contrived efforts of the suburban school to integrate its learners, drifters and their suburban counterparts play a role in each other's integration as well. The principal's reflection on progress her school has made in meeting the transformational agenda is contained within the chronosystem devised by Bronfenbrenner (1986) allow tracking developmental change over time, both within the individual and the environment in which they operate (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.10.10).

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Three very important aspects were discussed in this chapter that concludes the presentation and discussion. Suburban schools place a high currency on sport as well as academic achievement and try to find a balance between these for their learners. The chapter tried to bring out the unstated determination of the suburban school to continue on its trajectory of creating its own brand of excellence in these areas while knowingly working with drifters who may or may not become a part of the mainstream. In response drifters showed their determination to use this 'passage in time' to maximise their learning so that they could have a better chance in life. The responses tie in with the comment I made in the opening chapter that the golden thread that holds this presentation and discussion together is the determination by drifters to make a success of their suburban schooling despite all odds. While some drifters have formed strong bonds with their suburban schools and are thankful for the education that they got there this has not translated to a student- *alma mater* relationship when they leave which leads one to question why this is so. What emerges is the picture of two powerful forces working towards success which they interpret differently and if taken to one end of the spectrum, could be likened to working in silos. On the positive side the forces of the drifters and the suburban schools are not working against each other but towards a common destination using different approaches. What would be of benefit for suburban schools and the future of the country is if these forces could be integrated to create the dynamic that is imbued with the essence of quality to thrust education into the realm of transformation. Alexander (2011) and Meador (2005) pose a caveat that suburban schools, if they are in the process of integrating drifters, should

neither maintain the status quo of the privileged by perpetuating segregation and stratification of drifters nor should they merely assimilate and acculturalise them into the existing system (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.9).

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **REFLECTIONS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This exploration along the road less travelled tried to go as deep into the heart of the phenomenon that circumstances would allow, to investigate how suburban schools were seeking to cope with integration of drifting learners. This would make up a stepping stone towards an attempt on my part at theorising about what the integration in suburban schools or lack thereof, of learners from hitherto very disparate contexts entails. I reflect on this exploration now to understand what happened along the way and what it means in the context of the study. To make meaning would, of course require me to step back and examine the journey as a whole. I start with an outline of each of the platforms of the study as captured by the chapters. Drawing on the data thereafter, a response will be formulated to the research questions posed at the outset. Connectivity was key to the process of making meaning of the study by drawing on work put into all the chapters of the study to ensure a flow through which, hopefully will be the final link in communicating the thesis. I must hasten to say that even a study such as this, that set out to explore a gap in literature which covered a particular area in education will probably have gaps of its own. There probably will still be unfinished business at the end. In this regard limitations of the study are spelt out and may act as pointers for future studies as well. The journey is brought to conclusion with some closing remarks.

#### **7.2 Looking back**

Chapter One was the canvas used to paint a mural of the historical legacy of inferior quality education that apartheid left on the rural and township landscape and the impact of democracy on these very communities. Change, written all over what 1994 stood for, seemed to circumvent the rural and township schools, leaving the majority of them still disadvantaged and dysfunctional in the realm of producing quality in the classrooms. Disillusionment had set in soon after democracy, especially amongst the rural and township based parents who expected that schools in their areas would now deliver a better quality



education thus giving their children a better chance in life. Alas, this was not to be as government struggled to improve the quality of education in previously disadvantaged schools despite pouring in huge resources. Having waited all this while for change to bring them better education and being left empty handed, rural and township parents instigated the drift of their children to suburban schools. Today, rural schools continue to drain and shut down (Fengu, 2012) as the waiting list to get into suburban schools grows longer each year.

Also presented was a scenario of what was taking place or not taking place at the suburban schools in the run up to the 1994 elections. Suburban schools were privy to draft policy papers and new policy in the run up to the new constitution as well as SASA through their links with policy makers drawn from their National and Provincial Departments of Education (Jansen, 2002). They were well informed about how things would unfold. Conversations with principals of the suburban schools researched indicated that deliberations did take place amongst their school governors as well in some cases, the parent community on what strategies should be employed to tackle the issue of all schools being open to all citizens of the country. Although discussions may not have been uniform, the majority of suburban schools wanted to work out the best way to ensure continuity in their trajectory. They wished to tackle change on their own terms and find ways of preventing government from excessively 'interfering' in the way they conducted their business (Jansen, 2013). One of the ways they reacted was to introduce high fees to those seeking admission to restrict being inundated by drifters and thereby keeping control of their own environment. What they could not avoid though was the legislation and policy that allowed drifters to study where they wanted.

Be that as it may, the scene was set for drifters to arrive in their numbers at the suburban schools and suburban schools were compelled to accept them as long as they had the space. Therefore, a confluence involving drifters and the suburban school was inevitable. This study focused on this confluence and tried to explore whether the suburban schools would act either as catalysts or remain unchanged in the need to integrate drifters into their schools. Thus the road travelled as signposted by the various chapters in this study was to

discover and understand what happens at the confluence by asking these key research questions:

- 7.2.1 How have the principals, teachers, learners and parents of the selected schools experienced the dynamics of the drift?
- 7.2.2 What can be learnt from these schools regarding the integration or failure thereof of integration at suburban schools?

Chapter Two presents the literature review which opens with explanations of the key concepts that would feature in the review. In this chapter, I have positioned drifting and integration as the two main concepts in the study. Drifting was explained as referring to the deviation from a particular direction that is caused by a force of some type. Regarding global drifting patterns, it emerged that the need to improve their socio-economic status and provide their children with better opportunities through quality education was the driving force behind the movement of people towards urban centres which was accelerated after the Second World War. On the African continent I arrived at the position that a combination of declining demand for labour in rural areas, increasing poverty and poorly resourced schools were the catalysts for drifting. South African drifting patterns I found were hastened by the expected positive change in circumstances that failed to materialise at rural and township schools.

In the next part the chapter focuses on the key aspect of this study: the efforts of suburban schools to integrate drifters. In exploring this part I found that factors that came into play either inhibited or enabled integration at suburban schools. The literature suggests that school leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring integration whilst other factors such as the language gap, the cultural divide, the disconnect between the school and the home as well as inclusivity impact on whether integration takes place. This aspect raised many questions that would prove relevant to the investigation. In closing implications of the literature review in the light of the research questions were considered.

The theoretical framework, made up of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and the student integration model as theorised by Tinto (1987) is presented and unpacked in Chapter Three. In the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) I found a useful

framework that tracks the effect of changing environments on a developing child. The contextual development of the drifter in the movement through the various systems identified in the theory and effect of change in the drifters' social address from the background environment to the suburban environment are well captured in the theory. Also illuminated by the theory is the effect of *proximal processing* as well as the *ecological niches* necessary for the drifter to integrate into the suburban school. Tinto's (1987) student model of integration provided the lens to track and understand the three main phases of the drifters' movement from the one environment to the other *viz* separation, transition and incorporation. This theory, I found went right to the heart of the integration phenomenon. In retrospect, the combination worked well for the study as it allowed me to understand the two worlds that drifters shared and the single world that the suburban school lived in. It therefore provided the platform necessary to understand what exactly was happening at the confluence, why stakeholders were behaving as they did and how they manoeuvred to deal with the challenges they faced.

Chapter Four is the tool box of the study. It presents the technical aspects of how the study was operationalised and presents the tools needed to deal with the nuts and bolts that put the study together. This is a qualitative research design and methodology which is nested in the interpretive paradigm and utilises a multi-site case study to explore the phenomenon. Data generation instruments, the semi-structured interview which is supported by observation are unpacked. It outlines how entry was gained to the target population and how purposive sampling was used to select the 18 participants. While observation was useful to gain an overall impression of what was happening at the sites, the semi-structured interviews allowed in-depth exploration into issues as they occurred and interrogation of the happenings at the confluence from the pre-democracy era, drifters arriving during the changeover and how integration is proceeding at the present time. The phases of data analysis are dealt with in detail and ethical issues of trustworthiness are discussed before concluding the chapter.

Research findings are presented in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five gives an overview of what was observed at the schools on arrival and conversations that set the scene for a background of each of the schools. The chapter talks about the similarities and differences

between the schools and then goes on to give a detailed description of each. Themes are presented as far as possible in a chronological order starting with the scenario prior to democracy, moving on to preparations and change during the transition and then discussing what the *status quo* is at present. Chapter Six delves deeper and goes beneath the skin as it were and probes what exactly is happening in the areas of culture, sport, co- curricular activities and classroom engagement against the background of the literature review and the theoretical framework. The final section of the chapter attempts to present a view of the future as seen through the eyes of the suburban schools. It closes with an interpretation of the findings by scrutinising it from the study perspective of how suburban schools are sought to cope with the integration of drifters. In so doing it draws on the connectedness of the presentation with the other chapters to inject integrated meaning into the study.

### **7.3 Crystallising the findings**

At this point I examine the findings to understand what the experiences of the various stakeholders were at the confluence as the suburban schools grappled with integration as a consequence of the drift in the struggle for quality education. I do so by responding to the critical questions raised by the study. The first question sought to establish how the principals, teachers, learners and parents at each of the selected schools understood and experienced the drifting. Drifting brought hope and despair. Drifters and their parents showed determination to get into suburban schools. What they had not reckoned on was the paradigm shift that accompanied the move. Tinto's (1987) integration model brings into focus the phases of separation, transition and incorporation that drifters passed through (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.1). The effects of the separation and transition were felt differently by drifters at each of the schools: Masada of Meraska School said she felt at 'home' in her school and Lindani of Camalita Preparatory said *"I am excited to be here"*, although Lindani noted that some teachers here shouted at her sometimes. Gugu Dlamini of Roaine High observed that some adjustment was necessary to fit in at her new school so she made the transition through a conscious effort by creating two identities for herself: *"I have always separated Gugu from school and Gugu from home because at school in a way I have to act a little different to how I act at home with my mother"*.

The responses also revealed that of the three drifters interviewed, Gugu who was the eldest had to effect a more conscious effort to make the transition and mind the effects of separation at home at the same time. The other two who were younger made smooth transitions to the suburban school and tended to take their parents along. Viewed through the macrosystem of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, each of these phases that drifters pass through are developmental contexts wherein their interactions with the new environments and the strength drawn from their background environment cements their determination to remain at the suburban school despite challenges (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3). Gugu Dlamini of Roaine High was quite upfront about missing the culture, church and the home environment which allowed her to be 'loud' but she was determined to look beyond these 'deterrents' to stay the course and fulfil her dreams. As espoused by Tinto (1987), a drifter who reaches such a crossroad is faced with the prospect of either staying and integrating or departing (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.5).

In regard to the drifters' parents, it was plain to see that an open door welcoming policy at Meraska School built a strong, drifter parent support base for the school which benefitted both the drifters and the school. Responses from staff indicated that by and large, drifters' parents responded positively to the open door policy while most responded positively to the appointment system the school used to interact with parents. Such a practice is not part of the process of helping drifters' parents make the transition at Camalita Preparatory and Roaine High where parent - school interaction is much more formal. These two schools tended to attend to parents if they requested an appointment or would call them in if there were issues to be discussed regarding their children.

Educators for the large part were left to their own devices to respond to the transition phase once drifters were in class. Although two of the schools had consultants come in prior to and during the early phase of the transition period to coach them on transformation the courses were obviously broad based and did not offer much in the way of guidance on the nitty-gritty of integration challenges. As a result responses such as 'I saw them as children' or 'I came from a Christian background so I treated them all alike' to calling them to order as quickly as possible were common in the early days, indicating that the transition was challenging for teachers just as it was for the drifters. As pointed out by Tinto (1987) at

Roaine High over-emphasising compliance led to a heightened sense of isolation and normlessness amongst drifters and lengthened the period of transition (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.4). Tinto (1987) emphasises that prior preparation to help drifters make the transition through orientation and related activities such as games, functions and rituals are essential to smooth drifters from separation and groomed to make the transition into the new environment (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.3).

*Aluta Continua* is probably how one would describe drifting in recent years. The drifting experience is being communicated positively back home. Masada of Meraska School said “*I’d like to tell learners in my township to get to a school like this faster*”. Drifters’ successes act as motivators for others in rural and township areas to pressurise their parents into allowing them to drift to suburban schools. While the push is from bottom up nowadays, conditions that existed twenty years ago at rural and township schools seem unchanged with poor infrastructure still prevalent, absence of basic services like water and electricity, underperforming schools and new additions such as school mismanagement and the danger of walking long distances to schools (Louw, 2014a).

In response to the second research question which sought to find out what it would take for suburban schools to integrate drifters, the focus shifts from the earlier phases of separation and transition to integration or incorporation as referred to by Tinto (1987). There is a fine line between transition and integration with overlaps in events and occurrences sometimes with references even to the separation phase. This is where the benefit of employing my twin-lensed theoretical framework shone through. Both Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Tinto (1987) emphasise that at this final phase, where drifters, having come to terms with separation from the background environment and having convinced themselves to make the transition to the new environment are on the cusp of integration. As part of the research imperative, I tried to identify broad trends in the phenomenon across the three schools that I sampled. I therefore begin by discussing these broad trends before I move on to deal with individual findings at the schools.

The efforts of the school as well as their own initiatives play a decisive role in their successful integration. The efforts of these suburban schools were met with mixed success. All three schools tend to be big on branding and merchandising usually marketing

themselves as a package deal to both parents and sponsors and are highly sought after (Govender, 2014). Their selling point is the high attainment, rounded education that prepares learners for the global market. Suburban parents and their children see these schools as a stepping stone to prestigious sporting academies or to higher education institutions that share links with the schools. Drifters and their parents see these schools as an escape route from their disadvantage that will provide a better quality education with high learner attainment that will provide a springboard to access further education, a bridge to society and work opportunities that await those with the necessary qualifications. Therefore, as postulated by the theoretical framework, the response to the second research question has to be seen against the dual backgrounds of the drifters and the suburban schools which is contextualised within the confluence.

If learner attainment alone is used as a yardstick to measure the success of these suburban school at integrating its drifters, then at first glance it would seem that they have done the work. Roaine High has achieved a one hundred pass rate for the past 18 years and the other two schools have maintained similar results in the final year exit examinations. It becomes obvious from the findings that the leadership offered by principals at these schools, although varied, determines the extent to which teachers are willing to pursue integration through the schools' curricular and co-curricular activities. The theoretical framework emphasises the suburban schools' need to understand the drifters' socio-economic backgrounds as a way to position themselves in their integration efforts (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3). Transformational leadership was evident at Meraska School where teachers exuded a passion to ensure compliance with the transformation agenda through the asset based approach to drifters and their parents. Teacher Jordaan stated that he worked hard at engaging with his learners to find out about where they came from, their circumstances and their strengths. In saying so he reflected the approach the school adopted towards their drifters. This attitude of caring permeated the staff who spoke passionately about how they worked as a team to make the school successful in its integration efforts so much so that they took to watching out for each other in the event that one of them misunderstood a cultural response from a drifter or *vice versa*.

The response by the principal at Roaine High who stated that her learners ought to assume multiple identities such as one for home and one at school summed up the way the school positioned itself initially in terms of integrating its drifters there. The emphasis was on the compliance of all learners to the practice and procedures at the school. The danger of not considering drifters' background social and academic experiences referred to as the exosystem (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3) led to a teacher grading drifters according to race in the early days, something that even shocked the principal at Roaine High. Although subsequently corrected, the measures fell short of a coming together to discuss strategies to consider what intellectual potential came with drifters. The volatile situation which followed and the subsequent response resulted in a reactive leadership that wanted to contain situations and bring them under control. Drifters having to live up to the Roaine High identity underpinned the integration efforts at this school. Camalita Preparatory exhibited a shade of understanding of drifters' backgrounds which was nuanced by the need to bring them up to speed with the school's teaching and learning programme. This understanding extended to being empathetic about such things as the types of living conditions in the background environments and the early departure from home that impacted on the attention span of the drifter in school (*Vide* Chapter Six, section 6.2). Camalita Preparatory showed a high level of commitment to creating what they construed to be the right academic environment which was quite rigid as Goodfellow put it: "*So we actually lay down the law*". It was, despite its understanding nature, a school that demanded compliance from both drifters and parents.

Unlike the grounds or the social events, the classroom is a bounded space that demands participation from all its occupants. My interviews tried to discover if teachers who, trained in observing, listening and understanding were able to start the process of integration by harnessing diversity in the classroom which is a melting pot of biases, wrong perceptions, intellectual capabilities and prejudices. Teachers at Roaine High did not talk of seizing opportunities offered by transgressions and insensitivities and encouraging learners to talk, discuss, and debate their perspectives to clear the space necessary for integration to take place. The exception was the drama teacher who allowed frustrations to be played out in class productions. At Camalita Preparatory, silent drifters, challenged by the language and content gap were sometimes identified and assisted by teachers while drifters such as



Lindani had to seek the assistance of her drifter peers during breaks to understand words she did not understand in class. Although such drifters were identified as weak they were not marginalised but there was no evidence of them being encouraged to participate in classroom activities and discussions to hasten their integration. Meraska School exhibited a secondary agenda to unlock potential in second language English learners who are mainly drifters. Teachers such as Jordaan skilled themselves to take cues from loaded responses and exploit them to open up the integration space. There was evidence from quarterly meetings held with parents based on learners' assessments that Meraska School developed a system to monitor and track progress in this regard.

What is clearly evident is the extra effort that these three suburban schools put into closing the learning gap between drifters and their suburban counterparts. The main reason for this is that they wish to protect their reputations as schools of excellence, thereby keeping their sponsors, attracting new ones and drawing in parents who can afford the higher fees they charge. At all three schools sampled, once a drifter is admitted the school system takes over and interventions, which vary from school to school are instituted to enable the drifter to catch up with each schools' expectations. Going deeper, one finds that in some cases, careful culling at lower grades also contributes to improved performance at higher grades. The practice at Camalita Preparatory is a case in point where the services of a professional is enlisted to support the school's decision and convince the parent to retain a child in the same grade for another year (*Vide* Chapter Six, section 6.3). In fairness to the school, the class sizes indicate that bunching is not taking place in the lower grades as a result of the practice as opposed to what one finds in some schools where huge numbers in Grade ten and Grade eleven classes and small numbers in Grade twelve classes tell the story of gatekeeping (Govender, 2014a). Recalling that the golden thread that held the study together was the tenacity displayed by drifters to stay the course against all odds, the negligible drop off rate in the three schools I went to was indicative of this. The theoretical framework (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3) posits that the drifter's own role in integration process is just as important as that offered by the institution. Meraska School drifter, Masada's statement that she would encourage her friends from rural schools to get to a suburban school as soon as possible indicates that rural or township learners would not want to return to their former schools for a variety of reasons that I shall not go into here.

Having said this, it cannot go unnoticed that academic integration for drifters who quickly get accustomed to the 'suburban ways' as exemplified by classroom activities during teaching and learning is excellent in Roaine High where a drifter rose to the position of Head Prefect. Drifter, Gugu Dlamini is adamant that she competes freely and equally with her suburban counterparts at Roaine High. Generally, there is some cohesion in this area, but a significant number have to work hard to comply and stay the course even if there are many factors that are hindering their integration.

Moving on to these suburban schools' efforts at integration in the area of sport, there is a range of limited success at the schools I targeted. Here too, if the schools are measured against the broad transformation agenda to expose its drifters to codes of sport that were previously denied them, then the schools would score highly. In support of this, the schools would probably add that they have made successes of those drifters who showed interest or exhibited potential in new codes such as rugby or hockey. Closer examination reveals that although Camalita Preparatory even provides evidence of drifters who represented the school at provincial and national levels in these new codes, these are a few exceptions. Efforts the school puts into raising the profile of a drifter who displays the attributes that links with the school's status is not concomitant with efforts to integrate the majority of drifters into the sporting curriculum and could be deemed as marginalising the rest of the drifters. Meraska School is slightly ahead in terms of offering sporting codes drifters played at their previous codes with the principal encouraging integration at inter-school level by arranging matches with so called white and Indian schools even in the early days. While coaching and support for drifters taking up new codes at all three schools is good, times and venues for sporting activities outside school hours as well as the exacting requirements for sporting accessories make this an expensive addition for many drifters and is therefore self-excluding. An alternative offered to drifters at Roaine High is to take extra-curricular activities such as art, music or drama if they do not offer a sport. The curriculum here is still very much the old Model C type and has still not been extended sufficiently to embrace the drifters' social capital, therefore foregoing an opportunity to open up the integration space. Overall on a positive level, the contextual experiences of the drifter through *proximal processing* as suggested in the theoretical framework (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.10.3)

in sport and extra- curricular activities could on the other hand contribute to the drifters' own efforts at integrating and broaden their offering.

Cultural integration has had limited or no success at these schools and would probably rank lowest in the integration stakes if they are to be compared. All three schools still largely reflect a monoculture of the dominant group and seemed to miss the opportunity to drive transformation and encourage integration through the strength of cultural capital brought in by drifters. The combined model of integration that was crafted by bringing together the Bronfenbrenner (1979) theory and the Tinto (1987) model provides for the academic, social and cultural activities as exosystems to create the kind of environment that help drifters to commit themselves to integrate and therefore realize their goals and intentions (*Vide* Chapter Three, Figure 2, section 3.3). Roaine High learned to 'soften' the environment after drifters rose in revolt at what they deemed to be an oppressive environment and allowed various cultural activities to form part of the co-curricular programme. There is no doubt that this move encouraged drifters themselves to hasten the process of integrating themselves at the school. The school responded by integrating such cultural activities into its mainstream activities at the school thereby allowing drifters a greater role in the process of their own integration. Meraska School, while serious about transformation and integration did not capitalise on the depth of the cultural capital that could have enriched the diversity at the school by confining itself to just one main Heritage Day event a year. Parent, Sma Mahlangu who is very supportive of the school pointed this out as an area that could help improve integration. At Camalita Preparatory cultural activities which were introduced in the early days of the transition largely amounted to tokenism and did not permeate the curriculum delivery neither were they driven to impact significantly on integration efforts. These activities were largely to create awareness and as the parent at Camalita Preparatory lamented, the school lost interest in these activities and in recent years, dropped them from their annual calendar of events.

Cultural awareness is happening at varying degrees and the response to it varies as well. This is evident in the response to the goat string and the red string worn by drifters which has led Camalita Preparatory to say that they ask drifters to cover it up while Meraska School tolerates it and Roaine High understands it. There is no significant move towards

integrating cultures and creating new blends that reflect their diversity. The stand-alone projects at Roaine High such as the Christian and Hindu prayer groups as well as the Ama Gugu Dancers are just that and have not made any significant impact on becoming part of the bigger cultural picture at these schools and have produced a new brand of integration. There is minimal evidence that cultural diversity has been absorbed into the school culture and in turn being used as a strength to understand its drifters better. As a result the cultural capital of drifters remains largely untapped and remains largely in the slip stream at Roaine High. Despite the cultural gap, drifters sound determined to be part of the suburban school and move past the state of normlessness that they find themselves in on arrival (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.4). Gugu Dlamini of Roaine High says missing the culture, church and the home environment which allowed her to be 'loud' was not going to stand in the way of her achieving a good matriculation pass. This is the stage posits Tinto (1987) that can lead to either integration or departure (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.5). Gugu expresses it thus: *"I feel like one of them. There is not any kind of discrimination"*. As stated earlier, the golden thread that holds the process of integration together for drifters was the determination to succeed at their suburban school.

Camalita Preparatory has not as yet embarked on widening what I term the 'cultural corridor' between the drifters and the suburban school. This school revealed the most number of individual challenges it had in getting parents of drifters see the way it works and it led to teacher- parent clashes as well. While it invests enormously in "laying down the law" it came short in harnessing the best of both worlds, capturing the essence of values and norms intrinsic to all cultures present in the school and channelling it towards teaching and learning in an integrated environment. Teachers arriving here, as revealed by the Deputy Principal, Munsamy have not been exposed to any induction or training with the skills to interpret diverse cultural behaviour without the bias of race or ethnicity colouring their perspective. The cultural concept teachers at this school have of a good drifter is one who they consider as showing eagerness to learn, participates willingly in all the activities offered by the school, has all the rudimentary aptitudes and enjoys popularity with teachers and learners. In fact the cultural ways of 'others' are seen as deficits here, On the other hand, Meraska School continues to hold developmental workshops that encourage its teachers work on their own as well as their drifters' integration. Their concept of a good

learner operates within the context of the transformation agenda set before them. However, Meraska School has not yet exploited the social capital of drifters to its maximum potential although the leadership here seems to show a better understanding that cultural diversity forms a cornerstone from which to build on the other areas and feeds into all aspects of the schools' activities.

The theoretical framework postulates that key to the drifters' integration is also dependent on their own dynamic roles within the contexts of the environments they interact with (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3). While the slow pace of cultural integration is lamented by both parents and drifters at all three schools, social integration, like academic integration is on the increase. These two show movement although social integration still lags behind academic integration. It becomes obvious that as the language confidence increases in drifters, the academic space is mitigated more equitably by both drifters and urban learners. So too with the social space, where there is evidence of increasing friendships across race and ethnicity: Gugu Dlamini of Roaine High says she has moved on from the social circle she was in initially to one that is now made up of learners from three different cultural groups that are both suburban and rural. At both Roaine High and Camalita Preparatory drifters spoke of how their suburban counterparts 'looked out' for them. At Camalita Preparatory learners were inviting each other to parties at home irrespective of race or colour although this was still happening on a small scale. The progress in these two areas are attributed to mutual respect that has developed amongst learners as peers over the years and is a natural product of being thrown together at the confluence. Lindani at Camalita Preparatory stated that nowadays she didn't notice differences between her and her suburban counterparts. Dissimilar interests such as in music still keep drifters and suburban learners in their homogeneous groups during break times as reported by Alberton at Roaine High, although intermingling continues with interaction increasing in wider circles within the school learner population.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasises in the ecological systems theory the importance of background support while Tinto (1987) encourages the maintenance of strong links with the home environment (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.3). Looking through these lenses there was an expectation that the three suburban schools would indeed attempt to establish

strong links with the drifters' parents and thereby hasten integration but here again this has happened differently at each of the schools. At Camalita Preparatory indications are that the school still has some way to go to bring on board the drifter parent sector as stated by parent Mpisane: "... *right now if you go to the SGB its only white, there are no black parents-we can make a difference*". Parents of drifters are warmly welcomed and are expected to participate in activities relating to their children at Camalita Preparatory but are not drawn into support roles such as those at Roaine High which clearly delineates areas of activity for parents and encourages their participation. It is mostly the suburban based parent that is more deeply involved in the school's support structures. At Roaine High there are many who respond positively to being involved in support activities but drifters' parents are still hampered by the distance of their homes from school, work pressures and being uncomfortable in the company of the 'more literate' suburban parent hence the process of integration at that level is slowed down as well. Drifters' parents at Meraska School feel welcome at the school but are not involved in any activities other than at the SGB level. In the *person-process-context* window offered by the theoretical framework (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.10.2) the suggestion is that schools that increase their interactions with the parents and the background will find greater involvement by the parent and the drifter in the new environment which is not happening significantly at Camalita Preparatory and is at a starting level at Roaine High. While Meraska School has a transformational outlook and its open door policy sees many drifting parents visiting, their level of involvement is at SGB level and revolves around consultation about their children's academic progress. The general impression that comes through is that drifters' parents at all three schools are quite content to overlook challenges as long as their children are receiving the quality education that they came here for. Flowing through from the conversations too was the unstated fear that if they did not persevere here it would be difficult to place their children in other suburban schools because of the long waiting lists for admission.

It is important also to record that all three principals are aware of the enormous responsibility that rests on their shoulders, which is to take the school forward within the context of the transformational agenda. They also believe that they are doing the best that they can under the circumstances as leaders at the ground level with minimal support in the area of integration from the DBE. They know they have to increase parental involvement

especially that of drifters but they seem to battle with finding the right solution for this. The words of the principal of Meraska School “*These were the best twenty years of my life*” in reference to heading a school that was thrown open to all and in turn embraced all would probably echo what most suburban school principals would like to say about their part in integration and the transformation agenda. But it was not so. Alberton of Roaine High struggled at first and eventually had to dig deep to understand integration before attempting to make a go of it while at Camalita Preparatory they still grapple with it on many fronts. The preparation and pitch at all three schools have been varied and their success is not a mirror of their efforts at integration.

#### **7.4 Final comments: defining the thesis**

The three suburban schools share a common challenge which is to join the drifters into their ‘mainstream’ and to develop in them a sense of belonging to the suburban schools. Broadly speaking, suburban schools would like drifters to acclimatise to their way of doing things as soon as possible and get on with the curriculum offered there. In time they expect that drifters would acculturate themselves and in turn be assimilated into their school. This is akin to the French wanting to make Frenchmen out of the West Africans during the time of colonisation or someone taking apart a Lego toy and then re-assembling it to their own design. In this way they get to maintain the *status quo* which fits in with the suburban profile of creating order and discipline to maintain peak performance in sporting activities and excellent learner attainment. Drifters in turn would show compliance and fit in as the suburban school prepares them to exit the school as proud products that will go out there and not let down the *alma mater*.

Providing drifters access to better quality education means providing opportunities to be successful. This in turn hinges on the extent to which these suburban schools want to understand their drifters in the process of integration. Drifters at Meraska School have a head start on the other two schools in terms of moving towards integration. Meraska School has shown definite attempts at considering ways to close the gap between the world of the drifter and the world of the suburban school. At Roaine High they have successfully identified what some of the challenges are but still have some way to go in terms of unlocking the integration challenge while Camalita Preparatory lags behind the other two in

this regard. The key to this which is not happening is for the suburban school to embrace diversity (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.4).

Leadership in each of the suburban schools is strong but one- sided with everything seeming to flow from the suburban stakeholders to the drifters. The strength of the leadership also differs with Alberton of Roaine High investing lots of time consulting, studying different cultures and working out how best to accommodate drifters while at Camalita Preparatory the focus is on keeping the school on the path it has always followed and rather assisting drifters and their parents to comply. Meraska School, which has increasingly accommodated the drifters' various needs both culturally and academically has still to capitalise on the two-way movement of information and equal sharing of ideas and ideals. Overall, it would seem that drifters are baptised into these suburban schools' own systems which is not synonymous with integration. This has to however, be read together with the golden thread of drifter determination to remain when faced with the prospect of 'fight or flight' which Tinto (1987) posits are the options at the incorporation stage of student integration (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.2.4).

Both Roaine High and Meraska School displayed varying degrees of considering feedback from staff members and ways to use suggestions, concerns and complaints. While Meraska School viewed these inputs from a transformational angle and tried to incorporate them into attempts to unlock the integration path, Roaine High used the information to 'fix' problems that showed up so that teaching and learning could move smoothly again. These discussions were missing at Camalita Preparatory. I found no evidence in any of the schools of attempts to create forums for discussions between drifters and teachers or drifters and their suburban counterparts to discuss and debate issues with the intention of recommendations being forwarded to the school leadership to act upon. The exception of course was Roaine High that created focus groups when there was a clash between drifters and the school. Even at Meraska School where a transformation agenda was evident, there was no clear integration programme with goals and targets from which activities to encourage integration flowed.

Integration can only take place in an environment nurtured by a leadership that embraces change. The suburban schools I studied exhibit strong leadership at academic, professional



and governance levels. In particular they provide very clear leadership in the area of curriculum delivery which is testament to the way they have consistently produced high learner attainment and academic excellence up to now despite new challenges thrown their way. The principal at Meraska School who worked in township areas through NGOs prior to accepting a post at the school has shown herself to be an agent of change in many aspects of the school's activities and seems more comfortable with the challenges of transformation. Both Roaine High and Camalita Preparatory have principals that were inherited from the Model C era and are excellent managers but are seem to struggle with change leadership. As suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1979) a principal that has had some experience of the background environment or *social address* and the culture of drifters (*Vide* Chapter Three, section 3.1.3) is better able to be a change leader who is able to distribute the message amongst the SMT, the teaching and governance team strongly enough to encourage them to become agents of change. The literature shows that such leadership, further nuanced to build confidence in drifters can tap their potential in ways that would be mutually beneficial and find new ways to allow them to express themselves more responsibly (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.1). In understanding that the leadership at both Camalita Preparatory and Roaine High are from the 'old order', the leadership at Meraska would probably be considered unconventional which is what is needed for integration to proceed at a faster pace at these schools. Where the door has been opened to drifters' parents for such unconventional leadership such as at Meraska School which benefits from strong participation of drifters' parents in the SGB there seems to be greater progress with integration. Meraska School also demonstrates distributed leadership, creating the space for initiatives from staff members other than the SMT (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.1). In the wake of the upheaval experienced at Roaine High, had the leadership allowed a re-visit of their vision and mission as well as to develop blueprints for the future to reflect diversity and integration which was then constantly reviewed against the backdrop of milestones reached, the progress towards integration could have been accelerated.

The slow pace of genuine integration cannot be attributed only to lack of drive on the part of the schools that were sampled. DBE policies and procedures supporting integration in suburban schools have been largely symbolic and not supported by Circuit and District

interventions. The DBE has been largely reactive in its efforts to enforce change. New policy demanding accountability from suburban schools for progress in their support and integration of the culturally diverse learners they teach (Meador, 2005) is absent. Cultural ties are the umbilical cord of the democratic South Africa, pregnant with the heavy weight of the new suburban school. A heavy responsibility still rests with the state to feed the right diet to suburban schools to ensure the healthy new born it desires. The literature review (*Vide* Chapter Two, section 2.7.5) and data generated indicate that both cultural and structural conditions, underpinned by change leadership are missing as being a part of the wholesome solution that should be offered by these suburban schools to make integration work. The understanding that academic success does not hinge on assimilation or acculturation alone but integration based on multiculturalism which accommodates linguistic and cultural diversity (Conchas, 2012) has still to permeate the whole system at Camalita Preparatory and Roaine High while Meraska School is dabbling with the correct formula.

The dynamics of integrating rural and township drifters into suburban schools as evidenced by the findings is complex and multi-faceted. Several factors are at interplay at this confluence which is still very fluid. Drifters arriving at the confluence come seeking for a successful future in their struggle for quality education while these suburban schools that admitted them pursue integration against the backdrop of their academic successes. Meanwhile, The Department of Education assumes that it has prepared the groundwork by promulgating policy to facilitate integration. The process of integration at these schools therefore still remains incomplete. My position is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for integration to proceed smoothly at these suburban schools. There seems to be a lack of understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon by all stakeholders. These suburban schools have not considered the social, intellectual and cultural capital of the drifters as well as their academic and professional strength as pathways that could culminate in a new blend that accelerates integration of drifters. Drifters and their parents are in the main quite happy that they are able to attend these schools and are not vocal enough about speeding up integration. The notion that integration has to be re-conceptualised by all stakeholders who come together as equal partners has not struck home yet. Stakeholders seem to play up various factors in the integration process reactively and sometimes emphasise one at the

expense of the others. The DBE on the other hand does not incentivise the process of integration at suburban schools but continues to churn out policies without the will to implement.

My thesis would therefore be that the dynamic of integration of rural and township drifters at suburban schools is dependent on self-developed mechanisms at each of the confluences that draw on and develop the diversity of cultural, social and intellectual capital that all stakeholders have to offer which embraces the broad transformation agenda.

### **7.5 Limitations of the study**

This study has merely scratched the tip of the iceberg. Integration, which is a subset of the transformational agenda, still looms large on the South African educational landscape. It will take many more intensive studies to find lasting solutions and definitive answers to the many challenges faced by all stakeholders at this confluence.

I doubt whether increasing the number of schools or the number of participants would have brought any new or additional data through the data generation process I utilised. What is certain is that if I was able to afford the luxury of doing ethnographic studies at each of these schools for reasonable periods of time, this report would be all that much richer. Work and time constraints as well as a limited budget bounded my study, forcing me to maximise my restricted time spent with the participants and the short experiences of being at these schools. In most cases the appointment for interview with each participant was the only shot I had to generate the data. It would have been difficult to go back for a second interview. Nevertheless, mountains of data were generated through the semi-structured interview process and placed a tremendous strain on transcription, translation, interpretation and finally producing the report. Each school was at first written up on its own and put through the processes of trustworthiness which was time consuming. Afterwards these findings had to be brought together and then distilled into the final presentation and discussion which preceded crystallizing the findings. That part of the work required high intensity engagement for long, long hours which stretched me and the twenty four hour day I had and in the end I was forced to limit the work to the time available.

Not all studies are meant to be generalised but they should endeavour to provide as much information as possible for others to decide to what extent the findings are generalisable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The core of the applicability expressed here are mainly specific to the suburban schools I interacted with. It will be risky to generalise these findings to all former Model C Schools where various factors will come into play that will contextualise their individual circumstances. Be that as it may, the findings allowed me, through my interpretation to produce sufficient points of departure for those willing to accept the challenge of beginning or improving integration in suburban schools. Hopefully all stakeholders and role players involved in education in one way or the other will benefit from new and fresh perspectives offered here while researchers may want to base future large-scale studies on this report.

## **7.6 Putting down the pen**

This study set out to understand what it takes for integration to happen in former Model C Schools. In so doing, the study looked at the contextual background of the fragmented South African education system and the impact of democracy on the aspirations of those disadvantaged by poor education in the past. It went on to trace the outcome of the disappointingly slow pace of transformation in rural and township areas and the birth of a new struggle - the struggle for quality education in South Africa which set in motion the drift to suburban schools. The study culminates at the confluence of drifters and the suburban school where it attempted to unravel the tangled web of integration.

This journey has been exhilarating for me both as a fledgling researcher and a journeyman educationist. How and when the journey of the drifters and the efforts of the suburban schools would merge into a single realisation will be anybody's guess. In the broader matrix of things, it is an ongoing story of the human struggle for liberty and dignity and it has convinced me that in the end it is not laws and policies that will bring about change but the actions of a few good people on the ground who want to integrate what they know and what they have with the have-nots.

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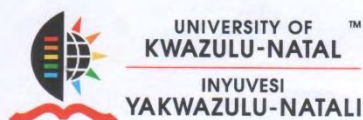
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## APPENDIX 1



16 November 2012

Mr P Naicker (210552184)  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Naicker

Protocol Reference Number: HSS/1220/012D

Project Title: The struggle for quality education in South Africa: How do urban schools seek to cope with learner drifting?

### EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)  
/ms

cc Supervisor: Professor Vitalis Chikoko  
cc Academic Leader: Dr R Mudaly  
cc School Admin: Mrs L Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee  
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa  
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS





## APPENDIX 2



**kzn education**

Department:  
Education  
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8/346

Mr. Perumal Naicker  
24 Rose Road  
Stanger Manor  
Stanger  
4449

Dear Mr Naicker

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **HOW DOES SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP INFLUENCE THE CONFLUENCE OF RURAL DRIFTERS AND URBAN SCHOOLS?**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 January 2013 to 31 December 2014.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following schools and institutions in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education:

- 1.1. [unclear]
- 1.2. [unclear]
- 1.3. [unclear]
- 1.4. [unclear]

2013/05/15

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PRINCIPAL OF SUBURBAN SCHOOL**

#### **Background information**

1. Please tell me about your association with this school- when you started here and where you were previously.
2. Was there a particular pattern for the drift to your school?
3. Have the drifting patterns changed with time? If they have how did they change?
4. Can you tell me how the change from regular urban learners to those also from township and even rural areas started happening?
5. How did the school prepare for this phenomenon?
6. What kind of changes did you notice in things like attitudes amongst the urban learners, teachers and parents?

#### **Handling disparities**

1. How do you deal with the fact that many cultures are now coming together as opposed to a mono-culture in the past?
2. Tell me about programmes that you may have to deal with gaps in knowledge of drifting learners.
3. What did you do about the language gap?
4. Your teachers may have been largely monolingual. How did you handle this?
5. Tell me about some of the major challenges you have had in dealing with some of these differences?
6. Did drifting learners require support of a special nature?
7. What did you do to maintain your school's learner attainment in the face of these new challenges?

#### **Inclusivity**

1. Were there any advantages of drifters arriving here?
2. Is there any way that you use the cultural differences to the advantage of the school?
3. Were you able to bring the parents on the drifters on board here? How?
4. How would you describe your school today in terms of integration of the drifting learners?
5. Tell me about a major cultural or other challenge that you had and how you dealt with it.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: TEACHER**

#### **Background information**

1. Tell me about your arrival here and where you served before this?
2. What was the feeling like when the rural and township learners started drifting in?
3. Can you recall some experiences of drifting learners' responses to you?
4. What kind of challenges did you face in the class in terms of now dealing with multi-cultural learners?

#### **Teaching and learning**

1. What were some of the teaching and learning challenges you had?
2. How did you handle the gap in content knowledge amongst the drifting learners?
3. In what way did cultural differences make a difference to teaching and learning in your classes?
4. How was discipline affected by the arrival of drifting learners? What did you attribute this to?
5. How did you bridge the divide between being a monolingual English speaking teacher who had to teach drifting learners who had a poor command of English?
6. Is there anything additional that you have introduced to assist drifters as a teacher to ensure that learner attainment levels do not fall?

#### **Inclusivity**

1. What kind of programmes are in place to integrate drifting learners into the mainstream?
2. In what way cultural diversity an advantage or disadvantage to integration and teaching and learning?
3. What would you say are the main challenges to you as you face increased numbers of children from diverse backgrounds?

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: LEARNER**

#### **Background**

1. Tell me about your home and how you commute to this school.
2. Tell me about your previous school and the learning experience you had there.
3. What factors made you drift to this school?
4. What process did you go through to gain admission to this school?
5. How was the response from parents, teachers and children to your arrival here?
6. Did your culture have any influence on your ability to learn here?

#### **Integration**

1. What difference did you feel as a learner who left a school where all the learners were of a single culture and then arriving here where a multi-cultural society exists?
2. How did you start socializing with other learners?
3. Were there any challenges to your being accepted by the general body of learners?
4. How are you coping with the rules and regulations of this school?
5. What kind of induction did you receive here?
6. What assistance do you think drifting learners mainly need?
7. What kind of activities do you participate in here?
8. Are you here just for the education or do you feel part of this school and its traditions?
9. How would you describe your relationship with this school?

## APPENDIX 6

### PROVISIONAL OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR FIRST IMPRESSION OF SCHOOL AND BODY LANGUAGE OF RESPONDENTS

Observation of the school and its surroundings on arrival, general impressions and body language of respondents during interviews.

Criteria	Comment
General impression	
Communication	
Work climate, tone of school	
Body language before responses	
Body language during responses	
Body language after interviews	
New issues	

**Elaboration** (Any other relevant information, clarification, puzzles, elaborations)


## APPENDIX 7

P. NAICKER

24 Rose Road Stanger Manor 4490

Telephone: 039 5331015

Mobile: 0845567598

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The Principal

\_\_\_\_\_ School

\_\_\_\_\_

27 October 2012

Sir/ Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL

I am presently studying towards a Doctoral Thesis at the University of Kwazulu Natal. I wish to conduct my research at \_\_\_\_\_ School during the period January to June in 2013 and hereby seek your permission.

The research topic is: **What strategies do urban schools apply to integrate drifting learners from rural and township schools?** The purpose of the research is to study how urban schools cope with the various challenges they face when they enrol learners from rural and township schools.

The study will involve interviews and document analysis. Consent forms will be issued to all participants prior to interviews. School personnel will be interviewed after school hours at the convenience of the interviewee. Document analysis will be negotiated with the school and take place at the convenience of the school.

I wish to reassure of the following:

- Educators or learners will not be identifiable in any way from the research results.
- Participation will be voluntary.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be respected and assured.
- The institution will not be identifiable by name in the research results.
- A synopsis of findings and recommendations will be made available to the school.

I trust that my request will be favourably considered.

Yours sincerely

P. Naicker

**P. NAICKER**

24 Rose Road Stanger Manor 4449

Telephone: 032 5331015

Mobile: 0845567598

---

For attention:

Date:

Sir/ Madam

**LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

I wish to include you in a research project that studies learners drifting from rural and township schools to urban schools. The study wishes to explore and establish the nature of the drift as well as to establish how the school is coping with the drift. The study will be conducted by me as a researcher for a Doctoral Thesis at the University of Kwazulu Natal. My supervisor is Professor V. Chikoko and can be contacted at the university on 031 2602639.

To help me in my research, I require you to participate in an interview with me that will revolve around the reasons for the drift and how learners and the school are handling the situation. The interview will deal with successes as well as challenges to enable me to get a full picture of the workings of your school and its partnership with you.

Only researchers will have access to the information collected in this project which will be kept in locked storage at the university for a period of five years following the completion of the research project. Neither your name nor your school's name will appear in any reports of this research. You will have the right to review any information being used in regard to your participation.

Participation in this project is voluntary and involves no unusual risks to you or your school. You may withdraw from the project at any time with no negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. Your participation in the project will help me develop improved ways in which schools partner with learners and parents that join them from rural or township areas. This may also assist other schools and communities to improve their partnerships.

If you are willing to participate, please indicate this decision on the attached permission slip. In addition, if you have any questions about the research project or would like me to review the information prior to providing consent, I may be contacted at the numbers listed above.

Yours sincerely

P. Naicker

## APPENDIX 9

P. NAICKER

24 Rose Road Stanger Manor 4449

Telephone: 032 5331015

Mobile: 0845567598

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For attention: **Parent**

Date:

Sir/ Madam

### LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I am aware that your child attends \_\_\_\_\_ School. I wish to include your child in a research project that studies how urban schools cope with learners from rural and township schools. The study wishes to explore and establish the nature of the drift as well as to establish how the school is coping with learners from different backgrounds and cultures. The study will be conducted by me as a researcher for a Doctoral Thesis at the University of Kwazulu Natal. My supervisor is Professor V. Chikoko and can be contacted at the university on 031 2602639.

To help me in my research, I require your child to participate in an interview with me that will revolve around the reasons for the drift to urban schools and how learners and the school are handling the situation. The interview will deal with successes as well as challenges to enable me to get a full picture of the workings of your school and its partnership with you. Permission will also be sought from your child before participation and you will have the option of accompanying your child if you so desire.

Only researchers will have access to the information collected in this project which will be kept in locked storage at the university for a period of five years following the completion of the research project. Neither your name nor your school's name will appear in any reports of this research. You will have the right to review any information being used in regard to your participation.

Participation in this project is voluntary and involves no unusual risks to your child, you or your school. You may withdraw from the project at any time with no negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. Your participation in the project will help me develop improved ways in which schools partner with learners and parents that join them from rural or township areas. This may also assist other schools and communities to improve their partnerships.

If you are willing to allow your child to participate, please indicate this decision on the attached permission slip. In addition, if you have any questions about the research project or would like me to review the information prior to providing consent, I may be contacted at the numbers listed above.

Yours sincerely

P. Naicker



## APPENDIX 10

### P. NAICKER

24 Rose Road Stanger Manor 4449

Telephone: 032 5331015

Mobile: 0845567598

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For attention: **Learner**

Date:

Sir/ Madam

#### LETTER OF CONSENT TO LEARNER TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I am aware that you are a learner at \_\_\_\_\_ School. I wish to include you in a research project that studies how urban schools cope with learners drifting from rural and township schools. The study wishes to explore and establish the nature of the drift as well as to establish how the school is coping with learners from different backgrounds and cultures. It will also help me understand how you see the situation. The study will be conducted by me as a researcher for a Doctoral Thesis at the University of Kwazulu Natal. My supervisor is Professor V. Chikoko and can be contacted at the university on 031 2602639.

To help me in my research, I require you to participate in an interview with me that will revolve around the reasons for the drift and how learners and the school are handling the situation. The interview will deal with successes as well as challenges to enable me to get a full picture of the workings of your school and its partnership with you.

Only researchers will have access to the information collected in this project which will be kept in locked storage at the university for a period of five years following the completion of the research project. Neither your name nor your school's name will appear in any reports of this research. You will have the right to review any information being used in regard to your participation. If you wish to, your parent or teacher may be present at the interview.

Participation in this project is voluntary and involves no unusual risks to you or your school. You may withdraw from the project at any time with no negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. Your participation in the project will help me develop improved ways in which schools partner with learners and parents that join them from rural or township areas. This may also assist other schools and communities to improve their partnerships.

If you are willing to participate, please indicate this decision on the attached permission slip. In addition, if you have any questions about the research project or would like me to review the information prior to providing consent, I may be contacted at the numbers listed above.

Yours sincerely

**P. Naicker**

## APPENDIX 11

### REPLY SLIP

I \_\_\_\_\_ designation \_\_\_\_\_ hereby

Grant/ do not grant permission to be interviewed by Mr P. Naicker for research  
that will be conducted at \_\_\_\_\_ School.

PERMISSION GRANTED	
PERMISSION NOT GRANTED	

.....

Signature

.....

Name

.....

Designation

.....

Date

## APPENDIX 12

### Turnitin Originality Report

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#### Turnitin Originality Report

The struggle for quality education in South Africa: dynamics of integrating learner drifters from rural and township contexts into suburban schools by Perumal Naicker

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## APPENDIX 13

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[sathsgovender4@gmail.com](mailto:sathsgovender4@gmail.com)

### Dr Saths Govender

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08 DECEMBER 2014

#### LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

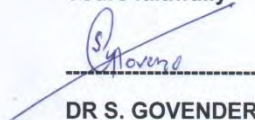
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the thesis titled:

'The struggle for quality education in South Africa: The dynamics of integrating learner drifters from rural and township contexts into suburban schools' by P. Naicker, student no. 210552184.

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the standard of language meets the stringent requirements for senior degrees.

Yours faithfully



DR S. GOVENDER

B Paed. (Arts), B.A. (Hons), B Ed.  
Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers  
MPA, D Admin.