

**Persona Dolls and anti-bias curriculum practice with
young children: A case study of Early Childhood
Development teachers**

by
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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree Master of Philosophy

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Submission: February 2009

Declaration

I the undersigned declare that this work has not been submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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_____ February 2009

Ref: Smith, C. 2009, Persona Dolls and anti-bias curriculum practice with young children: A case study of Early Childhood Development teachers. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Abstract

Anti-discrimination, one of the central principles of South Africa's Constitution and Bill of Rights, is central to the Early Childhood Development curriculum. The anti-bias, or anti-discrimination, approach challenges prejudice and oppression of all kinds and aims to develop self-esteem, respect for diversity, awareness of human rights, and a sense of fairness in all children.

This study examines the use of the Persona Doll Approach as a component of anti-bias practice in order to learn more about the approach, and about how it is used to engage with the realities of bias in the ECD phase of education in the South African context of poverty, and past and present discrimination. The study was conducted under the auspices of Persona Doll Training, South Africa (2003 -). Four hundred and twenty Early Childhood Development, foundation phase and preschool teachers from different socio economic, rural and urban contexts in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, participated in the study. All of the teachers received Persona Doll Approach training, which they then applied in their classrooms. The study adopted a qualitative approach that included teacher questionnaires, observations, interviews and trainer reports, to gain an understanding of how the teachers used the Approach and what anti-bias understandings were reflected in their practice. Vignettes based on observations were constructed to illustrate the application of the Approach. They provide a vivid picture of the classroom situation and atmosphere. Four Anti-bias Goals: Identity and self-esteem, empathy, unlearning negative attitudes, and problem-posing/activist approach provided the conceptual framework for the study.

The findings indicate that the PDA training and subsequent classroom implementation led, to a greater or lesser extent, to improved self-esteem, empathy and the ability to challenge and unlearn discrimination among both the teachers and the children. Thus, the Anti-bias Goals were achieved, at least in the short term. There were also other, unexpected, outcomes. These included proactive activist work by some teachers, positive behaviour changes in children, the emergence of children's voices, and greater appreciation of children's voices by teachers. The study also highlighted teacher's and children's prejudices, and lack of support for teachers as challenges.

Based on the findings, recommendations are made for the development of the PDA, and related training and teacher support, and for further research. The study confirms the value of the PDA approach and provides the motivation for continuing, and expanding, Persona Doll Training - South Africa.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ART	Anti-racism Training
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Programme
DECET	Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EI	Emotional Intelligence
ELRU	Early Learning Resource Unit
EMDC	Education Management District Centres
PDA	Persona Doll Approach
PDT-SA	Persona Doll Training - South Africa
PDT-UK	Persona Doll Training - United Kingdom
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

Dedication

For Helen Robb.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people:

Shirley Pendelbury, my supervisor, for her genuine interest in my work, for her support, and insightful comments throughout the study.

Colleagues in PDT-SA, the PDT-SA trainers and all the teachers.

Babette Brown for her inspiration and generous support.

Peter Fenton and the HIV and AIDS Programme, Western Cape Education Department for their support and belief in the project.

Cate Brown for her generous help, encouragement and for editing.

Jane Bennett, Jaamiah Galant, Cally Kuhne, for their encouragement and input.

Carohn Cornell for research assistance, encouragement throughout and for editing assistance.

Friends and family, and especially Wendy Trupos for her patience, support and encouragement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

1.1 Introduction

The anti-bias approach has enjoyed growing acceptance in the field of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa. Anti-discrimination is one of the central principles underpinning South Africa's Constitution and Bill of Rights and the national curriculum. The emphasis in the curriculum is on developing self-esteem, values, respect for diversity, consciousness of human rights, and a sense of fairness in all children. The anti-bias approach, similar to anti-racist approaches to education, aims to challenge prejudice and oppression of all kinds. In the anti-bias approach, it is not sufficient to be a passive 'non-biased' observer of prejudice; every individual needs to intervene actively to challenge personal and institutional behaviours that perpetuate bias and oppression (Derman-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Task Force, 1989; Derman-Sparks, Olsen Edwards and the Anti-Bias Task Force, in press¹).

In my own work in training ECD practitioners, an abiding passion for engaging with the realities of bias within ECD led me to theories about teaching and learning (including projective identification using Dolls) with ideas about development, bias and discrimination, and classroom practice, all in the context of the need for change. Curriculum policies are in place, but in the past little attention was paid to supporting the implementation of an anti-bias approach. The Persona Doll Approach (PDA) is an example of practical implementation of anti-bias practice in ECD settings. The term 'anti-bias' has been adopted in ECD but 'anti-discrimination'² is perhaps more widely accepted.

I was motivated to pursue this study to examine and develop a practical anti-bias approach, which could impact effectively on ECD teachers' anti-bias practice. The need for this emerged from my experience of ECD policy, classroom, community and

¹ Louise Derman-Sparks kindly made available to me the full text of the revised and updated edition, which is currently in press, to be published in 2009.

² Variations in terminology include, 'anti-discrimination', 'anti-oppression', 'anti-racist' and 'anti-sexist'.

teacher training situations. The question that I investigated was: ‘How do ECD teachers³ use the PDA to address bias?’

In this chapter, I introduce the aims and the motivation for the study. I describe my own anti-bias background and place the study in a South African political, social and educational context.

1.2 Background and motivation for the study

Children become aware of differences in gender, skin colour, language, and physical ability at a very young age. Numerous research studies on the process of identity and attitude development conclude that children learn by observing differences and similarities among people and by absorbing spoken and unspoken positive and negative ‘messages’ about those differences (see, for example, Katz, 1976; Milner, 1983; Aboud, 1988; Glover, 1991; Derman-Sparks, 1992; Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2000; MacNaughton, 2001).

The anti-bias framework may be interpreted as privileging individual psycho-social development, rather than exploring group behaviour and attitudes. The debate rages between the ‘anti-racists’ and the ‘multiculturalists’. The anti-racists criticise the multicultural approach as weak, failing to address issues of group power, and insufficient to counter oppression, while the multiculturalists emphasise the celebration of cultural differences (Creaser and Dau, 1996; Samuels, Sardien, Shefer, 1996; Soudien, 2004). The term ‘anti-bias’ needs to be understood as coming from an anti-oppression and pro-empowerment socio-political context (Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips, 1996).

Biases and negative attitudes and stereotypes about various aspects of human diversity that are prevalent in society can undermine children’s healthy development and impact negatively on their ability to interact effectively with people. The anti-bias curriculum seeks to nurture the development of each child by actively addressing

³ I use the term ‘teachers’ to include all ECD practitioners and educators working with children (learners) four to nine years of age, in community- and school-based ECD settings.

issues of diversity and equity in the classroom and in the broader community. Anti-bias curriculum goals (Derman-Sparks, 1992; in press) aim to foster each child's:

- Development of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity
- Empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds
- Critical thinking and problem-posing about issues of bias
- Ability to stand up for herself or himself, and for others, in the face of unfairness and injustice.

The South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for General Education (Department of Education, 2002a) provides a framework consistent with Anti-bias Goals. The critical cross-curriculum outcomes include Human Rights and Inclusion. The Life Orientation and Literacy outcomes (Department of Education, 2002a; 2002b; 2003) support Anti-bias Goals and include a focus on social justice, human rights, inclusion, and equal opportunities. In addition, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Unit Standards for training ECD practitioners include anti-bias attitudes, values and practices as outcomes (South African Qualifications Authority, 2005; 2007).

The PDA is an anti-bias, active learning approach for adults and children, which addresses prejudice, human rights issues, identity, values and diversity through story and dialogue. It builds on universal storytelling traditions to promote inclusion, address issues of bias and unfairness, and build EI and self-esteem in a non-threatening way. According to Kay Taus, an ECD teacher in the United States, who developed the approach:

They are different because they have individual identities just like children in the classroom do. They have a family, they live in a certain town, in a particular house or apartment building, they have certain friends, and these things don't change (Taus, 1987, cited in Brown, 2001:11).

Persona Dolls are life-like, culturally appropriate girl and boy Dolls (Figure 1) made of cloth. They are given 'personas' or identities, and thus transformed into unique personalities with cultural and social class backgrounds, family situations, abilities and disabilities, fears and interests. The 'stories' that are told about each Doll's life include issues such as racism, gender, HIV and AIDS stigma, social class, poverty, abuse and disability. Interactive problem-posing discussions develop, based on what

has happened to the Doll. In this safe environment children talk about their own identities, life experiences and feelings, and try to assist the Doll in resolving his/her problems. This empowers children to cope with these issues in their own daily lives (Brown, 2001).



Figure 1 Persona Dolls

According to Brown (2001), Persona Dolls represent diverse experiences, they usually visit at a group time, and a friendship relationship is built between each Doll and the group of children. The Dolls are not used as puppets: the teacher relays to the children what the Doll has said without taking on the voice of the Doll. Children are given opportunities to say what they think and feel about the anti-bias and diversity issues raised as part of the Doll's experiences.

The stories build upon each other and the aim is to encourage unlearning of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. The children have an opportunity to relate to the Dolls as ‘friends’ who may differ from them in language, culture and/or disability. In the process they build on their understanding of fairness and unfairness, learn conflict management and problem-facing skills, and are encouraged to feel proud of their families and cultural backgrounds without feeling superior or inferior to others. Children who have been targets of exclusion, bullying and name-calling are supported in developing strategies to deal with these situations. The children are helped to understand the hurt that prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour cause and, crucially, to develop the skills they need to stand up for themselves and others. Children develop self-esteem, are supported if they are the victims of bias, and are empowered to challenge unfairness.

Years of reflection on my experience of ECD, community development, and anti-bias, in the broader political context of South Africa convinced me of the value of Persona Dolls as a simple yet powerful catalyst for action towards change. The actual Persona Doll ensures that anti-bias issues are ‘carried’ into the classroom (like a piece of chalk) and provides a tool or support for action for change. I believe teachers trained in the PDA are more likely to apply their training than those trained in a more general anti-bias approach. Part of the purpose of this study, then, was to provide a systematic account of how South African teachers use the PDA. I hoped to provide evidence to support my belief and to develop a more critical understanding of the enabling and constraining conditions for teachers’ educational use of the Dolls.

1.3 Personal anti-bias background

My anti-bias experience was initially shaped by my work in the Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU), which is based in Cape Town. I worked on ECD policy and curriculum research and developing materials for trainers, teachers and children. ELRU’s anti-bias project began in 1990 and led the South African ECD field at the time in research, materials production and training (Cornell, 2008).

In the mid-1990s I participated in ELRU’s Anti-Racism Trainers’ course (ART). This provided a theoretical framework for challenging oppression of all kinds, and the

opportunity to listen to the hidden experiences of oppression of (mainly) black South Africans. It was appropriate that the ART course took place in the first years of South Africa's transition to an inclusive democracy. The course⁴ was both experiential and theoretical. It was based on the assumption that defining, contextualising and unlearning one's own biases are essential to liberation and empowerment. The course drew on the Visions model (Batts, 1982; Early Learning Resource Unit, 1997) which is based on the concept of 'modern racism' and how it interacts with 'internalised oppression' to continue the oppressive system. The personal and systemic levels of racism and oppression were examined and conceptual tools for change were used, such as elements of transactional analysis.

The concept of anti-bias in ECD brought together my personal political motivation and commitment to challenging oppression, in a focused proactive way. I was introduced to the PDA through the writings of Louise Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989), and through meeting her at the Qhubeka⁵ Anti-bias Conference convened by ELRU in Cape Town in 1996. Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips (1996) presented the keynote paper and the reflections at the end of the conference. This contact increased my awareness of their publications and of the PDA. However, my main exposure to the PDA was through working with Babette Brown in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2000 to 2003, under the auspices of a non-profit organisation, Persona Doll Training UK (PDT-UK). While teaching in the UK, I used the Dolls with three to five year-old children and also trained teachers to use the Dolls. I found the Dolls a useful practical tool for developing human rights awareness, anti-bias, and emotional intelligence. The activist element appealed to my activist inclinations and I saw the potential for using the Dolls in the very different context of South Africa.

On my return to South Africa in 2003, I was struck by the limited number of programmes and practical strategies available to support teachers in anti-bias work. This was particularly disturbing given the recent history of oppression, the need for change and for healing of the past, and the challenges of high levels of poverty and HIV and AIDS.

⁴ The seven-month course consisted of four week-long residential modules, reflection assignments, and a work-based research project.

⁵ 'Qhubeka' is a Xhosa word meaning 'continue or proceed'.

In response to this perceived lack, I developed a non-profit organisation, Persona Doll Training South Africa (PDT-SA), with support from PDT-UK, and began offering Persona Doll training. During this process I drew on my experience of ECD, community development, political activism, anti-bias work and research. I decided to base the project on the PDA, to keep the anti-bias focus clear and make sure it was not obscured by other priorities in the South African context. By 2009, PDT-SA has expanded to most provinces of South Africa and there is now a team of anti-bias trainers who train and support those who are using the PDA: ECD teachers, student teachers and trainers, child care workers, community workers, social workers and occupational therapists. Women in a rural income-generation project make the Persona Dolls, their clothes, their wheelchairs and other equipment.

1.4 Origins of the Persona Doll Approach

As already mentioned, the PDA developed out of the work initiated by Kay Taus⁶ and Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) in the United States, and was further developed by Brown (1998; 2001; 2008; 2009) in the United Kingdom. In the 1980s Taus became frustrated by the lack of ECD resources reflecting cultures other than the dominant ‘white American’ culture. She developed paper Dolls with varying skin tones, gave them identities or ‘personas’, and developed stories about their lives. The stories aimed to capture the imagination and transmit anti-bias values (Taus, 1987).

Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) attempt to address children’s needs in inequitable societies and define an anti-bias approach as an activist approach that challenges all oppressive beliefs and attitudes, behaviours, and social and institutional practices. They argue that in unjust societies where institutional structures create and maintain sexism, racism and other biases, it is not enough to be a ‘non-biased’ observer. Individuals, especially teachers, need to intervene actively in order to challenge the personal and institutional behaviours that perpetuate oppression. Persona Dolls are an activist tool to deal with stereotyping, racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice.

⁶ Kay Taus, a teacher and political activist, was a member of the Anti-Bias Curriculum (ABC) Task Force that wrote the *Anti-bias curriculum: tools for empowering young children* with Louise Derman-Sparks (1989).

The anti-bias curriculum goals outlined by Derman-Sparks *et al.* provide a social justice framework for ensuring effective use of the PDA.

A European ‘Persona Doll: Education without Prejudice’ Project (Brown *et al.*, 1998), supported by a network called Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training (DECET), brought together European diversity ECD organisations. This Project provided a forum for the exchange of theories and practices of anti-discrimination, as well as opportunities for organisations to work together, build trust, and share their expertise in practical ways. The Project included DECET members from Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK. The project uses the PDA to challenge the values, stereotypes and prejudices that underpin racism and other forms of discrimination, and the aim is to develop a European methodology and pedagogy.

The PDT-UK, started by Brown in 1999, developed out of the ‘Persona Doll Education without Prejudice’ initiative. From 2000 to 2002, Brown and I presented all the PDT-UK training. From 2002 the team grew and there are now eight PDT-UK trainers (Brown, 2008). Training, conferences, and materials including DVDs and Persona Dolls, have been offered to trainers and teachers in the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, New Zealand and Iceland. Many teachers, trainers and advisory staff have been trained and the project continues to grow. Recent work at primary school level has brought parents and teachers together to implement inclusion and explore citizenship, while acknowledging difference and language issues. The emphasis is on empathy, communication, respect, unlearning prejudice, and taking action against discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or refugee status.

The PDT-SA Project⁷ (2003 to date) was initiated ten years after the establishment of a full democracy, as South Africa was still emerging from a history of apartheid and oppression. The PDT-SA was to some extent a development from the South African anti-bias initiatives of ELRU, started in 1992 (see Section 1.3). Of South Africa’s post-1994 laws, policies and curriculum initiatives, perhaps the most significant are: the South Africa Constitution and Bill of Rights (1996), which outlaw discrimination on the basis of race, culture, language, faith, gender, sexual orientation, age, or

⁷ Persona Doll Training South Africa is a registered non-profit organisation.

disability; and the NCS for General Education (Department of Education, 2002a) which aims to equip learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing South Africa.

1.5 South African context

One of the challenges for ECD in South Africa is the lack of coherence between legislation, policies and plans (Biersteker and Streak, 2008). The rights framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the South African Constitution, provides the basis for the key legislative and policy commitments and plans for young children⁸. Policy documents such as the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001a), and the White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001b), have also yet to be implemented effectively.

South Africa has just over 18.2 million children; 1.6 million (9%) live in the Western Cape (Proudlock, P., Dutchke, M., Jamieson, L., Monson, J. & Smith, C. (eds), 2008). In 2006 some 68% of children nationally (41% in the Western Cape) lived in poverty in households with a monthly income of under R1200 and about 40% lived in a household where no adult was employed. Leatt (2006) notes the high rate of hunger experienced by children in households with unemployment. In 2000 there were 1,030,473 children enrolled in 23,482 ECD sites (Williams and Samuels, 2001).

The situation of children in South Africa with regard to poverty, HIV and AIDS, and lack of services, highlights the need for interventions including anti-bias. About 12% of the population is living with HIV. Shisana and Simbayi (2002: 45, cited in Porteus, 2004) suggest that 5.6 % of children between the ages of two and fourteen are HIV-positive. Children are also directly affected by the impact on their carers, loved ones, and neighbours (Porteus, 2004). The total number of orphans (maternal, paternal and double orphans) in South Africa is 3,768,000; of these, 198,000 are in the Western

⁸ Others include: the Children's Amendment Bill of 2006; the National Integrated Plan for ECD; the Massification of ECD Concept Document; and the ECD component of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Social Sector Plan. In addition, there is the Concept of ECD centres as Resources of Care and Support for Poor and Vulnerable Children and their Families.

Cape (Proudlock *et al.*, 2008). Richter *et al.* (2006) show that poverty-related lack of access to services, social instability, and overworked and demoralised caregivers, negatively affect children's learning and development. In addition to affecting physical growth, poverty may also reduce or delay psychological development. Deacon and Stephney (2007) suggest that HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination exacerbate the psychological problems that children already experience as a result of poverty and prejudice. In addition, South African society is still characterised by high levels of poverty, HIV and AIDS, prejudice, gender abuse, gender violence and xenophobia (Altman, 2007; Budlender, 2003). Many families live in informal settlements that offer no privacy, are often unhealthy environments, and may subject children to high levels of violence and trauma (Swift and Maher, 2008). Kwalsvig and Taylor (2006) comment: "Most shocking...were reports of rape and incest which came from community health workers and ECD trainers and practitioners" (cited in Swift and Maher, 2008:21). In addition, schools are a common site of crime with high levels of assault, sexual assault, abuse, rape and robbery.

The 96% of South African children (aged 7-17 years) who attend school are not only faced by the possibility of crime and abuse, but also have to contend with high learner (child) to educator (teacher) ratios⁹ of 32.8:1 nationally and 31.5:1 in the Western Cape (Proudlock *et al.*, 2008). Teacher education policies drawn up in an attempt to rectify apartheid inequalities have been criticised as betraying equality ideals (Sayed, 2004) and the changes made have not been effective. Closing apartheid-era colleges of education has reduced costs, but placing teacher education in the higher learning sphere has run counter to international trends favouring school-based training. For example in Malawi, England and Wales more time is spent at schools during training and less at university or college (Sayed, 2004). Fewer ECD practitioners are now being trained and supported, partly because many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have closed due to lack of funding (Chisholm, 2004). Teachers remain demoralised, under-trained, and over-stressed (Richter *et al.*, 2006).

The NCS released by the Department of Education, in 2002 covers ages 5-17 and it includes community preschools and reception classes in primary schools. The NCS is

⁹ In state schools.

concerned with the social, personal and emotional growth of learners, and espouses a vision of individual growth as part of creating a democratic society and improving the quality of life.

The NCS includes elements of human rights, inclusion and respect for difference in the critical cross-curriculum outcomes:

The critical outcomes envisage learners who are able to: identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking; work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation, community; communicate effectively in various modes; demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems and that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation (Department of Education, 2002a: 1).

Anti-bias elements are specified in the Life Skills¹⁰ outcomes for foundation phase learners (five-eight years/Grade R-Grade 3). The Life Orientation curriculum (Department of Education, 2002b) aims to address:

- Health promotion: Knowledge of HIV and AIDS, violence, abuse, safety measures, and environmental health
- Social development: Understanding of diverse cultures and religions, understanding of democratic values, commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, recognising and opposing unfair discrimination
- Personal development: Positive self-concept development and self-empowerment, and opportunities to explore and express feelings.

Jansen (2001) criticises the NCS on the grounds that it does not provoke debate about values, nor does it focus on shifting teachers' values. He asks how teachers can change children if their own values are not transformed. Even although broad 'critical outcomes' were stipulated, they were not crystallised within the Learning Areas, and remain too distant to impact on lesson content. They are broad and open to many interpretations. Jansen also criticises new curriculum implementation for neglecting teacher support generally. A review report (Department of Education, 2000b) has, however, emphasised the need for more support for teachers to implement the curriculum. This study aims to address these concerns by examining the PDA as an approach that can ensure anti-bias lesson content that is focused and specific but also

¹⁰ Life Skills and the PDA in Appendix 1.

open-ended and creative. At the same time, the study highlights the need to encourage teacher awareness and support classroom implementation.

The NQF issued Unit Standards (South African Qualifications Authority, 2007) for training practitioners who work with children up to eight years of age. The different qualification levels¹¹ include the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate inclusive anti-bias attitudes, values and practices in all aspects of the learning programme.
- Children should explore and value their cultural heritage and understand other cultural traditions and ways of life.
- Support children coping with experiences of communal and/or domestic violence and personal trauma (including child abuse and consequences of HIV and AIDS).
- Support children with special needs and encourage them to express their fears and explore issues of personal safety in ways that are appropriate to their level of development.
- Support children's well-being and development in relation to socio-economic factors (poverty, unemployment, inequality, disempowerment, crime and violence, both communal and domestic).

This study¹² is intended to make an ECD curriculum contribution towards the effective implementation of post-1994 South Africa's laws, policies and curriculum initiatives, in an effort to move closer towards the ideals they espouse. The recipients of the PDA training typically have a range of training, experience and skills. They are mainly ECD and foundation phase teachers, with a smaller number of intermediate and senior phase school teachers. Recipients also include: NGO trainers, lecturers, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, child care workers (particularly those working in remote rural areas with orphans, vulnerable children and families), Family and Community Motivators, and student teachers. Racism, gender issues, HIV and AIDS, and sexual abuse of children are common themes, but all forms of prejudice are addressed. Psychosocial support is an important part of the PDA.

¹¹ Anti-bias is incorporated in the fundamental curriculum of Level 4 and 5. Level 5 has an additional anti-bias elective.

¹² Using a diverse, fairly large sample of settings and contexts.

1.6 Research aims and questions

My purpose in this study is to examine the use of the PDA as a component of anti-bias practice, in order to learn more about the approach and how it is used in ECD in South Africa, and in the process to enrich the PDT-SA Project. The question I investigated is:

How do ECD teachers use the PDA to address bias?

The study focuses on preschool and foundation phase teachers trained in the PDA from 2006 to 2007. The study uses teacher questionnaires, trainer reports, observations and interviews to gain an understanding of the following:

- The ways in which the PDA is implemented in different ECD settings
- The outcomes achieved using the PDA in different ECD settings
- The types of issues focused on, for example: gender, racism, and HIV and AIDS stigma
- The variations used, and the successes and challenges experienced, by the people using the PDA.

Sub-questions explored in the study include:

- How are teachers using the PDA to meet anti-bias curriculum aims and learner needs?
- What anti-bias understandings are reflected in teachers' practices?
- What constraints regarding their understandings about children's learning and anti-bias are reflected in teachers' practices?
- What assumptions and understandings emerge about children and anti-bias curriculum?
- How do issues of identity, empathy and problem-posing emerge?
- Which anti-bias issues do teachers address and which do they avoid?
- How has the approach been developed or adapted by teachers?

My unit of analysis is the ECD teacher in the context of using the PDA.

1.7 Rationale

This study is motivated by my belief that teachers can play a powerful role in building an inclusive and fair society where diversity is respected, valued and even celebrated.

My interest in this topic is personal. I experienced exclusion and bullying by other children and by teachers about physical appearance and faith issues at primary school and, a little later in life, I experienced prejudice around gender and sexual orientation. I believe that negative attitudes impact powerfully on children's lives, and that support for targeted children is essential, as is working to reduce prejudice in general.

During the 1980s and 1990s a profound sense of injustice during apartheid led to my ECD work in marginalized communities, and political activist work in women's organisations. This personal experience and commitment to an activist approach to injustice drew me to anti-bias in ECD, and later to the PDA, and this study. My previous anti-bias and teacher training experience has convinced me of the relevance of a study of this nature.

The research question about how ECD teachers use the PDA to address bias is relevant, as the PDA is one of few practical, focussed, anti-bias approaches available to teachers. It has only recently been used in South Africa (Biersteker and Ngwevela, 2002; Buchanan, 2007; Brown, 2008) and is in the process of being further developed on the basis of this experience. This study is intended to contribute to building ECD anti-bias knowledge and practice, and informing the type and format of the training provided to practitioners who work with young children.

My belief (or, loosely speaking, hypothesis) is that the PDA provides an effective, non-threatening and focused practical tool for anti-bias practice. This belief is based on my personal experience of using the PDA with children, and of training and working closely with adults. The ongoing PDT-SA Project meant that I had access to teachers who received PDA training, Dolls and other materials. This allowed me to assess the usefulness of the PDA, and to identify and draw lessons from examples of good (and poor) practice. I hope the study will contribute towards developing training programmes and materials, and assist PDT-SA in motivating for support and resources for extending anti-bias programmes for teachers and children.

1.8 Synopsis of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. In this first chapter I have introduced the aims and background to the study. Chapter 2 considers literature pertaining to four Anti-bias Goals (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989) that constitute the conceptual framework for this study: identity development, self-esteem, emotional literacy, and activist problem-solving for unlearning discrimination. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methods, giving a detailed account of how the PDT-SA Project came into being and how it relates to the study. The methods of data collection and analysis, the sample, and participation levels of the teachers are explained. Chapter 4 presents the results. Questionnaire responses provide a broad picture of how the PDA was used. For a more nuanced and vivid picture of the PDA in action, I present vignettes developed from recorded classroom observations, field notes and in-depth interviews. The discussion of the results in Chapter 5 is organised around the four Anti-bias Goals and additional themes that emerged during the study. In Chapter 6, I conclude by summarising the main features of the study and discuss achievements and limitations. I also make recommendations for the development of the PDA, related training and teacher support, and further research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

My aim with this literature review is to develop a conceptual framework within the anti-bias tradition of enquiry to contextualise my research. I review literature on anti-discrimination in education and previous research that relates to my study. Four key anti-discrimination or anti-bias themes that are crucial to my research questions serve as an organising framework for the review and throughout the dissertation. These are the four Anti-bias Goals proposed by Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989; in press) namely: identity and self-esteem; empathy; unlearning; and problem-posing. These goals or themes are at the core of the PDA and I structure this review around them. I also review literature to provide a background of the education and political situation in South Africa, as motivation and context for the Anti-bias Goals.

I draw selectively on the literature on child development, identity and learning theories, cultural change, and diversity. My primary focus is, however, on the literature that deals with anti-bias education for change. The PDA provides a practical and focused application for Anti-bias Goals (Brown, 2001; Derman-Sparks *et al.*, in press).

2.2 Anti-bias Goals

The Anti-bias Goals and approach should be seen in the context of children's rights (Porteus, 2004). The core understandings of anti-bias education are that all children deserve the best that society can give them, and that social injustice profoundly injures them (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, in press). Systematic institutional inequalities profoundly affect children's lives and their development. The anti-bias approach seeks to respond to this challenge and works towards a vision of equality and justice for all children:

- The right to survival
- The right to develop to the fullest
- The right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and/or exploitation
- The right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

The Anti-bias Goals provide a framework to address the issues of social injustice that apply to all children who do not have access to these rights (Derman-Sparks *et al.*; in press). However, poverty, prejudice and violence shape the lives of all children, those who have access and those who do not; and those who are victims and those who are perpetrators.

There is interconnection and overlap between the four goals but they provide a mechanism for organising the literature review. Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) and the United States Anti-bias Task Force developed the four goals as principles and outcomes to assist children and adults to build a more equal world, where all can feel safe and secure in their many identities (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; in press).

The four goals are:

1. Identity and Self Respect: To nurture each child and each adult: building up a knowledge of confidence, group identity and self-identity that does not involve feeling superior to anybody else.

Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social (group) identities.

2. Empathy: To promote in each child and adult a comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds: this has to do with both information and emotional attitudes and feelings.

Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity, accurate language for human differences, and empathetic, just and caring interactions with people from diverse backgrounds.

3. Unlearning Negative Attitudes: To guide each child's and adult's critical thinking about the various kinds of bias in society: to learn to identify, challenge and eliminate those that are unfair.

Children will develop critical thinking skills about the various kinds of bias in society: to learn to identify, challenge and eliminate those that are unfair. They will increasingly recognise unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

4. Problem-posing/Activist Approach: To help each child and adult to develop the confidence and skills to stand up for herself or himself and for others in the face of unfair, biased behaviours.

*Each child will demonstrate empowerment, and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions. This is an activist goal, to teach that people working together can create change and build a more just community - even in the classroom (Derman-Sparks *et al.*; in press: 41).*

The four goals build on each other to foster a safe, supportive learning community for children. Children cannot construct a strong self-concept if they do not know how to identify and resist hurtful, stereotypical and inaccurate messages or actions directed at them. Furthermore, respect for others requires the skill to recognise and resist bias directed against others. Good anti-bias education happens when all four goals are part of the curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1996).

The African philosophy of Ubuntu is compatible with these goals. “‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ and ‘Motho ke motho ka batho’ are Zulu (and Xhosa) and Sotho versions of a traditional African aphorism, often translated as ‘a person is a person through other persons’” (Ramose, 1999:49). “Essentially, ‘Ubuntu’ means ‘humanity’ or ‘humaneness’. The maxim ‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ articulates respect and compassion for others; it is both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic. It prescribes how we should relate to others” (Louw, 2001:15). The South African Government officially recognises Ubuntu as:

The principle of caring for each other’s well-being ... and a spirit of mutual support... Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual’s humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being (Department of Social Welfare, 1997: Chapter 2).

2.3 The anti-bias approach in early childhood education

Many educational approaches have been used to address bias, prejudice and issues of difference. According to Soudien (2004), the approaches fit broadly into three categories: the assimilationist, multicultural and anti-racist approaches. In an assimilationist approach, power relations are not challenged and the ‘other’ or different group is seen as a “threat to the standards of the dominant group...the dominant group is culturally superior” (Naidoo, 1996:12, cited in Soudien, 2004). Members of the subordinate group are ‘expected’ (whether in a subtle or explicit way) to give up their own identities and culture and acknowledge the superiority of the dominant group. Thus, oppression continues.

According to Soudien (2004), the multicultural approach developed in the United States and the United Kingdom as a response to the oppressive practices, values and assumptions of assimilationism. The multicultural approach (Kiriakou, 1996 in Creaser and Dau, 1996) holds that all people are similar because they share the basic need for water, food, shelter, respect and love, and the difference between them lies in the manner in which they attain these needs (cultures). For multiculturalists, prejudice is the result of a lack of knowledge of the cultures of others (Kendall, 1996) and if people learned about each other's cultures, prejudice would disappear. Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) point out that it is possible to know about another's culture and still think it inferior to one's own. Soudien (2004) points out that multiculturalism has drawn criticism from critics on the right, who argue that it undermines the dominant culture and seeks to introduce inferior standards. Critics from the left, including Derman-Sparks (1989), view multiculturalism as weak, tokenistic, easily trivialised and ultimately racist because it pays "lip service to the rights of the subordinate" and is "a way of continuing to shore up half baked and stereotypical notions of culture" (Soudien, 2004: 96). The so-called respect for other cultures does not address the complex ways that attitudes are developed. Children are often exposed to cultural artefacts, food, music, clothing and 'celebrations' from cultures other than their own, but without developing understanding of the values and beliefs that inform these, or of the everyday experiences of members of that group. Such an introduction to other cultures easily leads to stereotyping and misunderstanding, and is sometimes referred to as "tourist curriculum" (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989:63). Critics also argue that focusing on cultural differences, rather than commonalities and/or the unequal power relationships that exist between groups, increases bias and discrimination.

The multicultural approach has also been criticised for being tokenistic¹³ and leading to stereotyping of particular cultural groups (Glover, 1991). According to Burgess-Macey and Crichlow (1996), the approach may in fact damage rather than raise the self-esteem of people and reinforce stereotypes. While the multicultural approach has enjoyed some success where the cultural differences between children are small, it has been much less successful (and possibly damaging) where there are considerable

¹³ Examples of tokenism include: providing one black Doll among many white Dolls; or confining diversity to a notice board of 'ethnic' images; or making only a single book available on one culture while there are many available for the dominant culture.

cultural and language differences (Brown, 2008). This is because it tends to ignore, not only the power relationships in society that determine how cultures and languages are valued or devalued, but also the impact of these values on children's ideas about themselves and others. It does not adequately deal with why, how and where children learn racist behaviour (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; Kendall, 1996) or how that behaviour may be changed for the better. However, despite its shortcomings, Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) maintain that multicultural education was an important step forward in that it recognised the fact that children grow up in different contexts that should be included and respected in the classroom. The multicultural approach is also significant for beginning to promote positive attitudes to diversity and challenging bias.

Carrim and Soudien (1995) note a trend of foregrounding multiculturalism in some South African schools and highlight the need for an additional approach that is sensitive to dealing proactively and positively with differences, within anti-racist approaches. Carrim and Soudien (1995) advocate "critical anti-racism" which is alert and sensitive to multiple expressions of identity. Critical anti-racism tries to move away from the stereotyping of whites as racist and blacks as victims. This is important in South Africa where there are complex racist scenarios between and among blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians. Critical anti-racism encourages the development of non-stereotypical senses of identity, and takes into account the actual ways in which people experience their lives. However, most studies conclude that thus far in South Africa, integration has followed an assimilationist route and not an anti-racist one (Soudien, 2004).

Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips (1996) provide the background to the anti-bias approach, which developed from anti-racist origins in the US after the civil rights struggle of the late 1950s and 1960s. Legal racial segregation had ended, but racism albeit more subtle, continued along with other forms of oppression, and power relationships based on race, gender and class were maintained. The US anti-bias approach recognises one of the weaknesses of multicultural education: that it ignored the power relationships in society that determine how cultures are valued or devalued. It also ignored the impact of oppression on children's development (Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips, 1996). Anti-bias is a proactive, activist approach that should be

integrated into existing curricula rather than added on as an extra, as was often the case with multiculturalism. To be effective, the approach should be applied to all aspects of education, from curriculum guidelines and regulations, to the ways teachers interact with and teach children (Samuels *et al.*, 1996).

According to Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips (1996), the name ‘anti-bias’ was chosen for two reasons: firstly, ‘anti’ highlights the need to challenge and unlearn prejudiced behaviour; and secondly, ‘bias’ incorporates the full range of ‘-ism’ issues. Anti-bias widened the focus from race and culture to include all elements of prejudice, with an emphasis on unlearning prejudice and empowering all children. Racism, racial exclusion and bias are addressed, but so are discriminations on the basis of gender, disability, sexual orientation, physical and mental health, or social class, and the interconnections between these oppressions (Samuels *et al.*, 1996).

What distinguishes the anti-bias approach from many other educational approaches is the fact that it considers biases that affect the individual as well as those that are targeted at a social group. Bias is often deeply entangled with institutional, legal and organisational matters of everyday life, and the messages about different groups contained in pictures, films, legal judgements and other discourses, can be significant contributors. Anti-bias aims to bring into consciousness these messages, and to develop (alternative) possibilities of behaviour at different levels (Aboud, 1988; Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips, 1996).

2.4 The Persona Doll Approach

Kay Taus (1987) developed the PDA as a tool to prevent young children developing prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour, and to help them unlearn existing negative attitudes. Today, the PDA is used in the US (Taus, 1987; Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1998; in press), the UK (Brown, 1998; 2001; 2008; 2009), Australia (MacNaughton, 1997; 1999; 2000a; 2001; 2007), and in some European countries, particularly Denmark (Brown, Harris, Egedal and van Keulen, 1998), Germany (Brown *et al.*, 1998), the Netherlands (Brown *et al.*, 1998) and Iceland (Ragnarsdóttir, 2002), as well as in South Africa (Smith, 2006; Buchanan, 2007; Brown, 2008).

As explained before, Persona Dolls are small friends (Brown, 2001) who visit the children and share stories about what is happening in their lives. These stories introduce discussion of potential problems and difficult situations. The Dolls give children opportunities to think flexibly and critically, and encourage their ability to problem-solve and to develop empathy and a sense of fairness. Originally, paper and cardboard Persona Dolls (Taus, 1987) were used to represent children, but these were gradually replaced by large (about 70-cm tall), soft Dolls made of cloth. Persona Dolls mimic humans. They are male or female, with differences of skin colour, hair and facial features; some wear spectacles, some use wheelchairs; and others are able-bodied. The Dolls are relatively easy to make¹⁴ (Smith, 2006) and can be made by volunteers and by businesses. In many ways they are similar to other dolls.

The power of the PDA lies not in the Dolls themselves but in how they are introduced to, and used with, children. Persona Dolls are given identities and personalities. Taus originally intended that the Dolls would reflect the physical characteristics, identities, lifestyles and circumstances of the children in her classroom. They would have a family and friends and live in a specific area in a specific house or apartment, and their identities would not change any more than for real children (Taus, 1987).

Establishing a relationship between the children and a Doll is the first phase of the PDA (Brown, 2001). This is done by developing a dialogue that explores similarities and differences between the children and a Doll, as well as opinions and feelings about the Doll and what is happening in the children's lives. Once the children have a relationship with the Doll, issues or themes relating to equality are introduced through stories about the Doll's experiences. The stories may be based on classroom realities or on broader issues in the community. These open-ended, interactive, problem-posing sessions allow children the space to express their feelings and thoughts about the Doll's problem, to empathise, solve problems, and develop an activist attitude around diversity and injustice (Brown, 2001; 2008; Derman-Sparks *et al.*, in press).

Phases of a typical PDA session (Brown, 2001):

¹⁴ PDT SA provides instructions and a pattern for making a cloth Doll.

1. Build the relationship between the children and a Doll.
2. Introduce issues or themes relating to equality through stories about the Doll's experiences.
3. The children empathise and share their own feelings and thoughts about the Doll's problem, as well as their own problems, which may be related.
4. In the problem-posing, interactive phase, children are encouraged to think critically and develop an activist attitude to unfairness and injustice.

In common with many other anti-discrimination interventions, the PDA is grounded in the belief that children are not born with negative attitudes and values, but learn these and can unlearn them. Numerous studies have shown that children learn by observing differences and similarities among people and absorbing spoken and unspoken positive and negative 'messages' about those differences (Katz, 1976; Milner, 1983; Aboud, 1988; Glover, 1991; Derman-Sparks, 1992; Siraj-Blatchford, 2000; MacNaughton, 2001).

The underlying assumption of the PDA is that challenging prejudices will bring about unlearning and reduce discrimination and the damaging effects, not only on those who suffer discrimination but also on those who discriminate. Any intervention to reduce discrimination is of interest to those who care about equality and the reduction of prejudiced attitudes. However, as Brown (2001) points out, there is a lack of research on the use of Persona Dolls. Thus, the question of whether the PDA is effective in combating discrimination has not yet been satisfactorily answered. It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of the PDA, but I will examine the limited research that exists on its use and efficacy.

MacNaughton (1997) led the Australian Equity and Social Diversity research project, using Persona Dolls to explore two questions. Firstly, what did four and five year-olds know about race, class and gender? Secondly, did the use of Persona Doll stories to positively introduce equity and social diversity issues change what they knew? Children were interviewed and asked semi-structured questions. Four Persona Dolls were used:

- Shiree, a girl from Aboriginal Australian background

- Willie, a boy from Vietnamese-Australian background
- Tom, a boy from a poor Anglo-Australian background
- Olivia, a girl from a rich Anglo-Australian background.

The children were encouraged to play with the Dolls, play activities acted as icebreakers to keep conversations going and gave the researchers opportunities to tell stories about class, race and gender. The research focused on comparing and exploring the similarities and differences between the silences and voices of Anglo- and Vietnamese-Australian children, aged four to five. Silin's (1999) view that silence can signal resistance as well as oppression, and words can conceal and transform as well as reveal the truth in our lives, proved useful in the study. The research showed that the children knew more about social diversity than was expected. For example, one girl knew a lot about the 'stolen generations'¹⁵ and was aware that there is more to being Aboriginal than skin colour. However, most of the Anglo-Australians' understandings about Aboriginal Australians were misunderstandings, and many knew little about Aboriginal experience and culture. Nearly half saw white skin a "normal, lovely and best". Some of the Anglo-Australian children actively rejected or were afraid of Shiree: they did not want to talk to her, play with her or even look at her. Their discomfort and rejection was mainly conveyed through meaningful silences, or refusal to hold or touch her. This is consistent with the research of Aboud and Doyle (1996), which showed that white children are often negatively biased against black children.

The Vietnamese-Australian children mainly self-identified more with Olivia and Tom than with the Vietnamese-Australian Doll (Willie), even though they commented on skin and face colour as the main difference between them. They remained silent about their reasons. In contrast, Anglo-Australian children commented on Olivia's lightness of skin colour and described her face as "lovely like mine", while Willie was seen as "not Australian" because he did not have white skin. Kim, a Vietnamese-Australian girl, blushed and looked down when she identified Olivia as looking most like herself. Her blushes suggest that she was aware the researcher knew that she knew she did not

¹⁵ The 'lost generations' were Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families and placed in white Australian homes or institutions.

look like Olivia (MacNaughton, 2007). According to MacNaughton (1997; 2007), the following emerged:

- The most powerfully remembered stories and Dolls are those that link with the children's existing knowledge base.
- Gender is an important factor in how the children pay attention and remember¹⁶.
- Children have complex understandings of equity and social diversity issues and can be helped to build respect and challenge unfairness through the Dolls and their stories.
- Teachers and families need to nurture white children's identity and social emotional development so that they resist false notions of racial superiority and entitlement.
- The PDA is a powerful approach. The Dolls excite children and fascinate adults. This provokes and encourages conversation and exploration of equity understandings of themselves and others.
- It is important to use the PDA with skill and sensitivity. Commitment to fairness and respect is essential.

The following questions (MacNaughton, 2000a) are posed for reflection:

- Some young children sort people by skin colour rather than gender or clothes. Why do some children not do this?
- What makes skin colour so prominent in children's classifications?
 - Were the Anglo-Australian children showing bias?
 - Why was Shiree the most rejected Doll and Olivia the only one described as pretty?

These questions are relevant to future South African research on the approach but were outside the scope of this study. Relevant themes in MacNaughton's research have been drawn on in Brown's research (2008; 2009) and in this study.

¹⁶ Tom's (boy Doll) stories were remembered by 83% of boys and 69% of girls (69%); Willy's (boy Doll) stories were remembered by 56% of boys and 46% of girls; Olivia's (girl Doll) stories were remembered by 69% of girls and 39% of boys (MacNaughton, 2000).

Brown (2008; 2009) evaluated whether Persona Doll training and Persona Dolls enable local authorities and individual schools, universities and colleges in the UK to comply with anti-discriminatory legislation and their curriculum equality requirements. Questionnaires were completed and interviews conducted with foundation stage and primary (key stage 1 and 2) staff, college and university lecturers, and local authority teams who had attended PDT-SA courses, organised or facilitated the training, and/or bought Persona Dolls.

The findings revealed that United Kingdom teachers are reluctant to work with the Dolls on anti-bias issues, but those that do are satisfied with the results. Many of those who used the Dolls reported on the children's spontaneous and whole-hearted responses and their empathy with the Dolls (Brown, 2008), which they themselves found motivating. Teachers appeared to lack confidence to deal with anti-bias issues and needed additional support after training. The issues least likely to be addressed through the Dolls were homophobia, immigration, ageism and social class. The teachers preferred emotional development scenarios: for example, addressing feelings of exclusion that a child might experience when a new baby is born.

Teachers maintained that children showed empathy and active support when the Dolls were unfairly treated, thus supporting the activist Anti-bias Goal (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989, in press). Local authority teams considered the PDA and the training a non-threatening and fun way to equip teachers to approach anti-discrimination (Brown, 2008). Overall, the study found that teachers wanted to develop their equality work with the Dolls (Brown, 2008).

McClements (2004) explored the use of Persona Dolls as an intervention to address discrimination in one infant school in the UK. Views of teachers and children (aged 3-6) towards the Dolls were explored and conclusions drawn about how the Dolls were used and how well the children related to them. The study drew on interviews, observations and questionnaires. The school had a diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures. The children were mainly of white British, Caribbean and Turkish origin. The teachers were all white British women except for one Turkish woman and one black male teaching assistant. The children in the study were positive towards the Dolls and showed fondness towards them. Many were able to describe the

background of the Dolls and recalled stories they had heard about the Dolls. Children were aware of differences and some children, white and black, showed a preference for the white blonde Doll. Some white children avoided talking about skin colour, and avoidance was less evident in black children. Black children also showed preference for the white Doll. They also appeared to have learnt to be selective about the differences they mention.

McClements found that from the point of view of the teachers, the main purpose of the PDA was to address issues that came up in class, as well as personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum topics. The teachers had not addressed racism with the Dolls and felt that racism was not an issue at their school. Half the teachers felt the PDA was useful in their work with children. Some difficulties, which may be linked to insufficient training, were reported (for example, not keeping the Doll's identity constant). Only one teacher had received external training in the approach and some had received no training at all. The lack of training and lack of common understanding about how to use Persona Dolls could also account for their reluctance to use the PDA for anti-bias issues. This also had implications for how well children related to the Dolls. McClements argues that teachers need to be committed to tackling discrimination and fully trained in the use of the PDA if it is to be an effective intervention. Teachers' perceptions of discrimination amongst children and teachers' personal beliefs would be suitable areas for future research.

Cook's (2004) United Kingdom action research project sought to find out what the benefits were to teachers and children of introducing Persona Dolls. Seven mainly rural, white, early childhood settings were included in the study. Support staff worked with the teachers. Teachers introduced stories based on incidents of discrimination and skin colour was discussed as an issue early on, but there was little evidence of gender being addressed. Cook found that teachers were very positive and valued the ongoing support that the project brought. The support staff also valued the project, which built their own skills. However, teachers reported difficulties when PDA sessions were too long and when there were too many children in the group. Some teachers also found it difficult to affirm children's existing knowledge and hesitated to deal openly with and extend the children's contributions, for example about

Traveller¹⁷ issues. Teachers said the children reacted enthusiastically to the Dolls and showed great empathy with them. The children also wanted to offer solutions and strategies to help the Dolls with their problems. The study underlines the need for more support for teachers so that they can use the PDA with confidence to help children unlearn negative attitudes. This is a complex area and needs sustained commitment. Recommendations include a specific focus on questioning and storytelling skills, and regular 'circle time' where issues are routinely discussed with the class. It was noted that research time was needed to develop authentic personas for the Dolls.

In South Africa very little research exists on anti-bias or the PDA. Biersteker and Ngwevela (2002) studied how children aged 4-6 understand and experience the anti-bias playroom. The study made limited use of Persona Dolls in four community-based preschools. The anti-bias approach did impact on children's and teachers' behaviour and what emerged strongly was the capacity of young children for empathy and problem-solving when they were asked to reflect on issues. When their contributions were really listened to, they gained confidence. In addition, the teachers who were trained in the anti-bias approach became more conscious of their personal attitudes and made changes to their teaching practices.

Buchanan (2007) used an emotional literacy framework to examine the potential of Persona Dolls for developing emotional literacy in Alexandra, Johannesburg. The presence of emotional material was assessed, in terms of emotional adjectives used in Persona Doll story sessions with preschool children. The five goals of emotional literacy training, as identified by Steiner (2002), were attained to some extent. She also found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the teacher is key to the success of PDA in developing emotional literacy. If the teacher is unable or unwilling to facilitate good communication and motivate honest self-disclosure among the children, then the efficacy of the PDA is compromised. Buchanan (2007) found that in some instances, the Dolls were used to transmit conclusions that the teacher had already drawn. I have drawn on emotional literacy and EI literature linked to Anti-bias Goal 2 to focus on this aspect of the PDA.

¹⁷ Community issues of Travellers, sometimes known as 'Gypsies'.

The literature review that follows will focus on the four Anti-bias Goals, which I use to explore themes related to identity, self-esteem, diversity, empathy and emotional intelligence, and activist unlearning.

2.5 Anti-bias Goal 1: Identity and self-esteem

2.5.1 Introduction

This section examines the development of the identity of self and other. I discuss theories of how children learn, in relation to the development of pre-prejudice and self-esteem, as encompassed in Anti-bias Goal 1: Identity and Self-esteem.

2.5.2 Early learning and identity development theories

Much early childhood learning theory is based on Piaget's theories (1977), which were later formalised and included in the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) framework or approach to early learning (Bredekamp, 1992). DAP is integrally linked to the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Katz (1982) about children's learning patterns, but it also draws strongly on Piaget. Piaget argued that children could only profit from external information when their cognitive level of development was ready to assimilate it. In this sense, development explains learning and not *vice versa*. Piaget described learning as a self-directed process, with the child actively constructing meaning and learning from what is provided, and the teacher acting as a guide supporting exploration and experimentation. Teachers should allow the 'natural' child to unfold. Critics of Piaget argue that he underestimated children as they learn much earlier than he thought, and that he saw language and thought as separate, only coming together when the child is about 11 years old.

Central to Vygotsky's (1978) theory is that both language and thought develop through social interactions. People participate in activities over time, build cultural and social knowledge through interaction, and thus form human knowledge. Vygotsky maintained that children construct their knowledge by interacting with others who have more or different knowledge, whether parents, peers or teachers. Play facilitates social interaction between the child, peers and adults, and helps the child to create

meaning from experience within a shared cultural framework. Vygotsky agreed with Piaget that children need to be developmentally ready to learn, but he differed about the role of teachers. According to Berk and Winsler (1995), Vygotsky saw the teacher's role as that of a mediator who provides experiences within 'the zone of proximal development'¹⁸, in other words, experiences which are challenging but achievable with guidance.

Katz (1982) maintained that children construct their identity and attitudes through the interaction of three elements: experience with their bodies, experience with their social environments, and their cognitive developmental stage (Katz, 1982). Child-centred early childhood curriculum incorporates liberal humanism and emphasised the importance of the self and individual development and achievement (Alloway, 1995). The goal of a child-centred pedagogy is to develop the individual child. The DAP (Bredekamp and Rosegrant, 1992) aimed to provide an approach and learning goals appropriate for different age levels and individual patterns of learning and development. The approach emphasised the individual in a child-initiated learning environment, although it also paid attention to individual and cultural variation among the children.

Identity development

Early childhood learning theory assumes that identity learning resulted primarily from modelling and social reinforcement. This view is based on sex role socialisation theory, which assumes that people learn gendered behaviour through indirect as well as explicit teaching (Cohen and Martin, 1976). These theorists suggested strategies including adult modelling of behaviour to encourage the development of non-sexist behaviour in children. Those caring for young children were advised to create physical and social environments that use non-stereotypical materials, activities and resources. This was to allow the children to 'soak up' social justice and anti-bias messages.

¹⁸ Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' is the distance between what a child can accomplish on her/his own, and what is achievable with the help of an adult or more competent child. It is in this dynamic space that learning takes place.

Hekman (1991) maintains that children uncritically absorb what is offered to them and take up the understandings of gender, race, class and other aspects of society, that their teachers, peers and parents offer them. He uses the metaphor of 'social dupe' to suggest that children can be duped into learning what society wants them to learn. This implies that children's identities can be controlled through the social messages provided to them.

MacNaughton (2000b) challenges the notions of identity formation put forward by Cohen and Martin (1976) and Hekman (1991). She does not agree that children are "sponges" who "soak up" their social environments. She argues that children acquire a unified and coherent identity from their social world, as they receive many messages about what is 'normal' given their gender, 'race', class and ability. The theories of Cohen and Martin (1976) and Hekman (1991) fail to recognise children's capacity to be selective about the meaning they use to construct their identities.

MacNaughton provides evidence to support her views through a study designed to change gendered play patterns in girls, which drew on the theories of Cohen and Martin. MacNaughton describes how Edna, an early childhood teacher, believed that children could build a new gender identity through observing and absorbing the anti-sexist social messages she gave them. She increased the non-stereotyped materials and activities and reduced those that reinforced traditional gender stereotypes. However, the girls negotiated their own way and took their own decisions about how they wanted to be as girls: they were not 'duped'. MacNaughton argues that, if the girls were simply absorbing all the messages given to them and adapting their behaviour accordingly, they would not have resisted their teacher, or been able to decide what to do when presented with contradictory expectations about social diversity. Edna's alternative strategy included introducing gender rules and a badge system to encourage girls to play with blocks. This achieved better results but she still struggles with having to play such a powerful role, which goes against her long-held DAP beliefs.

The anti-bias approach initially situated itself in a DAP structuralist learning theory framework (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989) but later Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (1993) moved away from the DAP. MacNaughton (2000b; 2005) challenges the notion that

an anti-bias approach fits into existing educational philosophies such as the DAP. She argues that the anti-bias approach fits in better with post-structuralist theories, which emphasise the importance of interaction and dialogue between teachers and children. According to MacNaughton (2000), the DAP's 'natural unfolding' approach to learning (Piaget, 1977) is also at odds with interventionist or activist approaches to sexism and racism (such as the anti-bias approach), which often require direct adult intervention. Approaches such as the DAP tend to restrict the teacher's role to that of creator and curator of the 'right' environment. MacNaughton's Edna Study shows that this approach is not enough to influence change that promotes equity and justice.

MacNaughton (2000b) offers two theories of young children's identity development as alternatives to the 'duping' and 'sponging' theories discussed in the previous section:

- Alternative 1: Identity formation as a dialogue
- Alternative 2: Identity formation as a narrative.

Alternative 1: Identity formation as a dialogue

The central metaphor for identity formation becomes dialogue rather than mirroring: the self is defined by gaining voice and perspective and known in the experience of engagement with others (Gilligan 1988:17, cited in MacNaughton 2000b).

MacNaughton (2000b) argues that dialogue in the context of identity development is an active process of talking with others, listening to them, and being listened to by them. She maintains that through this dialogue children learn how to respond to others without losing who they are; they find out who will care for them and under what conditions; and they learn who they are and who they can and should be. At the same time the others show who they are. Thus, through a dialogue with their social world children can learn to distinguish the personal self from others, and at the same time find a way of being that shows their social self to others. MacNaughton's theory gives teachers a strong role in assisting children's identity formation through a highly interactive process between the child and the adult. MacNaughton (2000b: 27) raises some important questions about how this theory could be of practical use in anti-bias work:

Whose voices and perspectives are present in the group?
Whose voices and perspectives are silenced, marginalised or trivialised?
How might we give voice to all the children in the group?
Who directs the dialogue?
What do we create dialogue about?

MacNaughton's approach is consistent with that of Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989, in press) who focus on an activist, interactive dialogue, which emphasises the teacher's role in anti-bias programmes.

Alternative 2: Identity formation as a narrative

The telling of one's own story...is inherently a creative process by which a situated narrative of identity is constructed (Gherardi, 1996:188, cited in MacNaughton, 2000b).

In this view identity is learned through several interrelated processes, including storytelling, playing roles, critiquing performances and being critiqued by others. Identity is not merely absorbed but has to be worked at with others in a process of active engagement. MacNaughton (2000b: 28) raises further questions:

What stories are narrated in our group?
What repertoire of stories do individual children have?
Who is active in narrating stories?
Who are the spectators in the group?
What stories do the spectators critique and how do they do this?
Whose stories are silenced, marginalised or trivialised?
How do children tell their own stories?
How might storytelling contribute to the formation of anti-bias identities?

MacNaughton (2000b: 28) highlights a number of themes that emerge from a post-structuralist terrain of identity formation, including:

There is not a fixed, coherent immutable gender (or 'race' or...) identity to be learnt.
The child is an active player in identity formation, but not a free agent.
The child does not receive messages through one single process.
The child seeks her/his messages from a highly controlled marketplace of ideas.
Interaction with others is central to forming identity.

The challenge in ECD is to change the approaches to identity formation and the curriculum practices based on rigid, underdeveloped or simplistic understandings of the relationships between the child and her/his social world. MacNaughton argues that

if this does not happen, the anti-bias curriculum will not be able to protect or transform children's identities.

Dolls and identity development

It is the Persona Dolls, each with their own identity and 'life experience', that set the PDA apart from other anti-bias approaches. The Dolls can be very powerful in eliciting responses from children, whether positive or negative, and need to be chosen and used with care to ensure that their impact is positive (Brown, 2001:13):

The physical and visual presence of the Dolls heightens their involvement with the stories and the issues that arise. The Dolls we select, how we present them, and the stories we create, can positively influence children's identity formation.

Any doll can have a persona and stories woven around it (Brown, 2001). For instance, commercially available and famous dolls such as Barbie and her boyfriend Ken have complex personas and near-human life stories, and a wide range of dolls is now sold under the 'Barbie' brand. However, there is considerable controversy about whether the Barbie Dolls offer young girls positive images and/or extended identity options. On the positive side, for example, Astronaut Barbie was the first female to go into space, in 1965, and Surgeon Barbie made her appearance in 1973 (MacNaughton (1997). On the negative side, MacNaughton (1997) argues that the Barbies represent strong sexual stereotyping, and a privileged elitist view of life. They contend that the Barbies' world presents boys and girls with images of women as sex objects who get what they want through grooming and glamour.

MacNaughton (1997) explored how children make sense of identity options using Barbie Dolls¹⁹, in one-to-one interviews with four to five-year olds and observing free play sessions where a large bag of Barbies was placed in a block play area. The girls rarely used a Barbie for dramatic story lines and most of their play was based on story lines suggested by the packaging. For example, Shopping Barbie had to stand up, hold onto the trolley and push it. MacNaughton identified an increased concern with appearance and grooming behaviour among the girls, suggesting that they had

¹⁹ In 1996 there were 600 million Barbie Dolls in the world. It was estimated that by 2000 the global Barbie population would have exceeded the population of India, based on the number of Barbies sold daily around the world (Carafella and Adams, 1996; cited in MacNaughton, 1997).

adopted the Barbies' image. The girls also interpreted any failure to make Barbie 'work' properly as their fault for not following instructions carefully enough: they mistrusted their own stories and actions with the Barbies. For the boys, the Barbies' bodies, not their clothes, were important in determining play. They undressed them and used their naked forms as dolls, guns or batons. Many boys found Barbie breasts funny and naughty. In MacNaughton's view, the boys' responses indicated that they adopted an identity option for women and girls that was defined solely by their bodies. She noted that the female bodies quickly became objects to be held and laughed at, and that harassing girls and sexual innuendo were defined as a source of friendship and pleasure for boys. It is interesting that MacNaughton recommended that Barbies become part of ECD centres so that staff could use them to discuss and critique options with young children, to assist girls to become more critical consumers of Barbie, and to expand boys' understanding of how female bodies should be valued.

Brown (2001) maintains that Barbies should not be used for Persona Dolls as they limit children's opportunity to explore a wide range of identity options. She strongly recommends that dolls intended for use as tools for identity development in anti-bias contexts should portray a range of realistic human features, rather than someone's idea of perfection or a negative stereotype. The PDA, and the Dolls used, communicate high expectations of each and every child: their right to be proud of their culture, their skin colour, and identity. The Dolls also offer support to those who experience negative attitudes (Brown 2001).

Self-esteem

The languages that children speak, their sense of identity and their self-esteem are closely linked (Tizard and Hughes, 1984) and build early feelings of trust and security. Erikson (1951, cited in Eggen and Kauchak, 2008) maintained that it is never too late to build this trust by ensuring loving and secure relationships. Erikson's psycho-social theory (Eggen and Kauchak, 2008) is an attempt to integrate personal, emotional and social development. He works from the assumption that development of self occurs in stages as a response to needs, or psycho-social challenges or 'crisis'. According to Erikson, challenges met successfully at each crisis (in each stage) result in an inclination to be trusting, independent and willing to take initiative. Successful

resolution of crises would therefore leave people with a firm identity and positive self-concept. Erikson identified three to seven years of age as the stage when children develop initiative and creativity; by the age of 12-15 months children start to express feelings, and that is when shame and doubt could begin to develop.

Repacholi and Gopnik (1997) observed the responses of 18-month-old children to broccoli and biscuits, and found that the children realise that other people's desires may be different to their own. At the age of five or six, children can understand that a person's facial expression may not represent true feelings. According to Eggen and Kauchak (2008), children from about three onwards demonstrate independence, decision-making and problem-solving, together with the capacity for conscience. A positive sense of self is essential for initiative and curiosity to develop fully, along with social relationships. Tizard and Hughes (1984) showed that when young children feel safe and have built a sense of trust, they are ready to interact and communicate with others. They learn language best when they talk with adults about things that interest them, rather than being taught specific words or phrases or being asked questions.

Mosely (1993) defines self-esteem as the inner picture we have of ourselves and the value we give to our strengths and weaknesses. Adults who have a significant role in a child's life help to shape that child's self-esteem from an early age. Praise, affection and encouragement assist the development of self-esteem. Sound self-esteem helps a child to be successful in school life and to be confident to learn new things. Low self-esteem results in children (and adults) feeling useless, incompetent and unpopular, and as a result they have trouble making friends, and are not able to do their best.

Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2000) argue that children's perceptions of themselves and their level of self-esteem are an important factor in how they respond to situations of prejudice. Members of a group of children exposed to racism may respond differently. For example, in the United Kingdom there are black and minority ethnic children who fail at school and drop out, whereas others are confident and academically successful in spite of the structural and interpersonal racism in society (Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2000).

Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips (1996) stress the importance of nurturing children and adults and building confidence, group identity and self-identity in ways that do not involve anyone feeling superior or inferior to anybody else. Brown (2001) maintains that if children have a strong sense of self-worth and a secure cultural identity, they are more likely to stand up for themselves when discriminated against, and more likely to stand up for others experiencing discrimination.

This section has focused on issues relating to Anti-bias Goal 1, identity development and self-esteem, and the use of Persona Dolls in relation to identity development. The next section considers themes encompassed by Anti-bias Goal 2, which relates to empathy and interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.

2.6 Anti-bias Goal 2: Empathy and diversity

2.6.1 Empathy and diversity

Empathy is the capacity to recognise or understand another's state of mind or emotion (Mayer *et al.*, 2000). It is often characterised as the ability to put oneself into another's shoes: to put yourself emotionally in the place of another (Brown, 2001). Empathy is closely related to compassion but does not necessarily imply compassion, as it can be present in the context of either compassionate or oppressive behaviour. The ability to empathise depends on the ability to feel one's own feelings and identify them (Brown, 2001). Children are more likely to empathise if they feel good about themselves: empathy and self-esteem are closely linked (Mosley, 1993). Empathy implies that one is receiving emotional information about another person and the situation (Mayer *et al.*, 2000). This process of getting to know another person's experience on an emotional level leads to identifying similarities between one's own feelings and the other person's, and between one's own basic emotional needs and theirs. When one realises that someone else's basic emotional needs are similar to one's own, it is more possible to relate and empathise with the other person.

There is some controversy about whether or not young children are capable of empathising. Piaget (1977) maintained that young children are egocentric and cannot empathise or see the world from another person's viewpoint. He demonstrated through the application of a series of tasks that the children were not able to decentre:

they were not yet able to think about people other than themselves in relation to the tasks. Margaret Donaldson (1978) disagreed with Piaget's conclusions and demonstrated that the ability to decentre is not dependent on a child's developmental stage but rather on how the tasks are presented. She maintained that children did not do well on Piaget's tasks because the tasks were unrelated to their knowledge experience. When presented with tasks related to their knowledge experience (what they already knew or had experienced), in an appropriate context, the children tended to perform far better. Dunn (1993) observed that young children, even toddlers, recognise and respond to the feelings of others, and can be supportive, concerned, intimate, humorous, deceiving or teasing, and can deliberately try to upset other people. Brown's (2001) experience with the PDA supports this view.

Tizard and Hughes (1984) showed that young children (aged four) have a well-established curiosity about and concern for other people:

Interest in other people - both children and adults - was a characteristic feature of most of the children in the study and manifested in many different topics: their friends, other members of the family, growing up, birth, illness, death, what people did for their living, and so on. It is worth remarking on the breadth of the children's interests and the complexity of the issues that they raised (Tizard and Hughes, 1984:128).

Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) suggest that the uniqueness of every child should be emphasised so that they realise that differences between them are special and positive. Accordingly, the second Anti-bias Goal is to encourage children to feel good about their own culture while at the same time empathising and respecting other children and cultures. Educational conditions should encourage children to know and value their own identities and cultures, without needing to feel superior to anyone else's. Through learning about each other and appreciating their diversity, children recognise that teasing, harassing and abusing one another is unfair and hurtful.

Brown (2001) cites Raundalen (1991:7) who argues that the people who are admired and looked up to generally have more caring and empathetic personality characteristics than those who are despised and condemned for their lack of humanity (Brown, 2001:1). Brown (2001) cites Oliner and Oliner (1988:3) who offer a hypothesis that the altruistic personality exists: that is, an enduring predisposition to act selflessly on behalf of others, which develops early in life. This hypothesis was

confirmed by a study that interviewed 406 non-Jewish people who had rescued Jewish adults and children during the Holocaust. Characteristics that emerged included: rescuers' parents depended more on reasoning than physical punishment; parents held caring and respectful values; an awareness of injustice; and altruism that had been integral to their lives long before the war.

A study by MacNaughton and Davis (2001) of 'conversations' with children revealed that most Anglo-Australian children's understandings about indigenous Australians were misunderstandings based on beliefs that 'they' had lived a long time ago, and were strange or exotic in some way. The study also found that very simple conversations with children could reveal much about their understandings of equity, social diversity and race. The study concluded that Persona Dolls, their stories and the conversations can illuminate the diverse and complex understandings young children construct about their social worlds. MacNaughton and Davis (2001:6) also looked at the role of the 'other' in classrooms. They argue that the desire to identify who we are by seeing ourselves as separate from and different to 'others' is linked intimately to the process of 'othering'.

Derrida (1976; 1978), cited by MacNaughton (2005:81) takes a post-structuralist view and argues that the majority of western languages rely on the pairing of opposites to produce meanings. Thus, in any pair the meaning of one word is enhanced by the presence of its opposite: male/female, adult/child; thin/fat; white/black; rich/poor; straight/gay. Commonly, the two words in a pair are not of equal status: one has higher value and is more privileged than other. This privilege usually mirrors the cultural standard of normality in that society. Identity and difference are intertwined. Identities of opposites (adult/child; black/white) are constructed through differences that produce cultural standards of abnormality and superiority. Practices of inclusion and exclusion rely on these binaries, the cultural standards they produce, and the identity differences that they establish. These differences can be used politically to exclude or to 'other' particular groups of people (MacNaughton, 2005:81). Derrida argues that the 'other' is not only socially constructed but is often repressed and/or silenced. For example, countries grant rights to citizens and not to non-citizens (asylum seekers, refugees). In apartheid South Africa the dichotomy was between 'white' and 'non-white' with white clearly seen as superior (Soudien, 2004). In a

feminist post-structuralist interpretation MacNaughton (2005:85) argued that the binaries, for example girl/boy and masculine/feminine, are “constructed, maintained and policed” in the ECD classroom. She highlights the gender implications of this.

Davies (1989) argues that if the dualism of the male/female binary were to be rejected, and people were free to position themselves in terms of their abilities and interests independently of their gender, and were free to move and dress as they pleased, then more people would emerge who did not fit into the male/female dichotomy. She argues that male children should not have to be ‘masculine’ nor female children ‘feminine’, and suggests that teachers should challenge the binary and free children to just be children, rather than to be strictly gendered.

MacNaughton (2005:99) engages with the way Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) use the metaphor of a ‘tourist’ curriculum for tokenistic approaches to diversity. Children would ‘visit’ a culture for a day or a week in the classroom and then ‘return home’, thus showing the dominant culture as home and ‘normal’ and ‘othering’ the different culture. MacNaughton (2005) and Soudien (2004) advocate attending to this ‘other’ in education as an ethical and anti-oppression position:

Discrimination relies on ‘othering’. Learning to attend to what is being ‘othered’ in daily classroom texts forefronts the dynamics of discrimination and the points at which it can be challenged (MacNaughton 2005:92).

2.7 Children’s voices

The most critical voices that are silent in our constructions of early childhood education are (those of) the children with whom we work. Our constructions of research have not fostered methods that facilitate (us) hearing their voices (Cannella, 1998:10).

Relatively little work has been done on the ideas, perceptions and experiences of children under eight years of age, or their responses to early childhood programmes, although in the last decade several researchers have emphasised the importance of such information (Bernard Van Leer Foundation, 1999:3) and the fact that only children can provide it (Johnson *et al.*, 1998). There is quite a groundswell of interest in what children have to say about services that affect them. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) puts forward a vision of childhood in which children have a right to participate actively in their own learning, while at the

same time acknowledging the challenges inherent in hearing and interpreting what young children have to say.

Biersteker and Ngwevela (2002), in their study on ECD anti-bias in South Africa, emphasise the importance of listening to children's voices. They report that young children showed a strong capacity for empathy and problem-solving on issues, some of which were presented using Persona Dolls. The children were serious, keen participants in the process, gained confidence, and developed their capacity for concern and responsibility.

In a United Kingdom study, Clark (2000) explores the different 'languages' young children use to communicate their perspectives. Observations, interviews and other participatory techniques such as transect walks and photographs, were used to understand how three- and four-year olds perceived their day care service. The study found that listening is an active process, involving not only hearing but also interpreting and constructing meaning of what young children do and say.

Part of the reason that children's views on their own education have been marginalised lies in the inherent difficulties of obtaining and interpreting those views. There is clearly a need for age-appropriate methodologies to capture children's opinions. Delfos (2001) raises several questions about the interpretation of information from children, such as:

- Is what children say reliable?
- Are children too easily influenced to say what their audience wishes to hear?
- Are their responses to fictionalised situations a reflection of their actual experience, understanding and feelings?

Delfos explored these questions in a study of four- to six-year old boys and girls. She found that by combining playing and talking, and using dolls and stories, the children were led into flights of fantasy, which revealed meaningful insights. Her success in combining discussion, Dolls' stories and play is similar to MacNaughton's (1997; 2001; 2005). Delfos provides age-related guidelines on the rules of conversation, and evidence that young children are not as suggestible or unreliable as they have been

made out to be.

There is evidence that ‘fictional’ accounts do represent actual lived experiences, and that children identify strongly with the characters. Clacherty and Associates (2001) were able to distinguish when children were relating from their own experience and when they were engaging in storytelling behaviour, by observing when they shifted from the more direct relating of real experience to storytelling conventions and different voice tones. MacNaughton (1997) believes that Dolls, their stories and the conversations they initiate can, and do, illuminate the complex understandings that young children construct about their experiences. She emphasises the importance of using Dolls with skill and sensitivity and combining the storytelling process with listening respectfully to children. MacNaughton emphasises the importance of the teacher’s role and suggests that success in helping children learn to respect diversity and unlearn unfairness is more likely to be achieved when teachers:

- Ask children what they know about social diversity
- Allow children time to reflect on the issues under discussion
- Are patient in seeking answers to their questions
- Develop conversations with the children by exploring the reasons behind the responses they provide
- Prepare the children for small group discussion
- Evaluate progress.

MacNaughton also raises several questions about using Persona Dolls to achieve equity through dialogue and stories:

- Whose voices and perspectives are present in the group?
- Whose voices are silenced, marginalised or trivialised?
- How best can all children in the group be heard?
- How do children experience engagement with each other?
- What forms of dialogue are possible within the group?
- Who directs the dialogue?
- What is the dialogue about?
- Would questions reinvigorate teaching?

MacNaughton's questions, as they relate to this study, are further explored in the discussion in Chapter 5.

2.7.1 Emotional Intelligence

EI is defined as the set of abilities that accounts for how people's emotional understandings vary in their accuracy, and how the more accurate understanding of emotion leads to better problem-solving in an individual's emotional life (Salovey and Caruso, 2000). EI is the ability to perceive and express emotion, and to understand, reason with and regulate emotion in the self and others. It has to do with the intersection of emotions and cognition. Emotion interacts with cognition when good moods lead to positive thoughts. EI theory relates to anti-bias as it refers in part to "an ability to recognise the meanings of emotions and to reason and solve problems on the basis of them" (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, cited in Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2000: 400).

When Gardner (1983) introduced the theory of Multiple Intelligences, he identified five kinds of intelligence: linguistic; logical-mathematical; musical; bodily kinaesthetic; and, personal. Personal intelligence includes experiencing and admitting to feelings, being able to control them, self-motivation, and establishing and maintaining social relationships. The concept of personal intelligence encompassed the concept of EI and paved the way for later theories of EI and emotional literacy (Gardner, 1983, cited in Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2000:398).

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) identified four branches of EI:

1. Emotional identification, which involves perceiving and encoding information from the emotional system
2. Emotional facilitation of thought, which involves processing emotions further in order to improve cognitive processes with the aim of solving problems
3. Emotional understanding, which involves the cognitive processing of emotion
4. Emotion management, which concerns the control and regulation of emotions in the self and in relation to others.

Steiner (2002) sees EI as helping people, including children, explore, understand and

articulate their feelings. Children with good EI are able to convert confusing and often frightening emotions into words, which makes the emotions more manageable. Being in touch, and comfortable, with one's feelings aids good decision-making, and encourages greater control of moods and impulses. Emotion and motivation are interrelated: one needs strong feelings to be strongly motivated. People are also more likely to learn when they are motivated, and more likely to feel motivated to learn when they feel good about themselves. Feeling good about oneself is about emotional well-being, knowing who one is and where one fits in. Emotionally intelligent people know how to manage their feelings in order to communicate with others in a positive and appropriate way. They tend to be good listeners, able to understand another's point of view, and are able cope effectively with other people's feelings. Developing respect for others is central to social competence.

Steiner identifies five main skills at the centre of emotional literacy development:

1. An ability to recognise one's own feelings and to identify the emotion being experienced;
2. Empathy, which includes the ability to recognise other people's feelings and the emotions they are experiencing;
3. An ability to manage emotions by talking about them
4. An ability to recognise mistakes and rectify them, which involves taking responsibility, and asking for forgiveness and/or making amends
5. An ability to interact emotionally, which implies the ability to tune in to the feelings of other people, sense their emotional states, and interact with them appropriately and effectively.

A South African study (Buchanan, 2007) investigated the impact of Persona Dolls on emotional literacy and EI in a preschool setting and measured change in Steiner's five main skills among the recipients. The study found that the preschool teacher initiated more emotional material than the children, and used a significant number of both helpful and obstructive questions. The teacher tended to be directive and did not always facilitate good communication and motivate honest self-disclosure. Questions influenced the children's responses unduly, and were used to suggest conclusions that the teacher had already drawn. The teacher did not make use of all the opportunities presented to reflect on the emotions that she or the children were feeling. However,

the five goals of emotional literacy training, as identified by Steiner, were achieved to some extent.

Ginnis and Ginnis (2006) outline ways in which stories contribute to children's EI. They suggest that stories provide:

- Personal awareness (What am I like in comparison to others?)
- An understanding of how relationships function
- Models of behaviours, both good and bad, in a whole range of situations
- An understanding that all behaviours are choices and choices have consequences
- A view of how communities (such as families and friendship groups) operate: the importance of give and take; of social responsibility; of agreed rules; and of routines
- Insights into major human themes such as conflict, trust, betrayal, loyalty, justice, greed, honesty, power, love, hate, guilt, happiness and sadness
- A catalogue of recognisable and named emotions and feelings
- The beginnings of a wider worldview and a better understanding of human nature.

2.8 Anti-bias Goal 3: Unlearning

2.8.1 Early awareness of difference

Children become aware at a young age that differences in colour, language, gender and physical ability are connected with privilege and power. They learn by observing differences and similarities among people, and by absorbing spoken and unspoken positive and negative 'messages' about those differences (Katz, 1978; Milner, 1983; Aboud, 1988; Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; Glover, 1991; Palmer 1986; Glover, 1991; Harper and Bonanno, 1993; Siraj-Blatchford, 2000; MacNaughton, 2001).

According to Milner (1983), by the time children are two years old they notice differences in skin colour, and between the ages of three and five they attach value to skin colour and create a hierarchy that places white at the top and black at the bottom. Milner also maintained that by three years of age children can understand what is 'fair' and what is not.

Goodman (1946) argued that black children were more aware of 'racial' differences than were white children. This view was supported by a 1947 experiment that used dolls to examine racial attitudes (Clark and Clark, 1947). Black children were asked to choose between black and white dolls in response to questions designed to measure their racial awareness and identification. When asked to choose "the doll that looks like you", a disproportionate number (33 %) of the black children chose a white doll.

The Clark and Clark results may have been a product of their times. In a more recent study, undertaken in Australia, Glover (1991) demonstrated that children aged two to three noticed and commented on skin, hair and eye colour and hair texture. They also used racial features to identify and classify themselves and 'same race' preference predominated when the children selected dolls. The value or judgements attached to the racial characteristics were not overt, although two of the participants refused to hold hands with a child of a different race and never chose different 'race' dolls or pictures. However, other studies, also in Australia, have demonstrated that young children do attach negative value or judgements to racial characteristics. Harper and Bonanno (1993:28) reported that four-year olds from rural South Australia made negative racial comments such as "You're the colour of 'poo'" and "Rack off wog, we don't want to play with you".

Racial differences are, of course, not the only differences connected with privilege and power. There is some discrepancy of views as to the exact age that children begin to express gender-aligned behaviour and opinions, although all researchers agree that it is at a young age. Milner (1983) demonstrated that, by four or five, children not only engage in gender behaviour defined by socially prevailing norms, they also reinforce it among themselves without adult intervention. Weinraub (1984) found that two-year old boys tended to behave in ways traditionally associated with the 'male' role and reject qualities that they had learned to associate with the 'female' role. In contrast, girls often saw 'male' roles as being more interesting and exciting, and behaved in ways associated with both roles. Dunn (1993), in a study of the development of gender discrimination in ECD, concluded that from the age of three a child makes clear distinctions between gender roles and chooses to play with traditional gender-specific toys. Connolly (1994) maintained that both the ability to discriminate according to gender and the ability to ascribe male or female

‘appropriateness’ to behaviour, roles and possessions evolves early in life. He also illustrated that racist and sexist behaviour are closely linked. Through observations and interviews with five- and six-year old boys he showed that they had already learnt that to be what they considered real boys, they had to be competent at sports, especially football. In competitive and public situations they often felt disappointed, frustrated and angry, and some white boys resorted to racist name-calling if they felt they had lost face (Connolly, 1994).

MacNaughton (2007) uses Persona Dolls to explore prejudices and discriminatory attitudes among young Anglo-Australian children. She found that 40 to 50% of the participants viewed white skin as ‘normal’, ‘lovely’, ‘best’ and ‘Australian’. She believes that the sexist and racist power relationships that she observed in Australian children would also be evident in other societies where sexism and racism are prevalent.

Baldwin’s gender research (1993) also indicates that many young children from heterosexual families have learned prejudice against lesbian and gay lifestyles and use homophobic language.

There seems to be little research into discrimination on the basis of disability in the early years. Reiser (1990) suggests that discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities have not been generally challenged because such attitudes are so deeply rooted that most people are not even aware that they have them. Reiser believes that researchers are too scared to confront their own deep-rooted prejudices to engage in this area. Autobiographical accounts of being a disabled child (Reiser, 1990) offers valuable insights into this form of prejudice: “It was the indirect avoidance of me, the whispering, the staring looks that I couldn’t hit out at, that were (by far the most) damaging. I was not often allowed to forget my body, being the butt of jokes and jostled and pushed in corridors or on the stairs.”

2.9 Anti-bias Goal 4: Problem-posing/activist approach

Activism for social justice arises for many reasons and the choice to actively seek social justice and equity is both deeply personal and politically inspired (Freire,

1972). Central to activism within education has been what Freire calls the process of “conscientisation”, a developing consciousness that has the power to transform reality. Conscientisation moves a critically reflective stance on educational work towards action for social justice and equity through, *inter alia*, “critical meaning making”.

Freire (1972) argued that all education has social and political consequences and that it is each teacher’s responsibility to be involved in social transformation. Collaboration between teachers and children develops through confronting real problems: this is a “problem-posing approach”. This is in contrast to traditional education, which Freire described as a kind of banking where teachers deposit of information that children receive, memorise and repeat. He suggests an alternative approach where teachers reflect critically on the social consequences of what they teach; work against the inequalities and injustices that children face in their daily lives; and work for the empowerment of each and every child.

Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989, in press) maintain that activism is essential for anti-bias practitioners, and that it begins with the self and facing one’s own biases before asking others to do the same. Thus, it is essential that anti-bias practitioners embrace the same anti-bias objectives that they set for children, and work together with the children to achieve these. Soudien (2004), like Derman-Sparks *et al.* (in press) sees the teacher’s role as central to the success or failure of an anti-bias or anti-racist approach. It is vital that teachers are able to connect with others with similar values and goals locally, nationally and internationally, in order to develop their own self-confidence and to benefit from the support of a knowledgeable, empathetic group. These informed, empathetic, and equitable relationships with people different from themselves will strengthen teachers’ abilities to think critically about oppression in all forms, and to act in the face of injustice against others and themselves.

In my view, ECD provides an invaluable opportunity to redress some of the biases of the older generation, and to transform unequal relationships of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability and age. Successful intervention, however, requires that teachers engage in critical reflection about their own lives and place in society “thinking deeply about what I do and why I do that” (Katz, 1996, cited in MacNaughton

2005:14). This involves taking account of the motivation for their choice of a particular action from among an infinite number of possible actions, an awareness that there will always be more questions than answers, and mindfulness of who may be advantaged or disadvantaged by their chosen action.

Gender research (MacNaughton, 2000b) indicates that providing positive role models, encouragement and space is not enough to produce change, but instituting gender rules and a more proactive anti-bias approach produces results.

Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989) argue for an activist, proactive anti-bias approach: thinking critically and deepening understanding of concepts of fairness and unfairness for children and adults to encourage caring about others, empathy, and action if they are discriminated against or if they witness discrimination. This relates to the four Anti-bias Goals.

This literature review contextualised the research within an anti-bias and anti-racist approach to bias and oppression. As a conceptual framework for the review I used the four Anti-bias Goals, which represent the core elements of the PDA. I related these goals to theories about child development, identity and learning, and education for change, as well as literature, which focuses on the PDA as an anti-bias and research tool. I made links between the work of other researchers and my own research question: How do ECD teachers use the PDA to address bias?

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the process I followed to assess the manner in which ECD teachers use the PDA to address issues of anti-bias.

I examine the use of the PDA as a form of anti-bias practice in order to learn more about the approach, and how it is used in ECD in South Africa. Using a case study approach, I investigate the question: How do ECD teachers use the PDA to address anti-bias? I focus on preschool and foundation phase teachers to explore the way they used the PDA, the types of issues they addressed, their anti-bias understandings and assumptions, and their successes and challenges.

I describe: the research design; the sample and setting; the instruments used for data collection; the data collected; and the methods used to analyse the data. I also include a brief section outlining the pilot study, which assisted in developing the instruments.

My own experience, over many years, in the fields of ECD and anti-bias work has been crucial in guiding this research²⁰. Strauss (1987) highlights the importance of experiential data in qualitative research and argues that pertinent data may be lost if experiential data is not valued and acknowledged. Experiential data includes the researcher's technical knowledge, research background, and personal experiences in and knowledge of the field.

Thus, my research was guided and enriched by personal knowledge, experience, beliefs, values and attitudes to the social world, and how it should be understood and studied (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). I am committed to supporting equity and fairness for all people regardless of gender, sexual orientation, culture, language, skin colour, faith or no faith, and social class. Throughout the process of the study I have consulted and listened to teachers, trainers and project colleagues. Because of my leading position in the Persona Dolls project, I filled multiple roles during the course

²⁰ Personal background is provided in Chapter 1.

of the study and in the activities leading to it. I was project organiser, facilitator, trainer, field-support person, researcher and participant observer. Inevitably, social research involves issues of power and research reports are authored by raced, gendered, classed and politically oriented individuals (Rossman and Rallis, 1998). Issues of power may be even starker in cases where the researcher is also the project leader. In order to make the research process more transparent, I provided feedback to teachers and received feedback from them, kept a record of notes taken at support meetings, kept a journal, and kept records of one-to-one discussions, field notes and personal correspondence. Ultimately, the findings of this study should be evaluated in relation to the context in which the research was done.

3.2 Research design

The study aimed to provide a detailed picture of how teachers used the PDA in ECD settings, and to document issues and outcomes of the PDT-SA programme on the sample. I used a qualitative case study design that, as is typical of such designs (Marshall and Rossman, 1999) incorporates a range of methods including interviews, observations, document analyses, and a small quantitative survey (of issues raised by teachers). I use the quantitative survey data and the data analysis to look at the incidence of equality issues or themes encountered by the ECD teachers. I also give an overview of PDA implementation issues and a broad picture of children's and teachers' responses to the PDA, including changes in children's behaviour reported by teachers.

The case study focused on teachers' use of the PDA, in the context of formal ECD settings in the Western Cape, South Africa. This work forms part of a country-wide PDT-SA Project, which makes use of the PDA with older children in the intermediate and senior phases of general education, as well as in social work, community work, and occupational therapy.

I chose this case because it brought together a varied group of teachers and thus had the potential to illuminate different classroom and different anti-bias and contextual themes. I hoped these themes would be relevant to the project's future development in a range of formal and non-formal ECD and other situations. The case included: a

range of children, from four to nine years of age; urban and rural communities, the three main Western Cape languages; various types of schools (reception classes attached to primary schools, community-based ECD classes, and primary schools); and teachers with varied levels of teacher training.

The contained case study group could be accessed in the future for support and further training if needed. In addition, I believed that learnings from the case study would be of value to both formal and non-formal groupings. These learnings would help to shape the future impact of the PDA. On a pragmatic level, the case was accessible as the resources and relationships were in place to offer the training and materials, and the project could support the research study. In addition, I worked on the assumption that the support and approval of the Education Department would add weight to the PDA, and motivate over-subscribed teachers to participate in the new approach.

An ethnographic study or discourse analysis could have provided an in-depth description of the group and revealed insider perspectives, but not an overview highlighting diversity and variations. I explored using action research but realised that the project would not have the resources to sustain this approach. I hoped that a case study would help develop the project and thus in the long term empower many more teachers.

I chose ECD as learning theories and the literature generally suggest that this is the most appropriate level for this type of approach²¹. My personal experience using the PDA with young children, and in training teachers, confirmed this. The study showed that adults also benefit.

As the PDA is a new approach, the first step was to share the concept and provide initial training for the teachers. This helped to develop the teachers' awareness of equality and anti-bias issues. I have therefore tried to incorporate the teachers' feelings and opinions into this study.

²¹ I have had personal experience (not referred to in this study) showing that older children can also benefit from the approach.

3.2.1 Credibility and trustworthiness/validity and reliability

To ensure credibility and dependability of the data and my interpretation, the research design included methodological and source triangulation (Creswell, 1994): more than one method and multiple sources of data were used.

The questionnaire was piloted and feedback used to develop the final questionnaire used in the study.

I presented a sample of data from the questionnaires data sample to a research colleague who assisted by doing a pre-analysis of this limited group of questionnaires. She provided feedback that assisted with the analysis, and confirmed the themes that later emerged. The research colleague assisted with the interviews. She had not met the teachers before or performed a training role and thus provided a different, possibly more objective, perspective. Researcher bias was also reduced by critical reflection on the data with the help of the research colleague, and participants were asked to confirm data. Participants varied in the degree and form of their participation in the study (see Table 1).

Table 1 List of participants and level of participation

Teachers and Trainers	Level of participation:
Mandy	Interviewed, confirmed transcribed data.
Verna	Observed, interviewed.
Gonda	Observed, interviewed twice, confirmed. transcribed data, commented on drafts of analysis.
Shahida	Observed, interviewed twice.
Thandi	Observed, interviewed
420 ECD teachers from Cape Town Metropoles East, Central, South and North; West Coast; Overberg/Winelands and South Cape/Eden Karoo	420 participated in the training programme; 124 completed questionnaires; 420 gave feedback in the follow-up training sessions.
Five PDT-SA trainers (including myself)	Reported on teachers' feedback from training sessions, informal conversations and correspondence.

3.2.2 Research ethics

I obtained ethical clearance for the study from the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Research Committee and I followed the UCT Ethical Committee guidelines throughout the study.

My research proposal provided a detailed account of how I gained permission and access to the teachers. In order to protect confidentiality, only my supervisor, my research colleague and I have had access to the information collected. The participants and the schools have been given fictitious names to protect their identities and these fictitious names will be retained in any publications or conference presentations resulting from this study.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Sample and setting

The sample consisted of ECD foundation phase and preschool teachers in the Western Cape who had received PDA training during 2006 and 2007.

The teacher selection for the training took place within a PDT-SA Project (from 2005, ongoing) which is provided in partnership with the HIV and AIDS Programme of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). This is one of many sub-projects run by PDT-SA²².

WCED staff undertook the selection process, using guidelines provided by PDT-SA. These guidelines recommended that the teachers selected should:

- Be foundation phase or preschool ECD teachers
- Have a passion for inclusion of all children, and for supporting children around difficult issues such as HIV and AIDS stigma, bullying, racism and sexism, and should be interested in using creative ways to accomplish this
- Commit themselves to provide feedback, and to share the approach with colleagues.

²² Other PDT sub-projects include: PDA training and materials to teachers from other provinces in South Africa; training of trainers in ECD organisations; and training of student teachers; child care workers; FCMs; occupational therapists, and social workers.

Apart from providing the guidelines, PDT-SA had no control over the selection process as the Education Management District Centres (EMDC) staff and schools selected the teachers independently.

The ECD teachers who were selected taught children from Grade R (Reception) to Grade Three in rural and urban schools from all seven EMDCs in the Western Cape. In total 30 teachers per EMDC district per year were included in the sample, making a total of 420 teachers over the two-year programme.

The EMDC districts²³ are:

- Cape Town Metropole East (Khayelitsha)
- Cape Town Metropole Central (Southern Suburbs, City Bowl)
- Cape Town Metropole South (South Peninsula, Mitchell's Plain)
- Cape Town Metropole North (Northern Suburbs)
- West Coast (Paarl, Malmesbury)
- Overberg /Winelands (Worcester)
- South Cape/Eden Karoo (George, Oudtshoorn).

The teachers spoke the main Western Cape languages: Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. The teachers were all women: this was not unexpected as ECD is an historically women-dominated field. According to Porteus (2004) 99% of ECD teachers and practitioners in South Africa are women.

I assumed that the teachers would have varied training levels, ranging from ECD NQF Level 4 to Level 5 or Diploma level, and that most would have no previous anti-bias or diversity training. I also assumed that there would be some diversity of culture, faith, sexual orientation, ability and social class in the training groups. These assumptions were based on information received from the WCED when the project was negotiated, as well as personal knowledge of the ECD field. Brief group discussions with the teachers at the beginning of each first training session confirmed these assumptions.

²³ In 2008 eight EMDCs were newly demarcated.

All the teachers in the sample agreed to participate in the research and give feedback, through a questionnaire, to the PDT-SA Project. All received PDA training, materials and Persona Dolls to enable them to implement the approach. The training consisted of two initial sessions (Sessions 1 and 2), followed by a six to eight week implementation period to allow teachers to use Persona Dolls in their classrooms, and ending with a feedback session (Table 2). Training venues were located as close to the schools as possible. The course programme focused on personal awareness as well as how to use the approach with children (Training Programme and suggested ground rules: Appendix 5).

Table 2 Training and Persona Doll Approach implementation process

Phases	Explanation
Training Sessions 1 and 2	Training in consecutive weeks, after school hours, at a local venue; provision of materials (Manual and DVD) and Persona Dolls.
Implementation	Feedback to colleagues; create persona/s with colleagues; plan and facilitate PDA Sessions (single lesson or series of lessons) after Training Session 2.
Training Session 3	Feedback on implementation; discussion; return questionnaire.

I presented all the Session 1, 2 and 3 training during 2006. During 2007 a team of three experienced anti-bias trainers, whom I had trained in the PDA, presented training, ran support sessions and collected the completed questionnaires (Session 3). These part-time trainers are part of the PDT-SA Project.

Each school was supplied with a minimum of two Persona Dolls. Implementation involved using the PDA twice a week in lessons on the life skills curriculum. The training encouraged teachers to use the PDA to address classroom issues they had already identified, to cover curriculum themes, and to be proactive and raise anti-bias issues. Teachers were given a period of six to eight weeks to implement at their school and PDA lessons were to take place at least twice a week in each class.

Implementation of the PDA with children at their schools involved²⁴:

- Feeding back about the PDA to colleagues
- Meeting as a group with colleagues to develop the persona of a Doll
- Planning how to store the Doll when it is not visiting a class and how to share the Doll among classes
- Keeping a record of the persona and story sessions
- Planning sessions linked to the Life Skills and other Learning Programmes
- Planning the introductory visits and then further sessions/lessons using the Persona Doll.

All teachers were requested to complete the questionnaire after training and after implementing the approach in their classrooms. All the questionnaires received were used in this study. The teachers to be interviewed and/or observed were selected from the same sample.

3.3.2 Access and permission

I recognised that dealing with ‘gate-keepers’ to obtain permission and access was crucial in order to undertake this study. From past experience I realised how difficult it can be to gain access for research or training purposes to teachers working in state schools. To overcome these difficulties, I first approached the WCED curriculum staff in 2004 with the concept of a PDA Project (see the timeline in Table 3). I decided to pursue a partnership relationship with the WCED, and to use an overt, informed consent approach to the study.

The WCED protects teachers’ contact teaching time with children, and will only approve courses that enhance or complement WCED curricula. However, since the PDA is consistent with life orientation curriculum guidelines, this did not present a problem (see Appendix 1).

²⁴ Some teachers took implementation further by involving parents, colleagues in other education phases, their families, and their faith groups.

Table 3 **Timeline: Project and research process**

2004	Information meetings, anti-bias and PDA advocacy with WCED and HIV and AIDS Programme staff, permission and agreement on a pilot project business plan and part funding from the WCED.
2005	Pilot project and curriculum planning; presenting the training; developing the instrument/questionnaire.
2006	Presenting PDT-SA in all seven EMDCs of the Western Cape; planning research study; negotiating permission; recruiting and training additional PDT-SA trainers; refining instrument; gathering questionnaires and feedback reports at training session 3; gathering reports; undertaking observations.
2007	PDT-SA ongoing in all EMDCs of the WCED; negotiating permission for research; refining research design and plan; gathering questionnaires and trainer reports; undertaking observations; interviews; initial analysis.
2008	Interviews; data processing; data analysis; dissertation writing.
2009	Completing dissertation.

The WCED curriculum staff showed interest and said the project was needed but seemed to be overwhelmed with other priorities and unable to engage with a new project. I explored other WCED departments as access points and found that the HIV and AIDS Life Skills Programme Manager was interested in and enthusiastic about the PDA. With his assistance, I then received formal WCED permission and developed a pilot project to train ECD teachers in a cluster of community preschools and primary schools in the South Metropole EMDC²⁵ during 2005. Three training sessions, Dolls and other materials were provided to the teachers. At follow-up sessions after training they gave verbal feedback about implementation. I also undertook observation visits to selected South Metropole pilot schools.

²⁵ Schools in the following South Peninsula areas were included: Kalk Bay, Fish Hoek, Masiphumelele, Ocean View, Kommetjie, Hout Bay and Sun Valley.

Pilot project concept meetings were held with WCED curriculum officials, school principals, groups of teachers, and community organisations in the pilot area. This was essential to obtain 'buy in', especially from the teachers. I gave mini-workshops on the PDA during break times, which helped to generate interest and enthusiasm among teachers for becoming part of the project. At the same time, I organised information sharing workshops with local community organisations, WCED curriculum advisors, and WCED HIV and AIDS programme co-coordinators.

WCED support ensured permission and access to schools, teachers and principals for the training project from 2005 onwards. The PDT-SA programme is now ongoing and receives financial support from the WCED. Access to the teachers, in order to undertake this study, built on the good relationships established between the project and the Education Department, which began during 2004.

The pilot project was therefore the first phase of gaining permission and access for this study. The pilot project experience further sparked my interest and affirmed my belief that the PDA was valuable and worthy of research.

The first training sessions were prefaced by an explanation of the research component of the project, including the questionnaires and feedback meetings. Verbal agreement for the research was obtained from each group of teachers. Guidelines and ground rules regarding confidentiality, values and process were used in all training and follow up sessions (Appendix: 5).

Selected teachers (see Table 1) gave permission to be interviewed and/or observed as part of the research project. Permission for the video filming during observation was obtained from parents through the schools.

3.3.3 Data collection

I drew on the following instruments for data collection:

- Myself as researcher
- Questionnaires
- Interview guide based on questionnaire questions

- Observation
- Document analysis.

I aimed to create a picture of the experiences of the case study that was as vivid and detailed as possible. Methodological triangulation provided a fuller picture and helped to confirm the data. The observations balanced the interviews and questionnaires. The observations added eyewitness accounts of how teachers were using Persona Dolls to teachers' own accounts.

The questionnaires provided a broad overview of how the teachers in different EMDCs were using the approach. The questionnaires sought to elicit a range of rural, urban, class and language experiences. This information also provided: a quantitative aspect of the study in highlighting the range and incidence of anti-bias issues, as well as quantitative information about children's responses; any observed behaviour changes in children; and any self-observation of changes by the teacher.

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided a space for detailed information to emerge from teachers. Some of this information I followed up informally, or through interviews.

3.3.4 The questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) was developed in consultation with research colleagues and was piloted and adjusted during the 2005 Pilot Project. The questions were designed to prompt and encourage the teachers to share their experiences of using the PDA; to find out how the training was interpreted; and to learn how the approach was being applied in classrooms. It was subsequently changed on the basis of feedback received from the pilot project teachers.

The questionnaire was given to all the 420 selected teachers during their Training Session 2 in 2006 and 2007 (Table 4). All teachers were asked to complete and return the questionnaire after implementing the approach in their classes. The return rate of the questionnaires was approximately 30% (Table 4) and was influenced by factors such as: the school's readiness or not to implement the approach; whether or when

other staff came on board; the confidence, motivation and stress levels of the teachers who attended the training; and administrative barriers. The questionnaire responses were anonymous, but the teachers provided their EMDC area and often the name of their school (List of participant schools: Appendix 6).

Table 4 Questionnaires supplied and returned

Date	Teachers	Returned questionnaires
2006	210	54
2007	210	70
TOTAL	420	124 (30%)

3.3.5 Observations and interviews

I selected five teachers from the main sample (Table 1) so that I could further explore their practice by observing their PDA sessions and interviewing them, in order to highlight some of the range of practices employed by teachers. I selected teachers with different levels of training whom I hoped would highlight the potential of the PDA in a range of situations in preschool and primary settings.

In the observations I examined the teacher and the children's behaviour through evaluation of the teacher's style of facilitation, what children listened to, what they asked, how they reacted to each other and the teacher, and the issues or contributions raised by the children. The observation sessions were videoed to capture responses of the children and the teacher, and the videos were transcribed. The negative impact of my observer role as a stranger and visitor to the group was reduced by the fact that the Persona Doll, who was the focus of the session, was also a visitor, and received most of the attention. In some cases I was seen by the children as the Doll's escort, or accepted as the Doll's 'taxi'. In one case a teacher asked me to pretend to drive the Doll away in my car (with the seat belt fastened) and wave to the children, only to creep back later and pass the Doll over the fence out of sight of the children.

After the observations I conducted loosely structured interviews with the teachers I had observed, based on the questionnaire. I tried to establish the same positive, friendly, unthreatening atmosphere in the interviews as in PDA sessions. After each session there were many positives to talk about as ‘lead ins’ to the interview questions. Teachers were transparent about wanting and needing affirmation (“Did I do it right?”) Where possible I used an audio or video recorder, but when teachers were not comfortable being recorded, I made notes on the interviews in a field notebook.

The teachers had all been identified in trainer reports as enthusiastic and willing to participate in the research. They were selected from the Cape Town area for convenience and due to budget considerations. The interviews usually took place at the school either after the children had been dismissed or during a break.

In addition to loosely structured interviews, three in-depth teacher interviews (Appendix 3) were undertaken in Cape Town during 2007 and 2008. Two of these teachers (Gonda and Shahida) had previously been observed and interviewed (during the initial observation interviews), and one had not been observed (Mandy). These interviews were planned in parallel with process of sifting through other data (analysing questionnaires, reading trainer reports, viewing video footage, etc.). I conducted two of the in-depth interviews and a research colleague conducted the third.

3.3.6 Trainer reports and journal

Trainers’ reports (Appendix 4) reflect on the training sessions and feedback sessions and include: comments on the teachers’ responses; implementation feedback; issues raised by the group; level of participation; and participant self-evaluations. My journal includes field notes of classroom visits; reports of one-on-one conversations with trainers and teachers; notes of feedback meetings held with teachers; and personal correspondence related to the project.

3.3.7 Analysis

Organising the data

I collated questionnaire responses, question by question. Excel spreadsheets were used to group, code and quantify the responses. The interviews and observations were numbered and themes identified and coded. The themes were then categorised according to the four Anti-bias Goals. Additional themes that emerged were listed separately.

Mode of analysis

The questionnaires, interviews and observations generated a set of structured and unstructured data. When I organised the data, themes/categories emerged. The interview transcripts were crosschecked with each other and with the questionnaire responses.

I then interpreted the data in terms of my research questions (see Chapter 1) and the four Anti-bias Goals (Chapter 1), which I used as the conceptual framework to examine anti-bias practice. Quotes were selected to illustrate themes relating to each of the goals. Two perspectives emerged for each theme: those of the teacher and those of the children.

I wrote vignettes to highlight the themes that emerged from the observations and interviews. These were linked to the conceptual framework.

Analysis of the questionnaires:

I undertook a two-phase analysis of the questionnaires:

1. I read each questionnaire and highlighted and colour coded common themes and made notes in the margins. I made a note of quotes to highlight themes.
2. I categorised the themes into the four Anti-bias Goals. A few additional categories emerged. I tallied the number of responses to each theme, and constructed an Excel spreadsheet of the responses for each question. I highlighted the four most often mentioned themes for each question.

Analysis of the interview transcripts

I undertook a two-phase analysis of the transcripts:

1. I read each interview transcript several times and made notes in the margins. I analysed each teacher's comments on the questions asked. I compared the interviews and looked for common themes, similarities and differences.
2. I re-read the transcripts and noted teacher responses according to the four Anti-bias Goals. I noted additional themes and made links between the findings and the literature. I cross-checked the themes and made links with the questionnaire themes.

Analysis of the observation transcripts

I read each observation transcript several times and made notes in the margins. Video footage was viewed and re-viewed to search for any additional visual clues. I made notes about the children's responses as well as what the teachers said. I compared the transcripts and looked for common themes and differences. I cross-checked the themes and made links with the questionnaire themes. I noted additional themes and linked findings to the literature.

Analysis of journals and trainer reports

I re-read the documents and made notes that linked to the categories that had emerged from the other data. I extracted comments and quotes that related directly to the four Anti-bias Goals and the use of the Persona Dolls to achieve these goals.

The analysis of all the data generated categories and themes emerged which, for the most part, fitted within the four Anti-bias Goals. I analysed the main themes and made links to the literature and to my personal experience of the PDA. The themes were informed by the literature and structured by the four Anti-bias Goals. I made tables for each theme and categories emerged under each theme. From the tables the data were interpreted in the results chapter (Chapter 4).

The next chapter presents the results and discussion of the data.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to examine the use of the Persona Dolls Approach (PDA) as a component of anti-bias practice in order to learn more about the approach, and how it is used in ECD in South Africa. The primary unit of analysis for the study was teachers' use of the Dolls in ECD classroom settings. Specifically, I aimed to gain an understanding of: how the PDA is implemented in different settings; what outcomes are achieved in different settings; the type of anti-bias issues raised by the teachers and/or children; and the successes and challenges experienced by teachers using the PDA.

This chapter presents the results of the study, using two main forms of representation for the data. Firstly, thematic tables provide a quantitative overview of teachers' responses to the questionnaire and secondly, constructed vignettes provide a picture of the PDA in action in different settings. The next chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the findings in relation to the four Anti-bias Goals and in terms of the four research aims listed above. I substantiate the discussion in Chapter 5 with data in the form of selected excerpts from questionnaires and interviews, on-site observations, excerpts from trainer reports, and excerpts from my field journal.

4.2 The questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) provides a broad overview of how the 124 respondents were using the PDA. As mentioned in the previous chapter, questions were designed to prompt the teachers to share their experiences of using the PDA so that I could learn how the approach was being applied in classrooms. Although the questions were open-ended and qualitative in nature, through a categorisation of the data and a shifting of thematic recurrences, I was able to quantify the range and incidence of anti-bias issues, as well as the range, kinds and frequency of responses to the Dolls by children and teachers. On the basis of this analysis I created tables to present an overview of data pertinent to the four main research aims. Table 5 to Table 8 all relate to the attitudinal and behavioural outcomes that teachers believed had been

achieved through using the Dolls. These tables also give an overview of some of the successes the teachers achieved. Table 5 to Table 7 focus on teachers' perceptions of some of the outcomes for the children of using the Dolls, while Table 8 captures the main anti-bias themes emerging from the children and from teachers' use of the Dolls. Table 9 reflects teachers' views on how the use of the Dolls contributed to their teaching.

Table 5 Teachers' comments on children's responses to the Dolls

Type of response	Raised by percentage of teachers (n = 124)
Children were excited, loved the Doll and identified with the Doll.	86
Children were talkative, wider vocabulary, participative, curious and asked questions.	56
The atmosphere became more relaxed, with more child participation.	63
Children wanted to touch and hug the Doll.	21
Children showed empathy, compassion, caring, 'softening'.	20
Children did not want to touch the Doll.	2
Children were sceptical.	5

Table 6 Children's behaviour changed

Type of response	Raised by percentage of teachers (n = 124)
Empathy increased.	92
Listening, concentration and attention improved.	69
Children expressed feelings, became more confident.	48
There was more sharing, respect for others: children wanted to help.	34

Teachers overwhelmingly responded that the Dolls helped to develop empathy. Concentration and attention skills also increased. Children shared more, wanted to help, and showed greater confidence and more expression of feelings. These themes reflect the teachers' content focus when using the PDA. They also reveal differences between issues the teachers and children felt were important. All the themes raised by the teachers and the children are included in the Life Orientation learning curriculum outcomes and assessment standards (Department of Education, 2002b). Specific teacher emphasis on bullying, racism, sexism and xenophobia gave substance to the vague curriculum guidelines.

Table 7 Empathy and emotional intelligence

Type of response	Teachers say that children have changed - % of times mentioned	Dolls have helped in their work - % of times mentioned
Developing empathy	92	10
Aware of and expressing feelings, more confident	48	19
Showing respect/listening more	22	33
Shy children now participating	8	15
Relating/sharing information	24	20

Table 8 Incidence of anti-bias themes arising in Persona Doll stories

Type of response	Raised by percentage of teachers (n = 124)	Children's responses reported by percentage of teachers (n = 124)
Bullying and name-calling including: racist, sexist, classist, disablist and xenophobic	78	37
Empathy, diversity and expressing feelings	57	19
HIV and AIDS	34	12
Social problems including: domestic violence, sexual abuse, crime, alcohol and substance abuse	32	62
Family issues including: divorce, bereavement, neglect, hunger, moving.	14	43

Table 9 Teachers' responses to the Persona Doll Approach

Type of response	Raised by percentage of teachers (n = 124)
Teachers were motivated by, enjoyed using the PDA.	90
PDA makes it easier to address difficult issues.	67
PDA encouraged dialogue and discussion.	62
PDA helps teachers to understand children's situations, listen to children and empathise with children.	46

Table 5 to Table 9 show that the children and teachers responded positively to the PDA. The tables show the positive, and some negative, responses and themes, which will be addressed in the discussion.

4.3 Vignettes

I present four vignettes, three constructed from observations and interviews, and one from an interview. They are written in the present tense to convey a vivid description of the classroom situation and atmosphere. A semi-colon separates the various responses from the children. The vignettes illustrate the use of the PDA to achieve the four Anti-bias Goals as well as contextual issues. I will discuss these themes further in the discussion section. The vignettes are set in different urban, centre-based ECD contexts, including preschools and Grade 1 and 2 classes in primary schools. The teachers had varied qualifications and experience. The teachers and the children ranged from working class to middle class and included various cultural and language backgrounds. All the teachers in the vignettes were English-speaking. The issues raised by the teachers were drawn from different sources: from the curriculum, from the community, and from the children.

4.3.1 Vignette 1: "Lizo loves fish and chips"

Verna²⁶ is an experienced preschool teacher. Her preschool, Gecko, has a diverse mix of ninety children who speak English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. The preschool tries to be multilingual and anti-bias in its approach. Verna is introducing Lizo (the Doll; Figure 2) to her Grade R class for the first time. Lizo is five years old, he has very short curly

²⁶ All the teachers, children and schools have been given fictitious names.

brown hair, and he is wearing his favourite denim jeans (a bit scruffy) and his shiny soccer vest. Verna sits cross-legged on the floor with Lizo on her lap, in a circle of 26 expectant children.



Figure 2 Lizo

T (Verna): Say hello to Lizo

C (Children): Molo Lizo

T: Lizo is five years old.

C: I'm five; like me.

T: He's got a little baby brother. And he wants to know if you've got a mommy and a daddy? And a brother and a sister?

C: Yes; yes; yes; I only have a mommy; I've got a mommy; I've got a mommy and a daddy ,

T: Do you have a baby brother or sister?

C: Yes sister; yes; I've got a brother ,

T: And does your baby brother or sister sleep with their mom?

C: Yes; yes; mine does ,

Verna confers with the Doll.

T: Lizo says his mommy and daddy are not very happy about him staying too long in their bed are you allowed to get into your mom and dad's bed?

- C: Yes; yes; I read with my mommy; I sleep with my mommy ,
- T: And do you know what? Do you know what he loves to eat? Lizo loves fish and chips.
- C: I also like fish and chips!; and me; me too; me (very excited); I have fish and chips ,

Verna confers with the Doll.

- T: He wants to know if you also feel shy at times?
- C: Yes (chorus).
- T: He wants to know when you feel shy?
- C: When a visitor comes to my house I get shy and I hide away.
- T: Lizo is feeling a little shy today, but he wants to be your friend. Can he? And can he visit us again?
- C: Yes; yes! (chorus).
- T: Lizo is really a Doll but we're going to pretend he's really a person, okay? Sometimes he's confused because people say he doesn't look very much like his mom or his dad. His mom is Xhosa-speaking and his dad is English-speaking. And they have two different skin colours. Lizo says in his family he gets to know two different languages – isiXhosa and English. He wants to know if any of you know any Xhosa?
- C: Yes; Yes! (The children spontaneously begin to sing a Xhosa song, stand up, and do the actions.)
- T: Thank you! Lizo is so pleased and very, very happy. He wants to know if you speak Xhosa at home?
- C: Ewe (yes); I can speak Xhosa; I can sing; Ewe (yes) ,
- T: Would you like to give him a handshake say hello? You must remember the way you'd like people to kiss you or hold you or hug you, that's how we're going to treat him - okay?

The children rushed to hug him, then came one by one and all wanted to hug or kiss him.

- T: Because even though he's a Doll we're going to pretend that he has the same feelings that you have, same heart, because he's very much like a real person.

This introductory session opened many issues, some intentionally brought up by Verna, others by the children, for discussion at future visits. These included: one-

parent families, different skin colours and languages, feelings of shyness, and love of fish and chips. The children identified strongly and ‘loved’ Lizo and were delighted that he wanted to visit again.

4.3.2 Vignette 2: “Tell your mother all of us feel worried about her”

Gonda is an experienced ECD teacher who is steeped in anti-bias work and had recently received Persona Doll training. One of her early experiences of using the Dolls was with a Grade 2 class in the urban middle class school, Dalebrook Primary, where she teaches. Most of the children at the school are English-speaking, although there are also a few Xhosa-speaking children. Teachers at the school are predominantly ‘white’ and speak English or Afrikaans. In her interview, Gonda is confident, extremely positive about the PDA, and has a deep commitment to anti-bias practice. She says that she deliberately chose a pale ‘white’ beige-skinned boy Doll, Jesse (Figure 3) to address HIV and AIDS with the Grade 2 class, in order to challenge the stereotype that ‘only black people have AIDS’. Gonda also wanted to continue her HIV awareness work with the class and use the Doll to find out what the children really knew about HIV.



Figure 3 Jesse

Twenty-two children sit in a clumped semi circle on the floor in front of Gonda (who sits on a small chair). Jesse is on her lap (she refers to Jesse by dipping her head to one side to listen to his 'whispered' comments into her ear). When she introduces Jesse to the children, she intentionally raises a gender issue.

T: This is Jesse.

C: Some Jesses are girls and some Jesses are boys; Jesse can be a boy's name and Jesse can be a girl's name; and Jo ,

T: Yes that's also a name that can be a boy's name and can be a girl's name.

T: Jesse lives in Mowbray with his mum and his dad and his older sister called Jenny and his grandma. Now I'm going to tell you a bit about Jesse - do you think he looks a bit upset?

C: He's smiling.

T: But sometimes we smile but we still may feel a bit heartsore and sad, am I right?

C: Yes, yes ,

T: The reason he's so upset and worried and a bit sad is that his mum isn't that well. At school some of the children heard about this and they've been saying some nasty things about Jesse, and his family. Do you have an idea what kinds of things they say about Jesse?

C: I don't want to come near you because you might have AIDS; I never want to come to your house 'cos your mom has AIDS and I think that you never ever will be better again ,

Some children come immediately to his defence:

C: It's already in his blood, nobody else can get it, it won't happen so easily; Even if you have HIV you can still play with them and it doesn't mean you can get HIV; 'cos your friend is your friend and you can't get HIV only if it's HIV and you cough at someone then you can get HIV ,

Gonda deals constructively with the child's inaccurate contribution.

T: Some of the things you're saying are very important. Jesse is getting quite pleased from what he hears from you children because he's read a lot about HIV because he wants to understand what this means for his mum, and he knows that you can't get HIV from sitting next to someone who coughs,

because the germ as Thandi said, has to live in your blood. So it's only if you touch someone else's blood and ... you ,

Gonda stops herself from dominating the discussion and includes a child.

T: Yes, you tell me?

C: Then it gets into your blood and then you can get HIV because you can't have ... like you have a bruise and then the blood comes out and then the other person ,

C: It doesn't mean if you have HIV that you must stop having fun.

T: Do you think it's okay to give him a big hug?

C: Yes; yes, even a friend ,

T: Now do you have any ideas or suggestions for Jesse when he goes back to his school tomorrow?

C: He needs to stand up for himself ,

Gonda uses a child's name to include him in the dialogue.

T: Yes, Colin?

C: Sometimes you ignore them and then they'll just stop because they won't get any pleasure out of it.

T: And do you think that will help. Just ignoring them?

C: Can I also say something? They'll be shocked and then they'll really want to be his friend because he knows a lot of stuff about his mother.

C: He must stand up for his family. He can't let them just say these rude words because his mother has AIDS.

C: He has to stand up for himself and stand up for his family and his mother that's sick ,

C: If the other children are nasty he can just find some other friends because if they always nasty how can you just stay with a nasty person you can always go with another friend.

C: Tell your mother all of us feel worried about her.

T: And you can have the first ribbon (Gonda hands out red ribbons to all the children). Jesse will visit again next week and he'll tell us what has happened at his school.

This session encouraged the children to identify and empathise with Jesse (the Doll). Gonda then developed the session to the next stage of problem solving. The children

were actively involved and showed that they already knew an impressive amount about HIV. This vignette illustrates all the Anti-bias Goals as well as the facilitation skills of an experienced teacher: using a child's name to prevent a chorus and ensure participation; being aware of children's self-esteem; and challenging HIV and gender stereotypes in a non-threatening and activist way. The children felt empowered at the end of the session. They wanted Jesse to visit again.

4.3.3 Vignette 3: "Molly's hair is standing"

Molly (the Doll; Figure 4) is a well-known character at Sunshine preschool. The teachers and most of the children are 'coloured' and speak English and Afrikaans and a few children are Xhosa-speaking. The fairly well resourced preschool is in a very poor, gangster-ridden, predominantly 'coloured' urban community near Cape Town. The teacher, Shahida, has used Persona Dolls for a few months and is enthusiastic about them. Shahida planned the session as she felt the 'hair issue' needed to be raised with her children. She chose to use Molly "because somehow, if Molly says that she hates being bullied and feels frightened, it's easier for the other kids to open up and share their experiences". Shahida sits on a chair with Molly on her lap in front of rows of twenty-eight four- and five-year olds sitting at small tables.



Figure 4 Molly

The children know Molly from previous visits. Molly has medium brown skin colour, similar to most of the children. She has thick, curly, fuzzy hair in plaits, wears a slightly worn dress and lovely pink shoes. Last time Molly visited she had hurt herself and had a bandage on her leg.

The class are very pleased to see their 'friend' Molly and they all greet her in English, the majority home language of the group. Then Shahida asks a few questions to remind the children about Molly's persona. Today's session addresses 'hair', an emotive issue in this community, and an issue that emerged from many teachers during their anti-bias training as a painful personal issue of discrimination.

T: Molly said she is here today for you to help her. Molly went to her school the other day. Something happened ...it was terrible the children don't want to play with her. How do you think she feels?

C: What happened?; Sad; Is she crying? I cry; where's Molly bandage?; Molly sore (very concerned).

T: Molly's sore is better today, she says thank you for helping her last week. Today, you are right (Shahida 'listens' to Doll), Molly is very sad, and lonely. Did you ever feel lonely when no one played with you?

C: Yes; No; Yes I feel lonely when my mommy goes away, and I cry; I cry when I feel sad; Tyrone didn't play with me ,

T: Yes, so you also felt sad then Molly is feeling a bit better that you understand how she feels. She is feeling not so alone now. Molly wants to tell you what happened: Her Mommy let her hair loose that day, and one of the little girls called her 'bushy Molly' and laughed at her hair. Was that very nice?

C: No; No (Chorus).

T: How do you think Molly felt when they laughed? How did she feel? Was she happy?

C: No; No; Molly is sad; Don't know; Sad; Did she cry?; Sad ,

T: Samantha? did she feel sad, upset?

C: Ja sad; Don't know ; Upset, teacher ...,

T: Yes Molly is sad, she's telling me, she is not happy, she is upset (Shahida refers to Doll) she feels funny, a little sick in her tummy, do you ever feel that? Molly doesn't want to go back to her school, she is worried about her hair. What can she do? Molly wants you to help her with the problem, the children laughed at her and they don't want to play with Molly.

- C: Tell her mom; Her mommy can hug her; I will hug her! Tell her teacher; Molly can wear a cap; She can come here ,
- T: That is very kind! Molly is feeling better now that you are helping her but at her school what can Molly do? Her hair was standing, not flat what can she do to solve her problem? It wasn't nice

Shahida reinforces the children's empathy: "She can come here", "Tell her mom". The children empathise strongly and want to help. She praises them for wanting to help Molly and offers emotional vocabulary to support their emotional language development. The children in the vignette use emotional vocabulary ("sad", "not happy", "upset") in response to Shahida's questions. She doesn't judge any of their suggestions, she encourages them.

- C: She must tell her teacher (children seem uncomfortable).
- T: Molly, they say you must tell your teacher Molly says that's a good idea. You are really helping her. What do you think about her hair? Do you like it loose?
- C: Nice; No she must put it down; It's nice.
- T: Let's ask Molly, Molly do you like your hair? Molly says yes, it feels nice but she's scared they will laugh. What else can she do? She wants to know if you had a problem like this before? Did you go home and tell your mommy?
- C: No; Yes; No; Yes ... (mix of answers).

Shahida tells the children, and makes a judgement about 'nice' behaviour and name-calling. Shahida encourages participation by using children's individual names, trying to avoid chorus answers, and trying to encourage dialogue:

- T: Ayesha (a child), did you tell your mommy?
- C: I didn't tell my mommy put my boots on and called my daddy ... on the ground daddy throw them on the ground.
- T: Your daddy?
- C: My daddy throws them down.
- T: Your daddy did that! My word! Ella (a child) what did you do?
- C: Call my daddy and my daddy hit all of them.
- T: Molly said she doesn't want her parents to get violent that makes her scared, she wants to tell her teacher, maybe her teacher can talk to the children who

called her 'bushy Molly'. Now she had her hair loose, she doesn't want it loose any more.

C: Her mom ,

T: She's going to ask her mom to make her hair nice. Then perhaps she won't have to wear plaits all the time. She's happy now, a good plan, she's excited, she doesn't feel sad any more. Molly is feeling much better. She says thank you!

T: Molly says she wants her hair like you (looking at straight hair). She will see if they can do her hair like that. She's very glad she came today. Now she can solve her problem. Next time when she comes she wants to see who has a new hairstyle.

T: I will let you know when Molly comes again. All the girls will see what kind of hairstyle we can make for Molly. Molly says she's happy, but she has to go now. She wants to visit us again soon. You all can give her a hug . (Children all want to hug and kiss Molly) careful gently very good. Molly loves a hug, careful Ella give her a hug .then, Molly get a nice kiss too, you made her day! Molly says good-bye.

C: See you ; bye ; bye-bye Molly.

After the session, Shahida asked me to pretend to drive Molly away in my car (with the seat belt fastened) and wave to the children. I crept back later and passed Molly over the fence out of sight of the children. This escapade showed the teachers' and children's involvement in the 'realness' of the Doll.

Shahida raised an issue that is a common source of painful memories for many people. The children engaged to a degree, but needed a lot of prompting and leading from Shahida. Perhaps the 'hair' issue was greater for her than for the children. Shahida introduced the idea (perhaps her own internalised oppression?) that changing the hair ("She wants hair like you") was the option and not changing people's attitude (which was the actual problem). Troubling stereotypes and references to violence emerged from the children: mommy as a hairstylist and daddy as a violent protector.

4.3.4 Vignette 4: “Throwing stones at a blind man”

Mandy, an experienced preschool and foundation phase teacher had recently received Persona Doll anti-bias training. St Mathew’s primary school is situated in a poor, urban community near Cape Town. St Matthew’s has mainly working class English-, Afrikaans- and Xhosa-speaking children. Most of the Xhosa-speaking children are bussed to school from other communities. The teachers are predominantly ‘coloured’ and speak English and Afrikaans. Mandy has strong ties to the local community where she went to school as child. This session with a Grade 1 class was one of her first experiences using the Dolls. She is confident and extremely excited about the approach.

Mandy found out that a group of young schoolboys in her community were throwing stones at her neighbour, a blind man, and his guide dog. She decided to use a Persona Doll to take up the issue in an activist way, to challenge but in a non-threatening way. She discussed the incident and her idea of using a Persona Doll with the principal before using the Doll. He was initially reluctant for her to address the issue, wanting to protect his school’s reputation, but became enthusiastic after hearing how Mandy would use the Persona Doll in a confidential non-threatening way to try and build empathy and share information about blindness.

So as not to spotlight the particular stone-throwing incident, Mandy deliberately changed the gender of the blind person. She chose a girl Doll (Sally; Figure 5) with medium brown skin similar to many of the children, and gave Sally sunglasses to visually represent blindness.



Figure 5 Sally

The introduction helped the children to identify, bond and understand the differences and similarities between themselves and Sally, in addition to helping Mandy to find out what they already knew about blindness. Mandy is naturally dramatic and she described the lesson in an interview in which she re-enacted the session, dialogue and all:

T: Do you remember Sally?

C: Yes: yes ,

T: Why do you think she is wearing sunglasses? Is it a sunny day outside?

C: No, it's not a sunny day; because she is blind (chorused).

T: You are right, Sally is blind. But even though Sally is blind, Sally loves to do so many of the things that you like doing. Sally loves to sing. Do you love to sing?

C: Yes, I love to sing, yes ,

T: Sally sings in a choir at Sunday school. Sally also loves to read. Do you like to read?

C: Sally can't read!

T: Why can't Sally read?

C: Because she can't see the letters.

T: Sally can read. She reads in a special way, called Braille and she reads by using her fingertips.

Mandy showed them the Braille and passed it around so that everybody could feel.

T: Don't you think she's really clever?

C: Yes miss.

T: She's feeling a bit sad but she has come to tell you a story ,

Mandy then began a suspenseful story about the stone throwing, which focused the children on the problem. They listened attentively:

T: Sally walked to the shop with her dog Barker, she heard voices, they were saying ugly things to her, she couldn't see who was talking, she carried on walking but something hit her on the head! (The children were very quiet and really listening) Sally heard the voices of children, and they were throwing stones at her!

Mandy then facilitated the next stage: a discussion to encourage expression of feelings and problem solving:

T: How do you think she was feeling?

C: Scared; sad; angry; cross ,

T: How would you feel if something like that happened to you? Is that a nice thing to do?

C: No, it is very dangerous because what if the dog got a fright and ran away? What if the dog ran into the road and a car knocked Sally over? Can she cry? That was so sad for her ,

One of the children put up his hand:

C: I know someone who is blind. He lives up the road here and he also has a dog. This contribution from 'a perpetrator' added to the discussion, it was clear he didn't feel 'spotlighted' or judged, but was thinking and reflecting.

Mandy said the children showed great empathy. They wanted to make Sally feel better, they wanted to hug her, hold her, and the boys especially wanted to hold her. They gave suggestions and wanted to help find a solution to the problem. They spoke about what it feels like to be blind and about guide dogs and how they can help people. They pointed out that the dog was afraid. The children then made suggestions: "It's very dangerous"; "because what if the dog got a fright and ran away into the road"; "what if a car knocked Sally over"; "Sally must tell her mommy"; "Tell her

teacher”; “Her friend can shout at those children”. They wanted Sally to come back and tell them that it was “OK”.

After the session a little girl wrote a letter to Sally and pricked the letters with a pin to look like Braille: “I am sorry Sally I want to be your friend”. She gave the letter to Sally, not to Mandy (Figure 6).



Figure 6 Letter to Sally

Mandy also took Sally to visit older children in intermediate phase classes. She encountered a more developed language level, and more interest in information about the world. Whereas for the Grade 1 children the focus was empathy: “It was more feeling for the Doll, wanting to make her better.” The older children, aged nine to eleven, also empathised but they were more interested in life issues and information. “How does the dog know how to get to the shop?” “Does Sally know the shopkeeper is giving her the right change?” “How does she walk around at home, does she bump into things? Does she cry?” “My grandfather is blind, he has a white cane not a dog.” Mandy said the stone throwing stopped after the session.

This chapter presented the results of the study. I used thematic tables to provide a quantitative overview of teachers' responses to the questionnaire and constructed vignettes to provide a detailed picture of the PDA in action in different settings. Chapter 5 discusses the results in relation to the four Anti-bias Goals and in terms of the four research aims listed in Chapter 4. I also discuss themes, outside of the four goals, which are relevant to the PDA. I illustrate the discussion with quotations drawn from the questionnaires, vignettes, trainer reports and my journal.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter I discuss the findings in relation to the four Anti-bias Goals and in terms of my four research aims listed in Chapter 4. I substantiate the discussion with data in the form of selected excerpts from questionnaires and interviews, on-site observations, and excerpts from trainer reports and my field journal. The discussion is structured around the four Anti-bias Goals (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1998; in press) of my conceptual framework, which are:

1. Identity and self-esteem
2. Empathy and emotional intelligence
3. Unlearning negative attitudes
4. Problem-posing/Activist approach.

These goals are interrelated and there is overlap and overlay. This meant that the discussion of the results could not always be clearly categorised into one particular Anti-bias Goal. For example, themes that emerged from a vignette frequently illustrate more than one goal. Table 10, below, makes the main links between the Anti-bias Goals and the results presented in the vignettes and tables. Quotations from trainer reports, interviews and the questionnaires used in the discussion are used as illustrations across all the Goals.

I also discuss themes which arose but which are not directly related, or which relate indirectly, to all the Anti-bias Goals, but which assist in answering my research questions. These themes include: context of schools; constraints reflected in teachers' practice relating to how children learn and to their understanding of anti-bias issues; as well as teachers' assumptions and understandings about children, and about anti-bias.

Table 10 Main links between Anti-bias Goals and results

Anti-bias Goals	Vignettes: illustrate observations and interviews	Tables: Questionnaire findings
1. Identity and self-esteem	Vignette 1 and 2	Table 5 to Table 7
2. Empathy and emotional intelligence	Vignette 2 and 3	Table 5 to Table 7
3. Problem-posing	Vignette 4	Table 5 and Table 6
4. Unlearning	Vignette 2 and 4	Table 5, Table 6 and Table 8

5.1 Identity and self-esteem

5.1.1 “Just like me”

In Vignette 1, Verna shows the children’s strong identification and empathy with the Doll. She comments on how empowered they appeared to be by “knowing” or also “liking” the Doll. Learners could identify with the Doll’s “just like me!” part - they all wanted to hug or kiss Lizo. Brown (2001:17) maintains that children need to be able to relate to particular features they share with the Dolls, for example, “She’s got braids just like me” (Brown 2001: 17).

A high rate of teachers (86%) report that children want to be friends and are curious about the Dolls (Table 5), speak to the Doll, want to help the Doll, sit expectantly, smile and laugh, want to know more about the Doll, want to hug, kiss and touch. Children remembered (Shahida, Interview) when the Doll had not visited for some time, that he needed to get a taxi to go back home from school and they were very concerned that he must not miss his taxi, and that the teacher should make sure that he got on his taxi!

Some teachers feel that it is the age of the Doll that motivates the children to open up: “Lizo is five years old” - “I’m five”; “Like me” (Vignette 1).

Children feel that they can relate because I think children feel that adults don’t always understand but seeing the Doll is their age they open up more easily (Teacher Questionnaire).

Usually Persona Dolls are ‘given’ an age that is similar to the group of children. This provokes powerful responses: often children respond by shouting out: “like me”,

which reflects the recurring theme of identity. Teachers who worked as a team across grades often down played the age of the Doll (Trainer Report) as children assumed the Doll was their own age. This teacher strategy anticipated that the children would move up grades and the Doll would have to age with them, thus avoiding confusion.

The gender of the Doll was significant, as Gonda points out: “With boys that are quite macho, you want to break down gender stereotypes by bringing in a Doll that has the potential to challenge those” (Gonda, Interview). Some teachers used macho attributes to win boys over and also including elements in the personas that could challenge gender stereotypes, thus achieving Anti-bias Goals 1 and 3 and demonstrating the interaction across Goals by addressing identification and unlearning (gender stereotypes). Teachers were encouraged during training to start with a boy Doll to break down the idea that Dolls are girls and that Dolls are only for girls. Gonda’s gender awareness reflects her values and personal anti-bias attitudes, which allowed her to strategise to address gender. This underlines the importance of Jansen’s (2001) call for teachers to be transformed, so that they will be able to transform children.

It was a concern, but not unexpected, when children treated Dolls with scepticism (Table 5). Some Dolls were rejected, seemingly because the children could not identify with the persona (Mandy, Interview). This raised questions about whether it was possibly the teacher’s attitude or the way the Doll was introduced that was that the barrier. In some cases the teachers handled these situations very well and turned them into an opportunities for unlearning.

Look of the Doll

The Persona Dolls used in this study are 70 cm tall girl and boy Dolls made of cloth with authentic looking hair and features. The fabric skin colours range from light beige to dark brown. Hair may be short and curly-brown coloured, dread-locked, straight blond, brown or black, in bunches or braids. The girls wear dresses, jeans or trousers with T-shirts, the boys are in trousers or jeans and T-shirts. They usually wear shoes. A Doll may have a visible or invisible disability, for example using a small wooden wheelchair, or wearing spectacles or a hearing aid. Teachers also used other props (for example, Sally’s sunglasses in Vignette 4, Molly’s bandage in

Vignette 3, or particular clothes or lack of clothes or shoes. Teachers maintained that the size and realistic ‘look’ of the Dolls helped the children to identify and encouraged empathy (Table 5 and Table 7).

Voice of the Doll and three-way dialogue

The teachers successfully used the Doll, representing a person in his/her own right. Each Doll had a ‘voice’ that was relayed through the teacher who pretended to listen to the Doll whispering into the teacher’s ear. The following quotations illustrate this technique:

Vignette 1: And do you know what? Do you know what he loves to eat? Lizo loves fish and chips.

Vignette 3: Molly said she is here today for you to help her. Molly went to her school the other day. Something happened...it was terrible...the children don’t want to play with her...and...she says thank you for helping her last week... Yes Molly is sad, she’s telling me, she is not happy, she is upset...(Shahida refers to Doll) she feels funny, a little sick in her tummy, do you ever feel that?

This technique, demonstrated in the vignette, creates a three-way dialogue between teacher, the Doll (representing a child) and the group of children. This means that the children, teacher and the Doll can all have opinions and feelings, can share, discuss, question, and even argue. When the first person voice is used the teacher ‘becomes the Doll’ which limits the discussion (Brown, 2001) and can confuse children who may meet the same Doll with a different teacher’s voice. For instance, in Vignette 1 Verna refers to the Doll and then asks: “He wants to know if you also feel shy at times?”. This is in contrast to a teacher (Trainer Report) who confused the technique at first, during role-play in training, and used the Doll as a puppet, speaking in the first person: “I want to share what happened to me where I stay. You can see that my hair is long, but you remember I’ve got lice, my teacher noticed that I always scratched my head”. This aspect of the approach is dealt with in role-plays in training (Trainer Report) and needs practice, but overall very few teachers struggled (Trainer Report) with the technique.

“I am not alone”

A key element in using the Persona Doll Approach is that children feel that they are ‘not alone’, not outsiders. The Doll looks like them, wears clothes, perhaps

shoes like them, is the same age, or has experienced something similar to their own experience. This was confirmed by teachers who mentioned that children become “aware that they are not the only one with problems, they are not alone” (Teacher Questionnaire).

This is crucial to enable the children to put themselves in the Doll’s shoes and to empathise with the Doll, and with other children. Teachers reported that the children appeared to feel relieved that somebody else also knew about their circumstances or problems (Teacher Questionnaire).

This illustrates the therapeutic and psycho-social aspect of supporting children who feel alone, are perhaps being bullied, have been excluded from play, or have been abused. Mandy used a “very clever” girl Doll who “also spoke French”, to support a refugee boy from the Congo who had been rejected by the group (Mandy, Interview).

The scenario above explores empathy, respect for difference, and unlearning prejudice. Mandy applied her own values and was proactive in taking action. Mandy was able to demonstrate the PDA across all the Anti-bias Goals.

5.1.2 Responses to the Dolls

Children’s responses to the Dolls

In the questionnaires, 86 % of teachers responded that the children were excited when the Doll visited, wanted the Dolls to visit often and ‘loved the Dolls’, and children often want to hug and kiss the Doll (Table 5).

Most definitely! The children relate to the Doll. They are eager to speak about their family, friends, what happened at home. Children find it easier to talk about their circumstances – one boy came to say that he did not eat for a few days (Teacher Questionnaire).

Teachers enthusiastically reported the children’s positive and curious responses to the Dolls, saying that children opened up and were more spontaneous. “When I first introduced the Doll I could see that it was as if the Doll came to real life for them” (Gonda, Interview). Teachers (63%) reported that there was a different atmosphere (Table 5) in the classroom when the Persona Dolls were used. When the Dolls arrived the atmosphere became more relaxed, involved and participatory. There was a

relaxed, lively three-way conversation between the Doll, the teacher and the children. Teachers reported that the approach helped them to hold the children's attention and they listened attentively. "It helped to make lessons interesting and there was more variety to lessons. I tend to involve the Dolls with the lesson, and my life skill lessons are more exciting and become meaningful and alive" (Teacher Questionnaire). These teachers' accounts show the usefulness of the PDA in helping teachers to achieve Life Orientation curriculum outcomes (Appendix 1).

Teachers frequently reported positive, curious responses from children that linked to the first three Anti-bias Goals: identity, empathy, and unlearning and critical thinking:

Children are curious and also want to touch the Doll. They responded with many questions like: "Can she talk? Who will take her home?". They are eager to speak about their family, friends, what happened at home, and they want to touch and hug the Dolls (Teacher Questionnaire).

A theme of children being empowered to speak where usually they were silent emerged from these teacher quotations:

The Dolls help with children who are shy – encouraging withdrawn learners to participate; Not scared to be involved and participating; Children who never wanted to speak to you do now; The slow learners are showing interest and starting to be active; Speak freely and fluently ... (they used to) bly doodstil ... almal wil vragies vra (sit dead still ... all want to ask questions); The slow learners are showing interest and starting to be active (Teacher Questionnaire).

These quotations show how even shy children responded to the Dolls and listened and spoke more freely during the Persona Doll sessions. This participation and empowerment in dialogue provides for identity development and self-esteem (MacNaughton, 2000b). Teachers report self-esteem is increasing and that children are showing more confidence: "They are starting to be active; Learners are problem-solving with more confidence. You can see them thinking, "even the quiet ones" (Teacher Questionnaire). This response to the Dolls supports Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke's (2000) assertion that dialogue arises from a sense of confidence.

The teachers who reported positive responses by the children (Table 5) considerably outnumber those who said the children's responses to the Persona Doll were sceptical (5%). Furthermore, it became clear that even if sceptical at first, children could be drawn into identifying with the Doll: "Van hulle was baie skepties gewees maar hulle

het later met ‘haar’ begin praat” (Some were sceptical but later talked to ‘her’) (Teacher Questionnaire). Shahida made the point that you can draw a child in by emphasising the similarities between him (often a ‘macho’ boy) and the Doll or suggesting that the Doll wants to be a special friend with the sceptical child as this gives status to the child and to the Doll in the other children’s eyes (Shahida, Interview).

Two percent of teachers reported that some children did not want to touch the Doll (Table 5). They interpreted this as an expression of individual preference as some children enjoy touching and being physically close more than others. It could, however, also be an indicator of prejudiced attitudes to gender or skin colour, as shown in Australian research where some Anglo-Australian children did not want to enter the same room as Doll with skin colour different from their own (MacNaughton, 2000). At no time, however, was such a strong response reported in this study, and none of the children ever refused to participate or interact with the Doll. However, Mandy (Mandy, Interview) reported that middle class children rejected a working class Doll; and a teacher (Trainer Report) shared a similar experience related to race. Other examples emerged from trainer reports.

Teachers reported positive changes in the children’s behaviour towards each other and towards the Doll:

They show empathy to the Doll. I gave them Zukie one by one. They were kissing her, smiling at her, hugging her and even talking to her. There is laughter and excitement when the Dolls arrive. The children ask questions, want to hug and show affection for the Doll. Their empathy and affection for their ‘new friend’ is evident. They speak more freely and levels of participation increase at group times (Teacher Questionnaire).

Many teachers reported a ‘softening’ of the children during and immediately after PDA sessions (Teacher Questionnaire), some stating that they became “like children again” and displayed less aggressive behaviour towards other children (Table 5 and Table 6). In this study, learners were reportedly more eager, calmer and less disruptive:

There is less fighting during intervals. There is less bullying and more respect for each other and more self control. Name calling, swearing has decreased. Playing with each other in the playground, if any bitchiness or bullying occurs

they sort it out amongst themselves. They consider others' feelings and in so doing name-calling has stopped (Teacher Questionnaire).

The extent of this response was beyond expectation, in terms of PDA literature and of my previous experience with the Dolls. The 'softening' response shows how children may be 'hardened' by their situations (for example, crime, domestic violence and abuse). It also shows the potential 'softening' influence of the PDA. Brown's (2001) observation sums up the power and the risks of the PDA:

Children's identification with Persona Dolls is often profound and arouses strong emotion. Working with such a powerful tool we need to be particularly sensitive and principled (Brown, 2001: 32).

The responses above illustrate the use of the PDA across Anti-bias Goals 1, 2 and 3.

Teachers' responses to the Dolls

According to the questionnaire responses, 90% of teachers were motivated and enjoyed using the Dolls. "I will use the Dolls regularly. It works. It is of great help to me. This method of teaching is of great benefit. Yes, the Dolls help" (Teacher Questionnaire). These responses echoed UK teachers' responses to the Persona Dolls, as described by McClements (2004) and Brown (2008).

Teachers also identified with the Dolls.

I identify a lot with Lila (the Doll), probably because I made her come from the X community. I thought, I had to have one Doll come from my community! She doesn't look like me. She's got long dark hair and brown skin. Her skin is browner than mine. I like all of them. All of them are different. They all have different personalities (Mandy, Interview).

According to Brown's UK experience (2001), teachers instantly bonded with one or other of the selection of Dolls presented at training sessions, perhaps triggered by a hair style, particular shoes or a dress similar to their own. If the teacher has a strong bond and likes the Doll, the chances are much higher that the children will form a close relationship with the Doll (Brown, 2001). This was confirmed by 90% of teachers, who said that they enjoyed the PDA and that it motivated them (Table 9).

In one case (Vignette 3, described earlier), the teacher (Shahida) asked me to pretend to drive the Doll away in my car (with the seat belt fastened) and wave to the children, only to creep back later and pass the Doll over the fence out of sight of the children. This escapade clearly shows how the teacher as well as the children engage and identify with the Doll. A teacher (Researcher's Journal) who found it too difficult to talk about HIV and AIDS reported that making eye contact with the Doll helped her to speak about HIV and AIDS for the first time.

Teachers said they felt more relaxed with parents and able to talk about difficult issues with them. Children trusted them more to help with home-related problems. Children spoke freely about home situations, and this was valuable in understanding why certain behaviour was taking place at school. This positive response was echoed by teachers in rural areas who have received training and Dolls: "In most groups of adults there is a positive response to the Dolls and a lot of enthusiasm for the Dolls" (Trainer Report). A rural foundation phase teacher, who was also a voluntary adult literacy teacher, spoke at length about using the Dolls very successfully with her adult learners to get them to open up and share things they otherwise would not have spoken about (Trainer Report).

However, some adults felt uncomfortable touching the Dolls and there could be many reasons for this. For instance, during training some teachers reportedly felt self-conscious as an adult touching a Doll. Cultural differences have also emerged, with teachers saying that in particular traditional African cultures Dolls are not used. One teacher was scared of being near the Doll, but was determined to master her fear as she was excited by the potential of the approach and wanted to use the Dolls with her class (Researcher's Journal).

Some men have said they feel uncomfortable handling Dolls: "If I hold the Doll on my lap they may say I'm a paedophile" (Researcher's Journal). While this in and of itself could relate to gender stereotyping, it may also be that men have a greater need to protect themselves from possible accusations of child abuse and as such cannot have close physical contact with the children they teach. Thus, some men do not want to role-model a practice such as having the Doll on their lap, that they cannot apply with the children in their class (Trainer Reports). The PDA approach, however, works

equally well with the Doll sitting beside the teacher on a chair (Trainer Reports), and some men working with young children reported that they are more comfortable with this. However, the close physical contact and the ‘whispering technique’ (listening to what the Doll is whispering and relaying it to the children) is part of the power of the approach particularly with young children.

5.1.3 Identity formation and self-esteem

For many children the Persona Doll was a first experience of seeing a Doll (or anything directly representing themselves) with their own skin colour and gender (Teacher Questionnaire). This offered a strong symbol of approval, sending the message that the Doll is just like you (in terms of gender, skin colour, social class, language or disability) and I value and respect her, therefore I value and respect you. The Dolls provided a powerful tool to encourage self-esteem (Brown, 2001). They can be identified with, and can mirror experiences (Mosely, 1993). Another response was that the children are anxious to find out “if the Doll loves them” (Teacher Questionnaire). This need for acceptance and love echoes the response from an Education Department official in a rural area who felt that for many children the Doll might be the only positive love that they would receive on the day of the visit. He referred to the levels of domestic violence, abuse, and lack of affection and caring in schools (Trainer Report).

Gonda (Vignette 2) and Verna (Vignette 1) illustrate ways of using the PDA to develop self-esteem across Anti-bias Goals 1 and 2. Gonda (Vignette 2) skilfully and sensitively encourages a child when he gives a wrong answer about HIV; she ensures that he is not humiliated while simultaneously ensuring that the wrong information is corrected:

Some of the things you're saying are very important - Jesse is getting quite pleased from what he hears from you children because he's read a lot about HIV because he wants to understand what this means for his mum, and he knows that you can't get HIV from sitting next to someone who coughs, because the germ as Thandi said, has to live in your blood. So it's only if you touch someone else's blood and ... you ...

Verna uses Lizo to affirm the children in her class: he is also five, he loves soccer, and he is shy of strangers. The children can identify with Lizo and share parts of his

life, and Verna's approval of him translates into approval and acceptance of their lives. As mentioned earlier, Mandy (Mandy, Interview) boosts a refugee child's confidence by introducing a Doll with a similar background who "also speaks French" and is "clever":

And I said, "She can speak French. Who else can speak French?" And there were a few children who came from the Congo and put up their hands. It was really sweet. They were like: "I can speak French too!"

The teachers quoted above made the point that children learn language best when they talk about things that interest them rather than being taught about specific words or phrases or being asked questions (Teacher Questionnaire). Tizard and Hughes (1984) indicate that when young children feel safe and have built a sense of trust they are then ready to interact and communicate. They assert that the languages that children speak, their sense of identity and their self-esteem are closely linked, and this is supported by teachers' responses.

5.1.4 Identity formation

The teachers in this study (Teacher Questionnaire) concurred with Brown (2001) about the importance of first introducing a Doll with whom the children can easily identify. It is important to balance similarities and differences in the persona, especially in the first Doll to visit. It is important to include some aspects that are the same or similar that the group can identify with, together with aspects that are different and the second Doll can introduce a different persona and situation (Brown, 2001). This shows the importance of access to a set of Dolls that represent diversity. Some teachers (Trainer Report) used and shared a set of Dolls within and across nearby schools.

Most children in the study "could not wait" for the Doll to visit (Teacher Questionnaire) and identified and bonded across colour and class differences. The accounts above focus on the connections between empathy and identity and raise a question: Do children need to identify as similar in some way before they can empathise, and begin to unlearn? The responses received from teachers in this study suggest that they do (Teacher Questionnaire).

“Hulle praat by voorbeeld niet meer van ‘Slaamse’ nie, maar ‘Moslems’. Hulle weet waarom mans lang rokke dra” (They have stopped talking about ‘Slaams’ and now say ‘Moslems’. They know why men wear long dresses) (Teacher Questionnaire). This teacher raised a faith and a gender issue regarding the fact that men can wear long dresses for religious reasons, though perhaps not for other reasons, but she did not explore the gender issue with the children. This quotation underlines the need for teacher support and for the PDA to achieve its aim of encouraging knowledge development and research skill development (Brown, 2001).

MacNaughton’s (2000b) theory of identity formation as a dialogue also proved useful in examining how teachers have used Persona Dolls to help each child to develop her or his own identity and an anti-bias identity. The PDA provided a practical tool to support this dialogue. Teachers developed particular personas (Vignettes 1-4) to assist children in engaging in this dialogue. For example, Jesse (Vignette 2) is a tool to develop dialogue around HIV and stigma. Personas are created to assist the children in identifying with the Doll, and in developing their own sense of identity and self-esteem. Thus, Jesse mirrored their own experiences (he lived nearby, had a granny and sister) but also introduced aspects that might be different from their experiences (“Jesse’s Mom has HIV”) to encourage the children to engage in dialogue about different experiences and perspectives on the world.

The central metaphor for identity formation becomes dialogue rather than mirroring: the self is defined by gaining voice and perspective and known in the experience of engagement with others (Gilligan, 1988:17, cited in MacNaughton, 2000b).

Dialogue in the context of MacNaughton’s theory is an active process of talking and listening with others: listening to them and being listened to by them. It also refers to how we respond to others without losing who we are. This process helps us learn about who will pay attention to us and care for us and under which conditions. We learn who we can and should be, as others show us who they are willing to pay attention to and care for. Gilligan believed that through a dialogue with our social world we can learn to distinguish ourselves from others (our personal self) and at the same time find a way of being that shows others we are recognisably ‘normal’ (our social self) (Gilligan, 1988:17, cited in MacNaughton, 2000b).

5.1.5 Children's voices

Fifty-six percent of teachers reported (Table 5) that the PDA encouraged children's participation in dialogue. They felt that there was more spontaneity in discussion and that withdrawn learners showed increased participation. "Children speak more and ask questions freely and are more confident; Some children who had never spoken out in class before now do so; Yes, the children are more eager to ask, listen and answer questions and speak more openly; speak with more confidence and spontaneity" (Teacher Questionnaire). These findings support MacNaughton's (2001) contention that the PDA facilitates dialogue as an active process of talking and listening with others, listening to them and being listened to by them.

There was a reported decrease in 'teacher talk', and instead the teachers listened to the children and began to understand the value of this dialogue (Table 5 and Table 6). An important learning, demonstrated in Vignette 4, was that teachers should wait and listen to the children's responses, and not rush to ask yet another question without giving the learners a chance to answer. This concurs with MacNaughton (2000a, 2007) experience of silences and the need to wait and give children a chance to think before expecting them to respond.

MacNaughton (2000b) raised questions relevant to exploring the use of the PDA as a tool through dialogue, for example: "Whose voices and perspectives are present in the group? Whose voices are silenced, marginalized or trivialised?". In Vignette 2 one child asked: "Can I also say something? They'll be shocked and then they'll really want to be his friend because he knows a lot of stuff about his mother". The way this Grade 2 child asked permission to speak indicates a common fear that children have about speaking out, especially having to compete to be heard in a large group. Through Gonda's support, by the end of the session the child seemed to feel confident about speaking her mind.

MacNaughton (2000b) has identified gender as an issue that should be 'unsilenced'. This applies above to Vignette 2. The boys tended to dominate with three girls and six boys actively participating. At the beginning of the session the boys dominated at the expense of the girls but later through skilled teacher facilitation, this balanced out more equally.

In addition, in Vignette 2 HIV was “unsilenced” as an issue when Gonda asked children questions and encouraged their voices, for example when she opened the door for Thandi to speak:

T: So it's only if you touch someone else's blood and...you. (Gonda stopped herself from dominating the discussion and includes a child, Thandi)

T: Yes you tell me?

C: Then it gets into your blood and then you can get HIV because you can't have...like you...have a bruise and then the blood comes out and then the other person...

Silencing also applied to children who were marginalised because they were not fluent in the majority language or spoke with different accents: introducing a Doll that represented their cultural group was recognition and affirmation of their culture and language (Mandy, Interview). Some teachers reported using the PDA as a tool to assist with second language learning (Trainer Report). Teachers reported incidents of children teasing others who spoke a different language or with a different accent. This was closely linked with racism. For example, “You talk funny” was often applied to, a Xhosa-speaking child in a mainly English-speaking classroom (Researcher’s Journal).

The scenario in Vignette 2 above illustrates the PDA’s role in realising the Anti-bias Goal 1 of supporting and developing children’s self-esteem and confidence, as the children are encouraged to speak out and voice their feelings and opinions.

MacNaughton (2000b) suggested that success in helping children learn to respect diversity and unlearn unfairness is most likely when teachers ask children what they know about diversity, allow children time to reflect, develop conversations and dialogue by seeking the reasons behind the answers they give, prepare children for small group discussions, and evaluate progress. According to Brems (2001), questioning serves many purposes, including facilitating communication, motivating self-disclosure and creating meaning and insight in the child. Appropriately asked questions add value to an interaction, therefore it is essential to support and develop the teacher’s style of questioning. MacNaughton (2000b) views learning as a highly interactive process between child and adult. The teacher can help children to be active role-players in the dialogue and process of identity formation.

Teachers reflected on a shift in their teaching style and how this impacted on the children:

I find myself being a bit calmer...like talking softer...and it works, because then the children also talk softer, my voice is not high anymore; it is in the middle level (Teacher Questionnaire).

Some children are afraid of their teacher and less afraid of the Doll, so they open up and feel safe to talk when the Doll is present. One teacher commented: “The children respond better to the Doll - they are sometimes scared of teacher’s reaction. The Doll does not get angry. Children think of the Doll as a friend” (Teacher Questionnaire).

5.2 Empathy and emotional intelligence

In this section I discuss how issues of empathy and diversity emerged in the study for the teachers themselves, and how teachers use the PDA to develop empathy and EI and literacy (Anti-bias Goal 2) in children. I have tried to place information in the most relevant sections but inevitably there is overlap and interaction across the four Anti-bias Goals.

Teachers said they saw the Persona Dolls as providing a useful tool to develop EI. 19% of teachers (Table 7) said “feelings” and “expressing feelings” were important aspects that they wanted to use the Dolls to address. Teachers said that the Dolls assisted in helping children to express their feelings, and that children were more aware (48%) of their feelings and expressed their feelings more frequently (Table 7). Many teachers rated EI as the most important Anti-bias Goal to be addressed by the PDA. Thus, the teachers’ awareness of the importance of EI is evident. Only one teacher felt that the PDA was “more suited to trauma rooms” rather than mainstream class sessions (Teacher Questionnaire). A concern with this EI emphasis is that teachers may only use the PDA to deal with emotional literacy and EI and not address the unlearning of prejudices and the activist goal.

Emotional literacy and EI are important aspects of the PDA for adults and for children. One participant in training raised this need: “If you cry there is something that is a relief to yourself and you feel free” (Trainer Report). Many adults trained through PDT-SA have had few opportunities to talk and express feelings and be

listened to, or to cry, especially regarding their experiences of oppression. An example is the ‘hair issue’ (Vignette 3) which has arisen many times during training as a hidden, unnamed issue of ‘coloured’ participants feeling ‘less than’. Many still experience painful memories of name-calling when they were children (Trainer Report).

I looked at Steiner’s (2002) five main skills (listed in Chapter 2) at the centre of EI (Steiner, 2002). These emotional literacy skills assisted in examining the data. I looked for evidence of the five skills during Persona Doll sessions with children.

Teachers demonstrated the PDA goal of naming and expressing feelings. They reported that this, indeed, was happening, thus demonstrating Steiner’s first skill: “Children: Yes I feel lonely when my mommy goes away, and I cry; I cry when I feel sad, and I feel shy when strangers come to visit and I run away” (Vignette1). This showed that children were naming and expressing their feelings during Persona Doll sessions, which is essential if teachers are to use the approach to encourage meaningful relationships and dialogue with children.

Teachers maintained that the Persona Doll sessions provided a “safe space for children to open up and speak freely” (Teacher Questionnaire). Children developed emotional vocabulary while expressing feelings and thoughts through the stories and discussions (Table 7). Teachers confirmed that the PDA played a role in developing emotional vocabulary in the children’s home language²⁷ (Trainer Report).

This teacher’s experience illustrates Steiner’s second, third and fourth skills: children are learning to manage their emotions, recognise when they have done wrong, apologise and make amends:

They are playing with each other in the playground. If any bitchiness or bullying occurs, they sort it out among themselves and there is less fighting during intervals; Aisha, a bully, has become quite docile and cooperative; Much more spontaneous and observant and compassionate to each other; they say sorry; They are getting used to apologising when they are at fault (Teacher Questionnaire).

²⁷ The project developed resource lists of emotional vocabulary in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa which are used in training

This indicates that children were becoming more empathetic, their behaviour was affected and they were taking action to help their friends. Teachers also reported that children “have become aware of the emotional consequences of bullying and name-calling” (Teacher Questionnaire).

Measuring the incidence of emotional language used by teachers and children during Persona Doll sessions falls outside the scope of this study. As I mentioned before, Buchanan (2007) looked at this in a South African study which showed an increase in emotional vocabulary used by preschool children and teachers, as was expected. Teacher responses and observations collected in this study confirmed Buchanan’s findings. The development of emotional literacy and EI is closely linked to the Anti-bias Goals of empathy and unlearning.

5.2.1 Building empathy and respect for diversity

For Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989, in press), the second Anti-bias Goal is to promote in each child and adult a comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds: this has to do with information, emotional attitudes and feelings. This second goal links to Steiner’s second skill, having empathy, and his fifth skill, which relates to interaction.

They all clapped hands for Samkelo, who has HIV and sometimes is ill. That’s when the others offered to play with her outside during outdoor playtime. I kept on reminding them that she won’t play for long as she gets tired quickly. Children made suggestions where they can play with her. “We can play in the Doll’s corner!” “ No, she can play puzzles with us and she will sit on the chair, she won’t get tired!” The other one asked if she has brought her medicines with her (Thandi, Interview).

Thandi commented on the children’s empathetic interaction with the Doll in wanting to adapt their play to accommodate her illness. The teacher gave each Doll a persona that reflected similarities and differences in relation to the group of children (Brown, 2001). In the first introduction the focus should be on the similarities of identity, for example owning a fabulous soccer ball, or having been to watch rugby as the children in the class did recently.

Some teachers spoke of compassion (Teacher Questionnaire), and often used the term interchangeably with empathy. Empathy is the capacity to recognize or understand another's state of mind or emotion, often characterized as the ability to 'put oneself into another's shoes'. Empathy does not necessarily imply compassion, but it seems that empathy precedes compassion. Empathy and self-esteem are closely linked (Mosley, 1993). The ability to empathise depends on the ability to feel your own feelings and identify them. Teachers support the view of Mosley (1993) saying how strongly the children identify with the Dolls, see themselves in the Dolls, and then are able to 'feel for', to feel empathy and compassion for another.

When we feel empathy for someone we are receiving emotional information about him or her and the situation. In this process of getting to know another person's experience on an emotional level, you are likely to see similarities between your feelings and theirs, and between your basic emotional needs and theirs. When you realize that someone else's basic emotional needs are similar to yours, you are more able to relate to them and empathize with them (Steiner, 2002). 57% of teachers responded that it was most important to use the Dolls to address empathy (Table 8). Addressing empathy was second only to bullying and name-calling (78%), which may also be related to empathy or the lack of it. 92% of teachers mentioned (Table 6) that the children's behaviour shifted, their empathy, compassion and willingness to help increased, which realized Anti-bias Goal 2. Teachers reported shifts in children's empathy, noting:

They are more compassionate to other people's feelings and situations; Children say to each other "Don't be afraid"; One child didn't want to come to preschool, now after the Doll started coming he also does; he wants to do whatever the Doll does (Teacher Questionnaire; Shahida, Interview).

This attests to the children's strong identification with the Dolls.

Brown (2001) outlines a process for using the PDA to develop empathy. In the first stage children are able to relate to particular features they share with the Dolls, for example, "She got braids just like me". This stage helps to build empathy. The children can put themselves in the Doll's shoes and are able to empathise with the Doll. In the second stage, teachers introduce Dolls with physical characteristics and identities that reflect families and communities that are different and may not be

represented in the class or even in the local community. Examples are Sally and the dog (Vignette 3) and in Jesse's HIV scenario (Vignette 4). The children are encouraged to show empathy towards children and others who are different. (This is not to suggest that empathy with people who are different cannot be encouraged or achieved until the children empathise with a Doll similar to themselves.)

5.2.2 Dolls teach teachers

Teachers reported that they feel more empathetic and show more compassion towards the children in their care. "I am more sympathetic towards the learners about their feeling and emotions and (home) situations" (Teacher Questionnaire; Table 9). This response shows clearly that teachers are aware and acknowledge that children grow up in different contexts that should be brought into and respected in the classroom (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989).

Teachers (46%) reported that through the PDA they have gained greater insight and understanding into children's lives and problems (Table 9). Teachers (62%) say that more dialogue and discussion is taking place (Table 9). According to Brown (2001) an important aspect of the PDA methodology is that the voices of the children as well as the teacher are heard. The sessions provide a structured time to ensure interactive dialogue. The teacher's role is to introduce the 'story', and then the discussion begins. Teacher preparation should focus as much on the open-ended questions, as on the story, to ensure children's participation.

That was my very first experience of working with a Persona Doll. To me it was just amazing. I felt so empowered; I felt I was helping children to cope and helping them to talk about things. So often in schools it's numeracy, literacy, it's life skills, it's go play outside, it's come back in and it's work, work, work, RNCS²⁸. The session with the Doll, in life skills, was the one session during the day when the children could just talk about themselves and their feelings and the things they do at home, could get excited about the things that they like doing, and learn to deal with issues that upset them (Mandy, Interview).

Teachers do not always respond as positively as in this example. From classroom observations during this study it appeared to be very difficult for some teachers to relinquish the 'lecture' mode of teaching and change from the story-teller role to

²⁸ Revised National Curriculum Statement

being a facilitator using an interactive problem-posing style to encourage child participation. Teachers sometimes interrupt children, or complete their sentences for them, and at times don't allow a space for them to speak at all (Vignette 3; Trainer Report).

Forty-six percent of teachers said they felt the PDA was helping them to listen better to children (Table 9) and that they had learnt from the children: "I am more aware now that it's important to listen to my children"; "I have learnt a lot and understand their circumstances better now" (Teacher Questionnaire; Table 9). In Vignette 3 Shahida picks up on a comment made by a child to raise feelings related to domestic violence: "Molly said she doesn't want her parents to get violent, that makes her scared". The concrete role-playing of a respectful relationship with the Doll has a strong impact and many teachers (Teacher Questionnaire) have commented they hadn't realised or had "forgotten" that they should behave in the same caring, respectful way, that they want the children to behave. These responses from teachers confirm Brown's (2001) belief that the PDA can teach teachers to respect their children.

Some children were afraid of their teacher and less afraid of the Doll so they opened up and felt safe to talk when the Doll is present, as this teacher comments: "The children respond better to the Doll, they are sometimes scared of teacher's reaction. The Doll does not get angry. Children think of the Doll as a friend" (Teacher Questionnaire).

5.2.3 Factors influencing success

Teachers' own levels of confidence influence how the children engage or not in the PDA, and therefore its success and impact, or lack of impact. Brown maintains (2008) that some teachers feel comfortable in a fantasy situation, and in trying out a new strategy. Shahida (Vignette 3) demonstrated this when she asked me to 'taxi' Molly (Trainer Report). Some teachers have said practising at home in front of a mirror or with their own children assists in developing their confidence (Brown, 2008; Trainer Report). There seems to be a trend that teachers of younger children (preschool, Grade R and Grade 1) feel more comfortable using the Dolls (Trainer Report;

Researcher's Journal) as their practice is generally involves more drama, story and fun compared to the practice of teachers working with older children.

Developing personas has helped teachers to be aware of difference and dispel myths and stereotypes that are barriers to empathy (Mosley, 1993; Mayer *et al.*, 2000). This process has helped teachers to be more aware of their own personal prejudices. The process of discussing the persona and finding out more information, using parents as a resource as well as colleagues, has helped team-building and broken down barriers between staff in some schools (Gonda, Interview; Trainer Report). This process helped some teachers to understand and accept that it was appropriate and important (and part of the curriculum) to directly deal with issues of bias, culture, and poverty. Some teachers become confident as proactive PDA activists in their classes.

Teachers' confidence linked to teacher support has emerged as an important factor which was emphasised by Brown (2008). Teachers expressed a need for classroom-based support, meetings, workshops where they could share their experiences and receive support and fresh input to motivate and encourage their work. Often the need to explore a particular situation or issue arises (Trainer Report). Teachers also expressed their need for practical assistance, for example: "Our children won't go near others with HIV. I don't know what to do" (Trainer Report). Teachers also asked for more content information on topics including gender, the development of sexuality, homophobia, and refugees. In expressing this need teachers echo Derman-Sparks who reported that a motivation for the revision of the 1989 Anti-Bias Curriculum was in response to the need for information on issues such as social class, Arab-Americans, immigrant families, and families including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons (Personal correspondence).

Teachers wanted more training and support. The project guidelines for training selection recommended that each school send at least two teachers so that they could support each other in implementing the PDA. This helped to an extent but a need emerged for more support to develop confidence and skills to deal with anti-bias issues. This echoed the need expressed in the UK (Brown, 2009). The study confirms the need for this support: teachers requested support sessions, and their training

evaluation comments said they felt “refreshed and feel re-motivated” after PDT-SA support sessions (Trainer Report).

Classroom problems (Observations; Trainer Report) that impacted on children’s learning included: lack of discipline; large and overcrowded classes; teaching methods which were boring or not at the child’s level; and a culture of ‘not listening’ whether it be among children, children to teacher, or teacher to child/children. Many of these problems were reported at feedback sessions as impacting on teachers’ ability to implement the PDA (Trainer Report).

For some teachers (Trainer Reports), the PDT-SA was their first opportunity to reflect in a safe space on their own experience of being discriminated against or excluded. Dealing with sexual abuse was an often mentioned as an area where teachers wanted support. There were many issues of racism around appearance (skin colour, hair type etc). Teachers’ own self-esteem is linked to the unlearning of internalised oppression (Early Learning Resource Unit, 1997), which is ‘normal’ for those growing up in a deeply racist, sexist, classist society. Molly (Vignette 3) and the ‘fuzzy hair’ issue illustrated a painful story that often comes up in training in the Western Cape, as hair is a significant issue mainly in the coloured community. Some teachers also avoided racism (Chisholm, 2004). It is of concern that some (predominantly white middle class) teachers felt that racism was ‘not a problem’ in contrast to parents and children at the same school who made the problem very clear (Research Journal). These accounts highlight the need for support to transform teachers’ values (Jansen, 2001) to address personal bias and issues of internalised oppression.

Teachers reported that it had been valuable to share the approach with the whole school staff, and to develop the personas as a staff group. This opened a long overdue and very heated discussion of culture, language, gender and social class issues that would never otherwise be spoken about with the staff (Teacher Questionnaire, Trainer Report). Mandy (Vignette 4) understood that to achieve success she needed the support of the teachers and principal and won the principal over before she could address the stone-throwing issue. Samuels *et al.* (1996) and Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989, in press) assert that for an anti-bias curriculum to work it needs to be integrated in all areas and levels of the school. Cooperative teamwork helps to develop understanding and respect between staff members, and supports their anti-bias practice with children and parents (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, in press; Brown 2001).

According to Brown (2001, 2008), ideally there should be a whole school anti-bias curriculum focus.

Teachers (Trainer Reports) showed their enjoyment of the PDT-SA sessions. Teachers expressed despair at being overloaded, overwhelmed by day-to-day stress and numerous training courses. However, they wanted to come to PDT-SA sessions knowing they would leave feeling motivated, more skilled, enthused and refreshed.

5.3 Unlearning negative attitudes

This section focuses on the way teachers used the PDA to address issues of bias and prejudice in order to assist children to unlearn prejudice they may have developed (Katz, 1976; Milner, 1983; Aboud, 1988). I discuss children's and teachers' responses to the PDA. I use MacNaughton's (2000b) questions in relation to children's unlearning of prejudice (Anti-bias Goal 3) to discuss teachers' responses. Her questions included:

- What stories are narrated?
- Who is active in narrating stories, and who are the spectators in the group?
- What stories do they critique and how do they do this, and whose stories are silenced, marginalized or trivialised?
- How might storytelling contribute to the formation of anti-bias identities?

These questions assist in discussing the themes related to unlearning which emerged in the study and are addressed individually, to the extent possible, in this section.

5.3.1 Teachers' versus children's stories

The stories that emerged in the study originated from the teachers, based on themes, which they drew either from the curriculum or from classroom issues. Teachers narrated stories (Table 8) about bullying (78%) including racist, sexist, classist, disabilist and xenophobic bullying. These issues echo Jansen (2001), Carrim and Soudien (1995), Soudien, (2004), and Chisholm (2004). Teachers also used stories to promote empathy with similarities and differences (57%), and social problems (32%), for example domestic violence, crime, alcohol and substance abuse (Table 8). These

represent the themes teachers believed appropriate for children's needs in terms of their situations (Clacherty & Associates, 2001), and school situations (Chisholm, 2004; Soudien, 2004) and for addressing the foundation phase life skills learning programme (Department of Education, 2003).

The issues raised by the children's stories, however, differed from those reported by the teachers. Themes raised by the children (Table 8) prioritised social problems illustrating some of the issues raised by Chisholm (2004). These included: domestic violence, fighting, crime, alcohol and substance abuse (62%), bullying and name-calling (37%), and family issues like bereavement, divorce, neglect, moving (43%). "One boy came to me to say that he didn't eat for a few days", and another said: "My daddy hit my mommy" (Teacher Questionnaire). These findings concur with other South African studies, for example the Youth 4 Solidarity Movement's (2007) South African survey placed poverty, HIV and AIDS, education, unemployment and drugs as the top five issues which concerned young people²⁹. These issues were also in contrast to adult concerns.

The teachers selected some issues intentionally and proactively, while other themes developed from children's contributions, or were generated from the discussion including teacher and children's contributions (Vignette 1). This was an expected response (Brown, 2001) and was dealt with during the training, where teachers were encouraged to plan but also be open to respond to issues which 'come up' which can enrich the dialogue and provide insight into what is important to the children. Sometimes teachers shelved their planning, or sometimes the new issue was acknowledged (so the child did not feel put down), to be dealt with at a later date (Trainer Report).

Gonda (Vignette 2) deliberately and proactively chose a 'white' pale beige-skinned boy Doll to use to address HIV and AIDS with the Grade 2 class in order to challenge the stereotype that "only black people have AIDS". Gonda touched on gender by choosing a unisex name, Jesse, for the Doll (Vignette 2) but did not develop the

²⁹ Youth concerns are captured, not young children ages three to nine years, which also needs research.

discussion. Brown (2001) discussed using Persona Dolls to challenge gender stereotypes, for example by presenting a girl Doll as being active, strong and loving soccer, while including a range of characteristics to make sure that all girls could identify with her. Brown (2001) suggests that the first Doll to be introduced to a group of children should be similar to the majority of the children in the class, and that a boy Doll should be introduced first to anticipate the attitude that ‘all Dolls are girls and only for girls’. Teachers addressed gender issues in terms of abuse and domestic violence (Trainer Report; Researcher’s Journal) but there was a significant lack of gender awareness in relation to sexism, sexual orientation, and gender stereotyping. Teachers did not seem to make links to gender as a way of preventing abuse, although gender (sexism) was listed with racism as a priority (Table 8). This was not surprising: while gender was hotly debated during training sessions, the discussion revealed a need for more information and attention to gender as an issue. This links to the UK findings (Brown, 2009) that difficult gender issues like homophobia are the least likely issues to be addressed with the PDA.

MacNaughton (1996:54) presents gender as a way of being:

which influences every aspect of children’s development, from their values, beliefs, emotion, language, cognition, style of communication and physical activities, use of space and social relationships...

It is therefore of great concern that teachers neglect supporting children’s development in this area, particularly in the context of sexual abuse and violence against women (Chisholm, 2004; Richter *et al.*, 2006).

Identity issues of race emerged from some PDA sessions. A Grade 3 teacher (Trainer Report) reported that the initial response from coloured children to the Doll, Kami, was not at all positive. The children commented negatively on his dark skin and hair, although some of the children in the class resembled him in skin tone, hair texture and style (MacNaughton, 2007). The teacher did not pursue the use of the Doll but allowed Kami to sit in the class. Towards the end of the day the teacher reported to the children that Kami had been listening to the children and was very upset by their comments and that he wanted to go back to Khayelitsha and not return to visit this school. The teacher reported that the children felt bad and apologized and asked that he visit again. Kami became a regular visitor to the class and was accepted after the

teacher had addressed his hurt feelings (Trainer Report). Her sensitivity and skill in adapting her planned session, taking account of the children's attitudes and voices, and her strategy to address their racism seemed to be successful and developed empathy and unlearning.

Another teacher's strategy to deal with anticipated racism in the class involved asking a 'white' student teacher who had also used Persona Dolls, to introduce Zwaai (the Doll) to the group. She reported that as Zwaai was a 'black' Doll she was concerned that the mainly 'coloured' and 'white' children might reject him. She felt that if the 'white' student introduced Zwaai as her friend, he would have more credibility with the children. This strategy apparently worked in that the children happily befriended Zwaai, although it is uncertain whether the teacher's fears were grounded. It seems unlikely that the teacher was projecting her own racism, as she had very positive energy and enthusiasm regarding anti-bias. She has since used Zwaai successfully as a refugee child from Zimbabwe and integrated his story into the children's learning programme. She told of his fears when leaving his country and walking through the bush and being afraid of the animal noises etc. Her intention was that Zwaai would visit the class regularly (Trainer Report).

Social class bias and issues of identity emerged in a similar way to the examples above in Mandy's (Mandy, Interview) report:

But I made a mistake with the 'X' school, children from well-off and from very rich homes, and they were saying that it's "just a Doll". The mistake I made was that the Doll (Lucy) came from a poor community. You need to take a Doll that the children can relate to, and they were not relating to Lucy because Lucy comes from a poor, one-bedroom flat in a fishing village. And they were saying things like, oh, we've got eight acres! If I had made her come from a wealthy home and a big house, they would have related to her more (Mandy, Interview).

Mandy was part of a racism target group herself and different to the majority of the children in the group ('white'), which may have linked 'race' to the social class prejudice expressed (Chisholm, 2004). "Next time Sally visits maybe she will have a happy story about a birthday party or something else" (Vignette 4). This quotation shows Mandy's awareness of the risk of stereotyping the Doll. According to Brown (2001) it is important to ensure that the Doll is not presented as a victim. Positive everyday life and curriculum-related themes, as well as difficult scenarios, should be offered to prevent the children stereotyping the Doll.

Teachers recognised and understood that, if you allow them to, children can solve problems, understand that unfairness hurts, and unlearn prejudice. Gonda (Gonda, Interview) raised the issue of respecting differences, including disabilities. For example, she dealt with unlearning around learning difficulties. The Doll represented a child who was being teased because he had problems with reading. Another issue dealt with was name-calling linked to being overweight (“You are fat!”) In this case the issue was also linked to racism, illustrating the interconnection of issues (Samuels *et al.*, 1996) as well as Anti-bias Goals of empathy and unlearning. However, sexism and gender themes were hardly mentioned by teachers.

The different ways that the teachers dealt with the above anti-bias situations indicates the complexity of identity (including the teacher, the Dolls, and children) interacting with issues of bias, and the complex situations and equality themes. These themes ran across all the Anti-bias Goals.

5.3.2 Teachers’ versus children’s narration

Children related stories in response to the teacher’s ‘invitation’. The stories were not entirely open as the teacher set the scene, using the already developed persona and the introductory story, but the story is open-ended so there is space for the children’s voices. After the teacher set the scene, the children responded and added their own experiences and stories. The extent of their input, as discussed earlier, varied according to the teacher’s facilitation skills, especially skill in using open-ended questions. Observations showed that teachers were often over-active and dominated discussions, which then degenerated into ‘lectures’. This tells us much about the teaching style of the teacher: many struggle to stop talking and encourage dialogue. It is reassuring that most teachers expressed excitement about the spontaneity of the children (63%) and previously quiet and shy children were mentioned as now participating (Table 5 to Table 7). Teachers’ responses confirm their understanding of the importance of encouraging the child to express him/herself, and through dialogue develop a sense of identity and empathy.

In Gonda's session (Vignette 2) the high level of HIV knowledge in the group emerged because of her facilitation skills. Social issues such as HIV and AIDS, and bereavement were raised by children (Thandi, Interview). Children also revealed to teachers how much they knew about drugs, gangsters and crime (Trainer Reports). I learnt the details about the popular and destructive drug 'tik' from a grade two child (Researcher's Journal) while observing a PDA session.

Mandy (Mandy, interview) raised concerns about teachers' own assumptions and levels of prejudice, which may impact on the children:

...and you must be careful when you are using the Dolls not to make assumptions about certain things that certain cultures or certain families do. You have to get your facts right. Even the name of your Doll is a Muslim name and a coloured, and that the father is a drunkard – that just doesn't make sense to me. He's a Muslim...then his father shouldn't...might not really be an alcoholic. It does happen, but you can't just assume those things.

Making assumptions was not an unexpected issue in relation to racist and sexist stereotypes, and was addressed during the training. Teachers sometimes also made assumptions, for example that all children have someone they can talk to, a safe place to hide, or a 'special friend' who will help them (Trainer Report). These examples underlined the importance of addressing teachers' personal prejudices and assumptions towards 'difference' and 'other' (Soudien, 2004) and the need to develop knowledge about cultures, faiths, gender and health issues. This issue is addressed by Samuels *et al.*, (1996) and motivate for teacher support to address issues of bias on all levels: from curriculum guidelines to the way that teachers interact with children and teach. Derman-Sparks concurs (Personal correspondence) and underlines the power of learning, through "sharing the diverse narratives of the insights people have garnered from their experiences, that anti-bias work is possible".

"Oh he is from Angola - he lives in wetland (undesirable area)...ha ha ha..."(Trainer Report). This quotation illustrates how teachers' values and prejudices, in this case towards Angolan refugees, inform their use of the PDA. The issue arose in response to a Doll with an Angolan persona who was introduced during a training session, in a community that was ravaged by xenophobia not long afterwards.

5.3.3 Spectators

Who are the spectators in the group? Teachers display a desire for all children to contribute and actively participate. This study showed teachers were aware of the need to encourage all children “even the shy or aggressive ones” (Teacher Questionnaire), and they tried to support and encourage all the children in their groups in an inclusive way. “Some children who had never spoken out in class before now do so”.

Gonda (Vignette 2) drew in the girls when she became aware that boys were dominating the discussion. Mandy (Vignette 4) avoided spotlighting (or silencing) the perpetrators (stone throwers) and skilfully included them in the discussion to a positive end. Many teachers in the study work in large overcrowded classes (Jansen, 2001; Richter *et al.*, 2006). This impacted on the way the PDA was used. Teachers facilitating in smaller classes found it easier to include more children in discussions and therefore achieved more dialogue as well as emotional language development (Steiner, 2002). However, many teachers reported that the PDA also helped in large classes: children were more attentive, involved and interested in the session (Thandi Interview; Trainer Report).

5.3.4 Silencing and trivializing

Shahida (Vignette 3) effectively silenced alternative responses from children on the ‘hair’ issue, where a deeper discussion might have affirmed the beauty of African hair and built the self-esteem of children in the group. The father’s protector role was also ‘silenced ‘ and the stereotype not challenged.

Mandy (Mandy, Interview) as mentioned before, used a girl Doll to help children unlearn xenophobic prejudice. This Doll who was also “very clever” and “also spoke French” supported a refugee boy from the Congo who had been rejected by the group:

I introduced her and I said, “Do you know that Khwezi is really clever?” I said, “You want to know why she’s clever?” And they said, “Yes, why is she clever?” And I said, “She can speak French. Who else can speak French?” And there were a few children who came from the Congo and put up their hands. It was really sweet. They were like: I can speak French too!”

This scenario explores empathy; respect for difference; and unlearning prejudice; as well as refugee issues. Mandy acted on her own values and was proactive in taking action against racism, ethnic stereotyping and xenophobic attitudes towards refugees. Mandy was able to demonstrate the PDA across all the Anti-bias Goals.

Teachers reported that the PDA helped address name-calling and teasing of children who spoke English as a second language or who spoke English with a different accent. Language and accent prejudice was often linked to racism. This relates to Soudien's (2004) concern with the prevalence of the assimilationist approach in SA schools. Languages other than English are devalued and children suffered as a result of related rejection, name-calling and bullying (Teacher Questionnaire).

A concern emerged during the study that the PDA is a new approach and is perceived as falling outside the mainstream (even though the PDA is a cross-curricular approach and fits in easily as a tool to achieve the curriculum goals and outcomes). As a result of this perception, teachers might not continue to use the Dolls and/or they might use them to silence children or silence anti-bias issues. "When I need the children to follow instructions I let the Doll sit with the group and address the Doll as one of the learners" (Teacher Questionnaire). This teacher's technique to encourage listening and respect worked for her. However, if the Doll represents a 'teaching assistant' it cannot fulfil its anti-bias role as a realistic friend to the children, sometimes being 'good' and sometimes 'naughty'. Teachers who were tempted (Teacher Questionnaire) to use the Doll to establish better discipline and listening did not achieve the anti-bias aims.

There were reports that some teachers were not using the Dolls at all after training (Trainer Reports). However, there were many instances of the PDA being used effectively in classrooms (Vignettes 2, 4, Trainer Reports). The study identified barriers of language, class size, teacher attitudes, lack of structural support, teacher stress and lack of training (Jansen, 2001). These barriers could also be contributing to the silencing and marginalisation of children's voices (Trainer Reports). This concern also relates to teachers' high stress levels (Richter *et al.*, 2006). Teachers reported that stress about issues of poverty, overcrowded classes, and lack of support (Jansen, 2001) impacted on their use of the PDA. Some teachers claimed they had not been

able to implement their use yet due to these problems (Trainer Reports). However, one Grade 2 teacher (Researcher's Journal) who was faced with a class of 84 children (a double class due to staff shortages) on a daily basis, used the PDA successfully in this difficult situation.

It would be interesting for future research to investigate children's gender experiences (MacNaughton, 1996) and children's silence as an indicator of resistance as well as oppression (Silin 1999, in MacNaughton, 1999). It was not possible to explore this deeper level of children's responses to the PDA in this study.

5.4 Problem-posing and activist approach

This section discusses problem-posing and the activist approach reflected in Anti-bias Goal 4. Related elements include listening: respect; and the use of open-ended questions to ensure dialogue; increased understanding; cognition and concentration. I will explore how issues emerged in the study.

5.4.1 Problem-posing

Teachers have used the PDA to problem-pose and engage in an activist approach. Teachers (Vignette 4, Vignette 2) using the PDA demonstrate problem-posing (Freire, 1972) as they critically reflect on the social consequences of what they teach, work against inequalities and injustices which children face in their daily lives, and work towards empowerment. All four Goals³⁰ are referred to, as there is much overlap and interrelation.

Vignette 4 illustrates Mandy's activist, problem-posing approach. She was moved and motivated by a community issue and strategised to challenge bias in her community in a proactive activist way. The following themes emerged from Vignette 4:

- Problem-posing
- Listening and respect
- Cognition and concentration
- Activist approach.

³⁰ Four Anti-bias Goals: to develop identity and self-esteem; empathy, emotional intelligence and diversity; unlearning; and activist problem-posing (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989, in press).

Mandy (Vignette 4), focused on a real problem of social inequality (in this case a disability issue) which the children face on a daily basis in the poor community where Mandy also lives. Through using ‘Sally’, she strategised to challenge bias in her community in a proactive way. Mandy tried to assist the children to understand by leading them through a problem-posing process. Mandy expressed awareness of the empowerment and confidence-building potential of the PDA, supporting what other teachers have said, for example: “Children think very hard and serious about an issue, children would come out with amazing answers” (Teacher Questionnaire). Vignette 4 illustrates the collaboration between teachers and children that develops through confronting real problems. Freire (1972) maintains that this is necessary for a process where children and teachers become critical explorers, decision makers, and activists. He called this a problem-posing approach and contrasted it with traditional ‘banking’ style education, where teachers make the ‘deposits’ of information that the children receive, memorise and repeat.

Mandy (Vignette 4) addressed a difficult community issue during the session, demonstrating that teachers can use the PDA to deal with difficult issues such as racism, gender and conflict (Jansen, 2001). She demonstrated the proactive element that is an important part of the anti-bias activist approach (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; in press; Brown, 2001). Derman-Sparks *et al.* applies Freire’s (1972) problem-posing approach to the Anti-bias Goals of unlearning and activism:

Goal Three: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts, and the Activist goal: Goal Four: Each child will demonstrate empowerment, and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, in press).

Mandy (Vignette 4) demonstrates important elements and phases (Brown 2001: 60) of problem-posing, using the PDA:

- Phase 1: Introduce a realistic problem. Ideally, this develops out of an existing persona, and the children should already be familiar with and have a relationship with the Doll. The problem posed may be reactive (responding to an issue which has arisen in the class) or proactive (relevant to the local community or society). At this stage the focus is on Goal 1: Identity and self-esteem.

- Phase 2: Facilitate discussion with a focus on the emotions and expressing feelings that the Doll is experiencing, for example: "She hates being bullied and feels frightened". The children express their own feelings related to the issue. At this stage the focus is on Goal 2: Empathy and emotional intelligence.
- Phase 3: Pose questions and open discussion, encouraging children to respect and to listen and to offer solutions or options to help the Doll, and to share their own ideas, experiences and stories. At this stage the focus is on Goal 3: Unlearning and Goal 4: Activist problem-posing.
- Phase 4: Help the children to critically reflect, look at the options, and decide which are realistic. This is where children have a sense of empowerment and achievement in helping their friend. "It also empowers them as they come up with solutions for Sally, which they can imagine implementing" (Vignette 4). This phase pulls all the Goals together by building self-esteem, empathy, emotional intelligence, unlearning and activist problem-posing.

Sally the Doll (Vignette 4) was a practical tool to support problem-posing dialogue, through all the PDA phases, enabling children to develop a sense of social identity and unlearn discrimination. Children also learnt about who would care for them (MacNaughton, 2000b) and under what conditions. They also learnt who they can and should be, and whom they are willing to help and care for.

The scenario in Vignette 4 relates to the responses of 56% of teachers (Table 5) who maintained that children were more curious and asked more questions during the Persona Doll sessions than during other lessons. The children expressed interest and wanted to know more about what was happening in the Doll's life, and about the issues embedded in the stories. This aspect underlined MacNaughton's (2000a) findings that children are interested and wants to engage with issues of unfairness and bias.

5.4.2 Listening and respect

Many teachers in this study corroborated Mandy's observation in Vignette 4:

Now they are all quiet and really listening attentively; the children are listening better; children listen to what the Doll is saying. They are interested in what the Doll has to say and ask, so they listen attentively and concentrate better. They

are also more curious and interested in what is happening; they remember details about the Dolls personas and stories; they ask more questions and are actively engaged (Teacher Questionnaire).

Teachers commented on changes in their style of teaching, voice pitch and volume changes: “My voice is not high any more; it is in the middle level”...“I find myself being a bit calmer...like talking softer and it works, because then the children also talk softer”(Teacher Questionnaire). This appeared to assist children in listening and the role-modelling influenced the atmosphere and calmness in the classes. Teachers reported the impact on children’s behaviour:

Yes the children’s behaviour has changed; they are trying very hard to listen respectfully to teacher and trying to do it. They listen to each other. The more boisterous children are listening more attentively (Teacher Questionnaire).

Brown maintains (2001) that this capacity to wait and listen respectfully while the other person talks is essential to achieving the goals of the PDA.

There were differences in how children approached Persona Doll group times in the different settings. In Vignettes 1 (preschool) and 4 (Grade 1) children lolled about much more freely and interrupted many times. This contrasts with the middle class school (Vignette 2) where the children were more attentive, put up their hands to speak, and kept concentration for a very long time. The attentiveness could have been linked to the teacher’s style of teaching more than the age level or social class majority of the school. Children’s lack of experience of free discussion sessions may have influenced the behaviour.

In one preschool group (Vignette 3) it was extremely hard to see the PDA as valuable. The children were restless and not able to listen to the story or each other, unlike the children observed in most other groups. The capacity to wait and listen to someone else talking is essential to successfully achieving the PDA goals. If the Dolls and their stories are to be successful in helping children to problem-solve around what is fair and unfair, then children need to listen to different points of view and be able to contribute to group discussion. MacNaughton (2001b) maintains that when children can do this, much can be accomplished, but when they cannot voice their voices, and when the voices of other children remain silenced, the aims of the PDA are not

achieved. This points to the need for teacher support and facilitation skill development.

Teachers valued the PDA as it recognised their own voices: for example, personas were not supplied but teachers created them themselves, based on their own knowledge and experiences (Trainer Reports).

5.4.3 Cognition and concentration

Increased cognitive and language development was emphasised by teachers. 69% reported increased concentration during Persona Doll sessions (Table 6). Children were thinking through problems, thinking creatively and practically. Many were surprised at the solutions the children came up with. In addition, teachers were often impressed (Teacher Questionnaire; Vignette 2) by the knowledge that children possessed: for example, about drugs, HIV and AIDS, where to go to get help if abused, how to cure lice, shopping, money and safe transport routes.

Language development was reported, as shown in increased participation (63% Table 5) in discussion and wider vocabulary. Teachers (Gonda, Interview; Trainer Report) referred to children's ability to remember details about Persona Doll stories, their personas and what had happened at the last visit. However, as mentioned before, classroom problems (Jansen, 2001; Chisholm, 2004) impacted on children's learning: lack of effective discipline; large and overcrowded classes; teaching methods which were boring or not at the child's level; and a culture of 'not listening' among the children, children to teacher, and teacher to child/children. These problems, which impacted on the way teachers implemented the PDA, were expressed in feedback sessions (Trainer Report; Researcher's Journal).

5.4.4 Activist approach

Mandy (Vignette 4) used the activist approach. She demonstrated her own empowerment, and the skills to act against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, in press). Mandy dealt with a community issue, she aimed to make a difference in the local community and also to raise children's awareness of

disabilities, help them to unlearn prejudice, to build empathy and prevent bullying. Her activist aim (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 2008) included wanting to empower children to act when something was wrong in their lives. Other teachers confirm that the PDA develops a sense of confidence and empowerment of children (Table 7).

The principal's initial attitude (Vignette 4) is mirrored by many other school principals, teachers and parents who are reluctant to deal with difficult issues. For example, the study found reluctance from parents and teachers to deal with HIV and AIDS. One teacher reported that she had used Mandla (a Doll) at a parent meeting to demonstrate using Persona Dolls to raise the issue of HIV stigma. This broke down resistance completely as the parent group empathised with Mandla. Parents said if this was how HIV was being dealt with, they wanted it for their children (Trainer Report).

Mandy (Vignette 4) also illustrates critical reflection, thinking deeply about what one does and why, as it applies to teaching (MacNaughton, 2005). Knowing why you make a decision and being mindful of who is advantaged and disadvantaged by the decision is an important part of the activist problem-posing approach. Mandy's story (Vignette 4) also provided an example of how avoid 'spotlighting', as the boys who had thrown the stones had no idea that their behaviour was the focus of the session. Care was taken to select Sally, a girl Doll, so the 'victim' was a different gender, and the story was different enough not to expose and embarrass the perpetrators:

The little boy who was one of the perpetrators, put his hand up and said:
I know somebody who is blind! And I said, Do you? He said: yes, he lives up the road here and he has a dog as well. He then participated freely in the discussion which was the purpose (Vignette 4).

The PDA attempts never to 'spotlight' a particular child or situation, as this can be counterproductive and cause embarrassment or humiliation (Brown 2001).

How do issues of problem-posing emerge?

You and the children have conversations about what has happened to the Dolls, how they are feeling and what we can do to help. The children will solve their problems. What the learners say can also highlight the need for another issue or for another story. The children do the most talking. You as teacher listen carefully and react to each child's contributions (Teacher Questionnaire).

This teacher echoed one of the main purposes of the PDA: to address and discuss issues that come up in class in a non-threatening way. She supports MacNaughton's (2005) view that children's voices are an important source of themes for discussions. She recognises that children can solve problems if they are allowed to, and that it is important to listen to children to learn what issues are important to them, and to introduce other issues in response to children's contributions. She demonstrates the vital role of the teacher in acknowledging children's contributions in an encouraging way, asking more open-ended probing questions, and listening to children.

Teachers also focused on issues linked to the Life Orientation Curriculum (Education Department, 2002; 2003) and in many cases issues originating from the children were consistent with the Curriculum (Trainer Reports; Teacher Questionnaire; Vignettes).

Mandy (in Vignette 4) addressed a difficult community issue during the session. On the other hand, Gonda (Vignette 2) used an issue of wider societal concern, HIV and AIDS. She was proactive in introducing this issue from outside the classroom experience, which she knew was relevant to the class. Teachers often avoid dealing with the more difficult issues such as racism, gender, and conflict. Teachers often also avoid being proactive (Teacher Questionnaire; Trainer Report) and did not bring community or broader societal issues, which had not yet emerged in the class. Being proactive is an important element (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; Brown, 2001) of the anti-bias activist approach.

Shahida (Vignette 3) explored the 'hair' issue. This session raised issues of self-esteem, culture, difference and similarity as many of the children had similar hair to the Doll. However, she reinforced the negative attitude that 'straight hair' is better than 'bushy hair', by suggesting: "ask her mom to make her hair nice", implying that it wasn't 'nice' before. This points to the risk that negative attitudes may actually be made worse by dealing with them in a prejudiced way in PDA sessions. It is essential to deal with anti-bias issues and build awareness on personal level for the teachers themselves (Jansen, 2001) before they use the approach with children, or teachers may reinforce bias instead of challenging it.

Shahida's response to the hair issue also indicated her lack of gender awareness, as she assumed that dealing with 'hair' was a task for girls and not boys: "All the girls will see what kind of hair style we can make for Molly" (Vignette 3). This response confirms the need for further anti-bias teacher training. This session also showed less response from the children, which may have been because the issue came from Shahida, not from the children.

Some unhelpful and overly negative stories and personas emerged (Teacher Questionnaire; Trainer Reports). These were a dead-end for dialogue and problem-posing. However, if children cannot hope to help the situation then they will not feel empowered or any sense of achievement.

Dead-end stories may be inspired by dead-end realities such as this situation reported by a teacher in a rural area:

"The child lives with grandmother only, after school comes home, and eats and helps with the dishes. Then the grandmother just sits and the child has to sit with her, is not allowed to play outside or go and play elsewhere, nor to have children come, because the grandmother is old and can't cope" (Trainer Report).

Such situations need to be acknowledged but a skilled teacher will find an element that can be developed positively, which offer some glimmer of hope, and which can help build self-esteem in the child.

Teachers spoke of their dilemma (Trainer Report) of whether to stick with their planning for the session or to take the lead from the children. Teachers agreed on the importance of listening and responding to children but steering them back to the topic or making sure the topic is dealt with at a later date. The teacher needs skills and strategies for engaging children and the importance of alertness and sensitivity on the part of the teacher cannot be over-emphasised (Brown, 2001).

Open-ended questions

The study showed some teachers using open-ended questions to encourage problem-posing and to help develop children's ability to empathise and to talk freely about their experiences, feelings and ideas. This dialogue built teachers' confidence and

skill and in some teachers, the ability or confidence to relinquish the ‘lecture’ mode of teaching. The dialogue enabled children to make up their own minds on issues of fairness and unfairness. The study confirmed that these requirements were being met to a degree but that many teachers needed to develop their facilitation and questioning skills (Trainer Report, Vignette 3).

Sally’s story (Vignette 4) used dialogue rather than the lecture or ‘banking’ method to elicit discussion. The use of open-ended questions is consistent with curriculum and assessment requirements for Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2002b; 2003). Teachers used open-ended questions like, “If you saw what happened to Zoliswa, what would you do?” (Teacher Questionnaire). ‘What if’ questions can deepen children’s involvement and reflection (“What if the teacher saw or heard what happened?”; “What if the Doll hit back?”; “What if something else had been said/done?”)

Shahida (Vignette 3) provided a contrast to this dialogue, however. It is easy for teachers to talk too much and to fall into the trap of ‘preaching’ or ‘lecturing’, rather than listening and question posing. Often, opportunities to probe more into the children’s thoughts and feelings are lost (Vignette 3). MacNaughton’s (2001a) research using Persona Dolls to “get into the minds” of young children showed the benefits of the adult (teacher or researcher) being quiet and listening to children. Often there were long thoughtful pauses before children answered questions and revealed that they know a lot and about racism, for example. Gonda (Vignette 2), as mentioned before, showed her awareness of this by giving children time to think, and providing openings for them to speak.

Sometimes teachers responded to children’s answers and suggestions by repeating what they said. This was one way to acknowledge the child’s contribution, but did not take the child to a deeper level of understanding and might, in some instances, have changed the meaning of the child’s original idea. Sometimes teachers pressurised children to speak (Trainer Report, see below) and did not facilitate good communication. This confirmed Buchanan’s findings (2007) that teachers’ questions may influence the children’s responses unduly, and some were used as a conduit for hidden suggestions and conclusions that the teacher had already decided on.

One follow-up session revealed an inquisition style (Trainer Report) that should be avoided. A teacher used a Doll to demonstrate how she had addressed sexual abuse. The background to the story was that a local male shopkeeper invited children to go in by a back door to get sweets "because you're hungry" and they had to let him touch them first. The teacher reported that all the children in the class had come up talk to the Doll, and many children came and "confessed to the Doll" (Trainer Report). From the demonstration it was clear that the children were pressurised into answering questions and 'confessing' and that caused emotional distress rather than offering support and awareness. The teacher proudly gave this demonstration of 'successful' use of the Doll. The situation was further complicated by racism and language prejudice in this training group. The teacher, a Xhosa-speaker, had the courage to demonstrate in front of a seemingly hostile group of predominantly 'coloured' Afrikaans-speaking teachers, who initially didn't want to join her group or share a table with her. The trainer was torn between wanting to support and build confidence in the teacher (a victim of prejudice) and wanting to encourage good PDA practice for the whole group (Trainer Report). This scenario raises a crucial training question: How best to train teachers who may lack understanding about learning, basic skills in facilitation and questioning and to whom the concept of listening to children may seem foreign or culturally inappropriate?

Other trainer reports have also raised the issue that the Doll may become a tool to support lecturing or preaching, and have recommended more input on listening skills, reflection, questioning, restating and encouraging statements. This concurs with the findings of Buchanan (2007) and Brown (2009).

Teachers observed (Teacher Questionnaire) that a three-way dialogue occurs between the Doll, the adult and the children, and the teacher, children and the Doll (interpreted by the teacher) with each having a voice. Teachers say: "The children are more lively than usual and are actively participating; Children speak more and ask questions freely and are more confident. They are also more curious and interested in what is happening" (Table 5 and Table 9). "Withdrawn or shy children participated more often. Some children who had never spoken out in class before now do so" (Table 7).

5.5 Conclusion

I have discussed the main themes that emerged in the results, indicating which relate directly and indirectly to the Anti-bias Goals. The themes include the conditions in schools and the constraints in teachers' practice that relate to how children learn. I have also discussed teachers' assumptions and understandings about children and about anti-bias, and their responses to the PDA. I will conclude this chapter with a personal reflection on the process of the study. The next chapter will present my conclusions.

5.6 Critical reflection on my role as researcher

Being in the role of researcher has required me to step back from my usual roles as trainer, project manager and project developer. This has given me new perspectives on the PDA in a variety of ECD contexts. Doing the case study has been a process of listening to and reflecting on the voices of children, teachers, trainers and education officials, while at the same time engaging with the voices of other researchers in the literature.

I have been witness to teachers' frustration and despair at the stresses of working in overcrowded, under-resourced schools, and their feelings of helplessness about the home situations of many children. Many teachers shared deeply personal experiences in the training sessions and it was clear this 'safe space' was therapeutic. It has been both humbling and heartening to find teachers open to trying out a new approach in their classrooms, despite the pressures on them. Teachers report that using the Dolls gave them a better understanding of the lives of the children and why children behave as they do, and helped them to treat children with more respect and gentleness. Many gave positive feedback about how they had used the PDA to deal with name-calling, teasing and bullying of children seen as 'different'. Some said that the PDA helped them cope with very big classes because the children were so interested and attentive. Reflecting on all that I saw and heard of what teachers were doing with the PDA, I felt we were tackling Jansen's (2001) concern about the need for transformation of teachers' values.

The voices of children and teachers in the study have profoundly moved me. I cannot forget what teachers told me about the emotional neediness of very young children who were desperate to know that the Doll loved them and wanted to hug them. It is rewarding to know that the Dolls have helped many children feel better about themselves: outsider children who are bussed or taxied to school; children with poor English or ‘funny’ accents; children who are overweight or ‘too dark’ or who have ‘funny hair’, ‘slow children’; and perhaps even some of the hungry ones.

I often felt like giving up and asked myself whether this ‘drop in the ocean’ project was worth the effort. Running a session and hearing first-hand from teachers their problems, failures and successes and their willingness to carry on was guaranteed to motivate and energise me. An interaction during a site visit with a teacher or with an Education Department official (like the one who said, “These Dolls might be the only love that the children get today”) would inspire me to carry on.

Engaging with the literature has not been just an academic exercise either. Reading a range of theorists (anti-oppression issues in South Africa and international research into issues and approaches) has made me reflect more deeply on anti-bias work in general and the PDA in particular. For someone more accustomed to activism than to theoretical reading, this has been a challenging and rewarding process. I have been fortunate to have as colleagues and mentors on the way some very practical and some more abstract theorists: the late Helen Robb of Zithembe and ELRU’s anti-bias project; Babette Brown of PDT-UK; Louise Derman-Sparks in the US (ex Pacific Oaks College, Pasadena, California); and Glenda MacNaughton in Australia (Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, Melbourne University).

I am mindful that my use of a particular anti-bias framework has narrowed my capacity to raise questions of power, context, and other issues related to bias which deserve further discussion and debate. There are many pressing needs for future research into anti-bias work including the PDA. I list some of these in Chapter 6. The one that interests me most at the moment is research into children’s voices and silence as an indicator of resistance as well as oppression (Silin 1999, in MacNaughton,

1999). I believe we need to explore what South African children are really thinking about bias and discrimination.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The chapter concludes the dissertation and attempts to capture the main features of the study and related discussion. I relate the findings to anti-bias literature and theory, discuss the achievements and limitations of the study, present recommendations for supporting teachers in implementing an anti-bias curriculum, and make suggestions for further research.

6.1 General remarks about the study

This dissertation is based on a case study of the Persona Doll Approach (PDA). The conceptual framework for the study was provided by four Anti-bias Goals outlined by Derman-Sparks *et al.* (1989; in press), namely:

- To develop self-esteem and social identity
- To develop empathy around differences and diversity
- To help children to unlearn prejudice
- To do all this in a problem-posing activist way.

The study sample consisted of 420 Early Childhood Development (ECD) (foundation phase and preschool teachers) in the Western Cape who had received PDA training. Teacher questionnaires, observations, interviews, and trainer reports were used to gain an understanding of the way in which the PDA was implemented in different ECD settings, the outcomes achieved, the types of discrimination issues focused on, and the successes and challenges. I examined how children and teachers responded to the approach, and whether the PDA had any impact on their behaviour. I used their responses to look at the potential for developing and improving the effectiveness of the PDA. Initially, it was not an explicit aim of the research to look at the impact of the Dolls on teachers' attitudes and behaviour, but this emerged as an important outcome of PDA and was included in the study.

The PDA training developed teachers' own awareness of anti-bias and prepared them to use the Dolls as an anti-bias tool in the classroom. The teachers were first language speakers of Afrikaans, Xhosa and English (the three official languages of the Western

Cape) and had diverse backgrounds in terms of race, social class, rural and urban background, tertiary training and teaching experience. They worked in poor township schools, middle class urban schools and rural schools.

6.2 Discussion of the key findings

The research indicated that the PDA training and subsequent implementation led, to a greater or lesser extent, to improved self-esteem, empathy and ability to address bias, for the teachers and children. Thus, the anti-bias aims were achieved, at least in the short term. There were also other unexpected, positive outcomes. These included proactive activist work by some teachers, positive changes in children's behaviour reported by some teachers, and children's voices emerging and being valued by teachers.

On the whole, the findings reinforced the general approach and provided some evidence that it was effective in meeting its goals. However, the need for improvements, such as increased support for teachers, became obvious fairly early on in the project and could not be ignored. As a result, many of the shortcomings of the approach were remedied as they became obvious, which means that the outcomes are the product of an approach improved incrementally throughout the study. The study has confirmed the potential of the PDA approach and has provided motivation for the continuation of the project. Feedback from the teachers will improve future training programmes and teachers' stories will be used as examples.

6.2.1 Outcomes for children

Developing identity and self-esteem

The study showed that most teachers used the PDA with some success to build children's self-esteem and a stronger positive sense of their individual, social and cultural identity. Almost all the teachers reported that the Dolls boosted the confidence and self-esteem of the children. Children were more involved in the life skills sessions where the PDA was used than in those where it was not used, and even 'shy' children participated in discussions involving the Dolls. Children also spoke more freely about their families and personal experiences. The same applied to

children who had been marginalised in school because they were not fluent in the majority language or spoke with a different accent.

The study showed that children identified strongly with the Dolls. In one preschool, for example, the children remembered a Doll that had not visited for some time. They remembered that he needed a taxi to get home and were worried that he might miss his taxi. Teachers reported that the children were curious about the Dolls and their different experiences, and came up with many ideas on how to help them with difficulties they experienced.

Many of the teachers used the Dolls to encourage children to talk about their feelings and emotions, thereby promoting emotional literacy and emotional intelligence. The study showed that all Steiner's (2002) emotional literacy skills were achieved. Teachers were unanimous that the Dolls helped children to express their feelings, and talk about their home situations.

It was no surprise that the lack of emotional support for many young children emerged as a serious issue, but this was beyond the scope of the study. Children's needs and difficulties around poverty, HIV and AIDS, crime, abuse, and sexual violence all came up as themes, which created additional challenges for the teachers and underlined the need for programmes like the PDA.

Developing empathy around differences and diversity.

Identifying with the Dolls leads to developing empathy, and through empathy the unlearning of negative attitudes and stereotypes. There is a great deal of evidence that teachers used the PDA to develop empathy around difference and diversity in the classroom. A positive example relates to the painful topic of xenophobia. A little boy from a refugee family was being laughed at because his English was not very good. The Doll that visited could speak French ("Isn't he clever to speak French?") and he was also very good at soccer, so the children admired and empathised with him and the name-calling stopped.

Occasionally when the teacher introduced a Doll that was different to most of the children in the class, the Doll was rejected. For example, when a Xhosa-speaking, dark-skinned Doll was brought into a Grade 1 class of predominantly Afrikaans-speaking coloured children, the children said he need not come again. A similar situation arose when a Afrikaans-speaking coloured Doll from a working class fishing community was taken into a nearby upper middle class preschool. The children came from big houses with big gardens and horses, and they could not identify with the Doll. It might have been the teacher's attitude, or the way the Doll was introduced that was the barrier. In some cases the teachers still managed to use the situation to achieve an anti-bias aim. It was of concern, but not unexpected, that some Dolls were rejected. This confirmed the findings of many other studies that showed that children develop negative attitudes towards difference at an early age (see for example, Katz, 1976; Milner, 1983; Palmer 1986; Aboud, 1988; Glover, 1991; Siraj-Blatchford, 2000; MacNaughton, 2001).

Helping children unlearn prejudice

The study clearly showed that children were eager to participate in discussions relating to prejudice. They empathised and offered ideas for solving problems. In one example, children assisted a Doll whose mother was HIV-positive to deal with stigma and the ignorance of his friends. In another example, children made helpful practical suggestions for a Doll who was being mocked because of her "bushy" hair.

An interesting contrast emerged between issues raised by children and those raised by teachers. Children focused on social problems (fighting, domestic violence, crime, alcohol and substance abuse), even more than bullying and name-calling. Teachers prioritised bullying and name-calling (including racism); empathy and the expression of feelings.

Anti-bias Goal 4: Problem-posing and an activist approach

Teachers reported that children demonstrated their knowledge and engaged in problem-solving offering realistic solutions. An example of this was the local community issue of children throwing stones at a blind man. The teacher used the

Doll strategically to challenge bias in her community and this brought about a change in the children's behaviour.

Teachers also reported that children concentrated better and problem-solving increased. Children collaborated with teachers in confronting real problems and taking decisions: an activist approach.

6.2.2 Outcomes for teachers

The results of this study indicate that anti-bias awareness in teachers did increase during and after the PDA training and many teachers were able to use the Dolls for anti-bias education with children. As expected, the Anti-bias Goals already discussed in relation to the children also applied to the teachers. Teachers' anti-bias understandings, their prejudices, and their level of understanding about children's learning and anti-bias were reflected in their practice.

Boosting identity and self-esteem in teachers

Teachers reported that they positively identified with and liked the Dolls. This bonding helped the children to identify with the Dolls. Using the non-threatening Dolls helped teachers to affirm themselves as teachers. They reported that they felt more at ease and were more confident when holding the Doll. One teacher who was anxious about discussing HIV and AIDS reported that making eye contact with the Doll helped her to do so.

For some teachers the training was their first opportunity to reflect in a safe space on their own experience of being discriminated against or even rejected. Many issues of racism around appearance (complexion, hair type etc), abuse and gender emerged in the study. Teachers' own self-esteem is linked to the unlearning of the internalised oppression that is 'normal' for those growing up in a deeply racist, sexist, and classist society. When stories of poverty and abuse came up from the children, this was an additional challenge for the teachers. Teachers' own voices were 'heard' in the study which helped to empower and support them. Hopefully, exposure to the PDA and to training will support and motivate teachers, and influence the way they interact with, and support children.

Teachers developing empathy for children

The study shows clearly that through the approach the teacher is more able to empathise with the children and be more understanding. The Doll represents a child and this helped the teachers to focus on the child while planning PDA sessions. In addition, the PDA helped teachers to look at the children, their interests and needs, with greater empathy and understanding. Developing personas and stories for the Dolls has also helped teachers to be aware of difference and to dispel myths and stereotypes.

The responses of the children to the Dolls have given teachers information that has helped them to understand and empathise with the children. Teachers report, for example, that they now have a deeper understanding of how the difficult home situations of some children impact on their behaviour.

Teachers unlearning negative attitudes

PDT-SA helped teachers to be more aware of their own personal prejudices. The non-threatening training activities supported this process. The PDA stories used in the training focused on prejudice, which also assisted teachers' unlearning process. The Dolls seem to have reflected diversity for the teachers just as they did for the children. Teachers' use of the PDA to help children unlearn prejudice revealed their own personal attitudes, and prejudices. Jansen's (2001) concerns in this regard were addressed to some extent.

The study showed that some teachers broke through a barrier in that they understood that it was acceptable (desirable, and in the curriculum) to directly deal with issues of bias, culture, and poverty. Some teachers seemed to become aware and then become activated and confident as proactive PDA activists in their classes.

Working with the Dolls helped teachers to listen more to the children and 'lecture' less. Many of the teachers developed a good understanding of their role in encouraging children to participate by asking more questions, including open-ended

questions. In the process they found out more about the children, their ideas, their prejudices, fears, their cultures, languages, home situations and communities. Some teachers also recognised that it is important to listen to children in order to learn what issues are important to them, and to introduce new issues in response to children's contributions. This accords with MacNaughton's (2000) view of the importance of children's voices in anti-bias dialogue.

Role-playing of a respectful relationship with the Doll sometimes made teachers aware that they might have been too rough or disrespectful with the children and this could have affected how the children behaved. This awareness promoted gentler, more respectful behaviour towards children. This awareness showed another aspect of the Doll's role as a catalyst for action in the classrooms.

Teachers problem-posing and taking action

The study showed some teachers using open-ended questions for problem-posing to develop children's ability to empathise and to talk freely about their experiences, feelings and ideas. This dialogue enhanced a sense of confidence and skill in some teachers and enabled them to relinquish the 'lecture' mode of teaching. However, the study also showed that many teachers were not facilitating and questioning skilfully and that more training and support were needed.

Some teachers explored an activist, proactive and challenging approach (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989; in press) and addressed current community issues with children. Others used the PDA with parents. For example, Mandla (Doll) was used to raise the issue of HIV stigma at a parent meeting. This broke down parent resistance to addressing HIV as the group bonded and empathised with Mandla. Parents said if this was how HIV was being dealt with, it was what they wanted for their children.

Some of the teachers gave feedback after training to the rest of the staff. In some cases the other teachers were excited and wanted to know more. At one school there was a full staff meeting to develop a persona for the Doll which "just went on and on" because they had to discuss identity and cultural issues in depth. There were heated

arguments and eventually consensus. In other schools teachers wanted to observe the PDA-trained teachers in action so that they could learn from them.

6.3 Concerns about teachers

The extent of teachers' own awful experiences of bias came out during the training in their stories of racism, abuse, sexual violence and exploitation. This points to the need for counselling and support for teachers themselves. It was striking that a number of teachers reported that the PDA training sessions helped them to cope with their stress (Richter *et al*, 2006). Many reported that the PDT-SA programme was one of the highlights in a very stressful training and teaching regime, and helped to build their motivation, self-esteem and energy.

It was a concern that teachers seemed to steer away from using the Dolls for difficult issues such as sexism, homophobia, and gender. Gender came up often as a 'hot issue' in training and many teachers dealt with sexual abuse, but it is worrying that some teachers did not seem to recognise that addressing gender issues in the classroom could help to prevent abuse. Some teachers also avoided racism. It is of concern that some (predominantly white middle class) teachers felt that racism was 'not a problem' in contrast to parents and children at the same school who made it very clear that racism was a problem.

Teachers' priorities were revealed in the stories they used, so it was clear which issues were being addressed and which were not. The dominant issues that teachers brought up included bullying, teasing, children being excluded from play (racism and other issues arose in the teasing and the name-calling), as well as broader social problems that affect the children, including poverty and HIV and AIDS stigma. However, teachers reported that children prioritised domestic violence, poverty, overcrowding, hunger, insufficient clothing, and alcohol and substance abuse.

A child's self-esteem and sense of identity is affected by poverty and the climate of violence. This implies that PDA is needed most of all in poor or violent communities and that should be taken into account in future PDT-SA Project development. It was anticipated that family violence and abuse would emerge and this was addressed in

the training. The PDT-SA had a counselling and support element and the project manual has guidelines regarding confidentiality. However, the extent to which sexual abuse arose as an issue was not expected and this indicates an urgent need for teacher support.

The balance of positive and negative issues addressed by teachers was a concern. Some teachers created 'dead-end stories': horrendous stories of dire social situations that might have been real for some of the children but the Doll became a victim of this situation without hope. Did these particular teachers misunderstand what is meant by problem-posing in the PDA? Or did they feel hopeless and that activist approach could never change anything?

The study revealed a need to develop facilitation skills and confidence: some teachers were natural storytellers but others needed nurturing. The study also underlined the need to help teachers plan and design open-ended questions that might facilitate a dialogue as envisaged by MacNaughton (2000b). Some teachers did not have the confidence to use the Dolls effectively but it was beyond the scope of the study to quantify this. The project has already planned to offer more training and class visits to support teachers.

Another concern was that of teacher's own prejudices which are likely to influence children. Jansen (2001) raised this issue when he asked how teachers could be expected to change children if their own values are not transformed. How children interpret teachers' attitudes is a great concern as stereotypes and prejudice may be reinforced. For example, the hair discrimination issue when the teacher suggested that 'changing the hair' was the option and not 'changing people's attitude' (which was the real problem); she also reinforced a gender stereotype that hair was the girls' domain and not a concern for boys.

Can the use of the PDA be sustained? An evaluation of sustainability fell outside the scope of the study and it is not known to what extent the PDA continues to be used. Because the PDA is a new approach and falls outside the mainstream (even though it is a cross-curricular approach and fits in easily as a tool to achieve the curriculum outcomes) teachers might not continue to use the Dolls and/or they might not use

them for anti-bias purposes. This concern was confirmed by reports of some teachers who did not use the Dolls at all after training, and by others who said they only used the Dolls to encourage “good behaviour” and not for anti-bias aims.

6.4 Possible directions for future research

Overall, the findings of this study accord with the findings of other anti-bias and PDA research done in South Africa and elsewhere. There is much common ground in the work of Biersteker and Ngwevela (2002) and Buchanan (2007) in South Africa; MacNaughton (2000; 2001; 2007) in Australia; Brown (2008; 2009) in the UK; and Derman-Sparks in the US; and much of the work done elsewhere is applicable here if we allow for differences in context, needs and resources.

The main differences and challenges for working with the Dolls in South Africa are to do with social and economic issues in the context of huge poverty, the HIV epidemic, and high levels of violent crime. Anti-bias generally (and using the Dolls for anti-bias) is not a priority, perhaps because of other pressing development issues. Teachers elsewhere have mostly had a richer training experience and receive much more support. For example, most ECD teachers in South Africa are nowhere near asking the questions that teachers in MacNaughton’s (2000) research group are able to ask. Most teachers in South Africa are dealing with their own poverty issues and those the children bring, and issues of equality and oppression remain, against the background of a history of apartheid and structural inequality.

I am mindful that my use of a particular anti-bias framework has narrowed my capacity to raise other issues related to bias that deserve discussion and debate. I would therefore like to conclude this dissertation with some questions for future research:

1. What is children’s participation across the assumed barriers of skin colour, gender, disability, social class, language and culture?
2. What are teachers’ attitudes to gender and how do children understand gender? Attitudes towards other types of difference also deserve investigation.

3. What is the impact of the PDA on children's and teachers' attitudes and behaviour 'before and after' intensive training? This would be a fascinating but complex study.
4. How can anti-bias (including the PDA) be infused across the whole curriculum with appropriate teacher support?
5. What kind of support for teachers would have the most impact? (This would need to include personal anti-bias awareness, understanding how children learn, mediation, facilitation and questioning skills, and more input on basic counselling skills including dealing with sexual abuse and rape.)
6. How can the training be scaled up to include all South African teachers?

6.5 Final remarks

In the early years of democracy there was a great deal of excitement about anti-bias work in ECD. It seemed certain that initiatives would grow and develop. It was disappointing when I came back to South Africa in 2003 after five years away, to find that attitudes were in some ways worse than before 1998, although overt discrimination had reduced. ECD initiatives and the anti-bias curriculum had not received the focus or support needed. It was clear that anti-bias work needed attention, more than ever.

I began this study with the belief or hypothesis, based on my personal experience of using the PDA with children, and training and working closely with adults, that the PDA provides an effective, non-threatening and focused practical tool for anti-bias practice and is more likely to impact effectively on ECD teachers' anti-bias practice than more general anti-bias training and approaches. This has been confirmed by the study.

The academic reflection I undertook in the study and dissertation has brought a new dimension to my decades-long engagement with 'reflection'. The study reflects, and reflects on, the experience of ECD trainers, teachers and children using the PDA in South Africa. I hope the study will give further recognition to anti-bias work and the PDA, that it will contribute to anti-bias knowledge and practice in ECD, and that it will inform anti-bias training, as a contribution to building a better society.

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Appendix 1: Life skills and the Persona Doll Approach

Life orientation learning outcomes that are linked to the PDA

LO 1: HEALTH PROMOTION:

Children/learners will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.

Children explain safety at home and school and understand the right to say no to sexual abuse, and they know how to get support.

Children learn to identify, question and solve environmental health problems at home and school.

LO 2: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

The children will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religion.

Children explore their rights and responsibilities in the family, extended family, friendship, school and community relationships in their own and in different cultures.

They explore and identify moral values and practices from diverse South African cultures and faiths.

They learn to value female and male role models from different local cultures.

ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

Grade R: Tells stories about moral values in own culture.

Grade 1: Explains relationships, deals with stories with a moral, from a range of cultures including own culture.

Grade 2: Identifies morals and values from diverse South African cultures.

Grade 3: Looks at healthy relationships, female and male role models in variety of local cultures, discusses diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions.

LO 3: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The child will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.

Children develop respect for themselves and their bodies.

They express and describe their different interests, abilities and emotions and are able to assert themselves in various situations.

They learn to deal with anger and conflict situations.

They learn skills to manage the school environment and group work.

ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

Grade R: Expresses emotions.

Grade 1: Shows and identifies different emotions; copes with anger and disagreement; manages the environment of the class and school.

Grade 2: Identifies aspects of self; demonstrates and discusses emotions in various situations; demonstrates appropriate behaviour in conflict situations.

Grade 3: Explains how to cope with the challenging emotions, including dealing with people living with disease and illness; and demonstrates assertiveness.

Appendix 2: The questionnaire

Persona Doll Life Skills Project

Date: _____ School/ centre: _____ EMDC:
Grade /Age Group: _____

*Thank you for your participation and for agreeing to be part of this project.
Please use your home language/ language of choice, to fill in the form.*

1. What is the persona of your Doll? (Boy or girl? Family? Home language? Appearance? Etc). Choose one Doll if you have more than one.

2. How do the children respond to you when you bring the Doll to visit, give some examples:

3. What issues have you used in the Doll's stories?
(List- e.g. HIV and AIDS , etc)

4. Are the Dolls helping you in your work?

If yes, in what way?

5. What kinds of issues (things that happen in the children's own lives) are coming up from the children? What are they saying and asking about?

6. Have the children changed in any way? For example: what they say, their behaviour? Give a few examples:

7. Has using the Dolls changed the way you work with the children?
Do you do anything differently?

8. General comments:

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form!
Please bring it to the 3rd Training session or fax to.....
or post to

Appendix 3: Sample observation and interview: Gonda

Grade 2 class
St Mathews, Primary school
February 2006

Observation of lesson: Transcript

- Teacher (T) Do any of you know any Jesses?
Child (C) Some Jesses are girls and some Jesses are boys. Jesse can be a boys name and Jesse can be a girl's name.
- C And Jo...
- T Yes that's also a name that can be a boys name and can be a girl's name. Jesse's in Grade 2 and he goes to the same school as Mariam, and do you remember which school that was?
- T A school in Observatory, Yes Nicholas.
- C He looks a bit short to be in Grade 2.
- T That's true but Jesse is in Grade 2.
- T Jesse lives in observatory with his mum and his dad and his older sister called Jenny and his grandma. I'd like you to introduce yourself to Jesse ...
- C My name is Joel and I live with my parents in Rondebosch.
- T Now I'm going to tell you a bit about Jesse - do you think he looks a bit upset?
- C He's smiling.
- T But sometimes we smile but we still may feel a bit heart sore and sad, am I right?
- C Yes.
- T the reason he's so upset and worried and a bit sad is that his mum isn't that well - Jesse's mum sometimes gets ill and then she's better again and then she can go to work and then she gets ill again and has to stay at home. She has ...
- C Cancer.
- T Not cancer sweetie, she has HIV. Jesse's mother has HIV.
- T Who knows what HIV is?
- C It's a virus in your blood.
- T Can I tell you HIV ...
- T What kind of ribbons are there?
- C Pink; red; red; black; red...
- T So why do you think we wear a red ribbon?
- C To show that you care about HIV people.
- T At school some of the children heard about this, and they've been saying some nasty things about Jesse, and his family, and do any of you have an idea what kinds of things they say to him? Let's think what do you think are some of the things they say to Jesse that upsets him?
- C Your family is not nice.
- C I don't want to come near you because you might have role-play.
- C I never want to come near you or to your house 'cos your mom has AIDS and I think that you never ever will be better again.
- T Any other nasty things?
- C Your mother is fat.
- C When you come close you will get it.
- C Your family dresses up.
- C Big sick snake.
- C She's ugly.
- C I can run faster than you.
- T How does Jesse feel when he hears these things?
- C Sad.
- C And cross.

- C And hurt his feelings.
- C It's already in his blood no-one else can get it, It won't happen so easily.
- C Even if you have HIV you can still play with them.
- C And it doesn't mean you can get HIV 'cos your friend is your friend and you can't get HIV only if it's HIV and you cough at someone then you can get HIV...
- T Some of the things you're saying are very important - I can almost feel Jesse getting quite pleased from what he hears from you children because he's read a lot about HIV because he wants to understand what this means for his mum, and he knows that you can't get HIV from sitting next to someone who coughs, because the germ as Jolene said has to live in your blood. So it's only if you touch someone else's blood and ...you... yes, you tell me ...
- C Make him sad 'cos they not play with him.
- T Is that fair?
- C Then it gets into your blood and then you can get HIV because you can't have ... like you have a bruise and then the blood comes out and then the other person...
- T What should you do?
- C It doesn't mean if you have HIV that you must stop having fun.
- T Never handle blood
- T His mum often does fun things with them when she's feeling healthy. And if it was your grandpa who had a disease do you think it's okay to give him a big hug?
- C You can hold his hand.
- C Yes, even a friend.
- T Now do you have any ideas or suggestions for Jesse when he goes back to his school tomorrow?
- C He needs to stand up for himself.
- T Yes...Craig?
- C Sometimes you ignore them and then they'll just stop because they won't get any pleasure out of it.
- C Tell him...ok. It's okay to touch him, you can't get HIV and they shouldn't be nasty to them. They can still be their friends.
- T And do you think that will help. Just ignoring them?
- C Say you're wrong...
- C Can I also say something. They'll be shocked and then they'll really want to be his friend because he knows a lot of stuff about his mother.
- T He could give them....
- C He can say "you're wrong that's not true", he must stand up for himself.
- C He must stand up for his family. He can't let them just say these rude words. Because his mother has AIDS...he has to stand up for himself, and stand up for his family and his mother that's sick.
- C You ignore them – but you can still feel bad 'cos you learn.
- C If the other children are nasty he can just find some other friends because if they always nasty how can you just stay with a nasty person you can always go with another friend.
- T If Jesse was at our school what could we do?
- C I ... I will be his friend and help him, and keep away from the nasty children.
- C I will play with him ...I will stand up for Jesse.
- T How will he know?
- C I will stay with him all the time.
- C Tell your mother all of us feel worried about her?
- T Wonderful, I'll start with you, Jesse would like you to have the first ribbon...

Interview with Gonda

2006

Researcher (R): What do you think about the PDA, how has it helped you in your teaching?

Gonda (G): It really can be used in terms of challenging stereotypes ...to raise discussions on issues be it racism sexism issues of gender, able-ism, looking at disability, class looking at class, identifying the clothes children are wearing, and how they perceive the child – to have access to a lot of money or not, so the way the doll is dressed – will give them an indication so it's a way of being more inclusive in terms of identifying and acknowledging those differences.

R How have you used the PDA?

G If we are aware of something happening with the child, of some kind of sadness or unfairness and we use the dolls and that particular child is obviously aware of the discussion while the focus is not on the child the ideas that come up and the support that is given and the encouragement builds that child's self esteem and often they feel safer to speak about some of their hurt and their experiences.

R How has creating the personas helped you, the staff, and parents?

G In terms of using and communicating with parents, involving them, getting info from them to build the persona this is very important. Also in using our staff as a resource- getting teachers to talk to each other about their culture etc.

R And children's responses to the Dolls?

G Once you develop a personality around them the children buy into it completely, they forget that they are talking to a doll - it's a little human being sitting out there, there's a lot of empathising going on. Children for example in terms of Jesse's situation and they identify with feelings and they also are developing the vocabulary in terms of how one feels and what to do and it's problem- solving, so the dolls can be used to raise issues, areas particularly of unfairness and bias which children understand so deeply. It's not always negative in terms of hurt, it's encouraging children to identify unfairness, to notice it and to say well what do we do about it. It's not good enough just noticing.

R So they really respond positively?

G For the children that's important, they're free to share it, they're not inhibited or shouldn't be – as to giving the right or wrong or incorrect answer, it's their gut responses to something and eventually they become more comfortable with the doll as a tool, they work and give open responses to situations.

R Any examples of how they benefit?

G Language development was reported: more participation, and discussion and more vocabulary, and emotional vocab. They remember details about Persona Doll stories, their personas and what had happened at the last visit.

R And anti-bias and diversity aims?

G Inclusivity - respecting and acknowledging and respecting those differences be it disability or ..., we've used it with learning difficulties within a class, a child who has been teased because they were having difficulty in reading, so you can pick up on all areas of diversity or issues of difference...so children in the class, if they're the minority or if they 're feeling more isolated. They have the opportunity to be included in the discussion because you're bringing this doll in and you are raising issues, anti-bias issues, and discussions around that. With boys that are quite macho, you want to break down gender stereotypes, by using a Doll to challenge those stereotypes, so you can create macho aspects in the persona to attract boys. You can use a boy Doll to break down the idea that Dolls 'are girls' and that Dolls are only 'for girls'.

Appendix 4: Trainer report

PDT-SA feedback session report

East EMDC
15 May 2008

All five teachers from Jackson Primary school had used the dolls. They have developed the personas for three dolls Themba, Zanie and Benny. The Grade 3 teacher reported that the initial response from children to Themba was not at all positive. They commented negatively on his dark skin and hair, this despite some of the children in the class resembling him in skin tone and hair texture /style. Teacher did not pursue the use of doll but allowed the doll to just sit in the class. Towards the end of the day the teacher reported to the children that Themba had been listening to the children and was very upset by their comments and that he wanted: "to go back to Khayalitsha and not return to this school". The teacher reported that the children felt bad and apologized and asked that he visit again tomorrow. Themba is now a part of the class and is accepted. The teacher has addressed his hurt feelings. A colleague, anticipating a similar negative response from her class started her lesson with a discussion on the rainbow nation and focussed on differences. Themba's reception was a lot more positive. Teachers claim that Themba is very much part of the Grade 3 classes and is accepted by the children. I suggested that Themba should visit the school regularly and not become a permanent fixture in the class as the children could lose interest.

A teacher said she had used 'Mandla', the Doll, to demonstrate using Persona Dolls to raise the issue of HIV stigma at a parent meeting. This broke down parent resistance completely. They loved and empathised with the Doll. Parents said if this was how the teachers were doing HIV, this is what they wanted for their children.

One teacher was confused and used the Doll as a puppet, speaking in the first person "I want to share what happened to me where I stay. You can see that my hair is long, but you remember I've got lice, my teacher noticed that I always scratched my head". We discussed it and I tried not to make her feel embarrassed about getting it wrong, she practiced in the role-plays session again.

I am sensing that some teachers are not 'buying in' so much to the educational and anti-bias part of the PDA as to the therapeutic, psychosocial value, and therefore don't put in the effort to utilize the resource, partly because the educational settings are so challenging regarding the numbers in classes, stresses, varied background and emotional needs of kids.

The teachers reported that they have developed the personas of two dolls. The Grade R teacher was particularly enthusiastic about the dolls. She reported that she had asked some visiting Stellenbosch ECD students, who have also done PDT, to introduce Zwaai to the group. She explained that Zwaai was a black doll and she felt that if the white student introduced Zwaai as her friend, he would have more credibility for the children. She had similar concerns as the Jackson teachers, in the children rejecting the black doll. This strategy apparently worked well. She has since used Zwaai, the persona is a refugee from Zimbabwe, and used and integrated his story into their theme - Wildlife. She told the children he was scared to leave his country. He was frightened of walking through the bush -of the animal noises and strange sounds, smells etc. Zwaai will visit the class again soon. The children said they want to be his friend. Lovely energy and enthusiasm from the teacher.

Some teachers are using the dolls regularly and some use them quite seldom. Standard stories: no time; the Manual is in the principal's office and I haven't read it; the second and third terms are hectic; our children are on drugs and are stabbing each other; they won't believe the dolls

etc. They 'expressed' and we discussed all of these issues and they were addressed- then teachers said "Oh!" and they were 'inspired' again!

Appendix 5: Training programme outline and suggested ground rules

Outline of Persona Doll initial training sessions (over two afternoons or one full day):

Introduction: Context of project and logistics
Introduce research element, confidentiality and permission
Identity introductions
Ground rules and guidelines
Task: Remember a discrimination/ unfair situation
Feedback and discussion

BREAK

Introduce the PDA
Demonstrate in role
Small group task with a Persona Doll: Create a Persona
Feedback and discussion
View video/DVD clip of a Persona Doll being used with a group of children
Discussion and questions

BREAK

Anti-bias issues: list issues and discuss: problems that arise with children, at school and in the community.
Input on dealing with issues e.g. HIV and AIDS , racism, religion, language, disability, bereavement etc with the Dolls
Demonstrate in role: Issue scenario/ story
Small Group Task: Develop a scenario based on an issue: role-play in small group
Feedback: presentations in role

BREAK

View video/DVD of issue session
Discussion and questions
Planning and linking with curriculum: Input
Discussion
Evaluation: discuss and give out participant evaluation forms
Guidelines and task for implementation, implementation logistics, and discuss follow up workshop
Presentation/ distribution of Persona Dolls

CLOSE

Persona Doll follow-up session: 4 to 6 weeks after initial training session:

Opening and welcome
Check feelings
Agenda and purpose of session
Share a persona or story/scenario
Discussion: comments from the group

Feedback from teachers about:

- Where they keep the Doll/ how often they use them etc
- Responses from children, parents, colleagues etc
- Issues addressed, and any successes and problems
- Input based on feedback
- DVD/ video input
- Comments and discussion
- Presentation of Attendance Certificate
- Collect filled in questionnaire from each participant
- General

Suggested ground rules for Persona Doll Training:

- Language of choice in small groups and feedback. Volunteer to translate if needed.
- Respect feelings and opinions
- Listen actively
- Deal constructively with any conflict
- Maintain confidentiality
- No question is a silly question
- Relax and participate
- Feel free to express feelings and ideas
- Cell phones: please turn off
- Please be punctual

Appendix 6: Participant schools

2006

WEST COAST WINELANDS EMDC

Groendal, Dal Josaphay, Windmeul, Wes-Eind, Joostenburg, Soetendal, Wagenmakersvallei, Kersboslaagte, Orleansvale, Mbekweni, Ligstraal, Groenheuwal.

OVERBERG EMDC

Riverview, OBOS, Rawsonville, Glen Heatlie, Lorraine, Petra Gedenk, Brandwacht, Worcester Prep, Esselenpark, Worcester Oos, Bet El, Lemoenpoort, Nieuwe Morgen, Victoria Park.

SOUTH CAPE/ KAROO EMDC

Holy Cross PP, Denneoord, George Voorberiding, New Dawn Park, Mzoxolo, Thyolola, St Pauls, Dellville Park, Thembaletu, Hibernia, St Mary's, Rosemoor, George-Suid, Parkdene, Conville, Heidedal.

CENTRAL EMDC

Chapel Street, Garlendale, Cypress, Blomvlei, Kenmere, Windermere, Holy Cross, Groote Schuur, Pinelands North, Morgenson, Newfields, Primrose Park, Salt River Moslem, Oakhurst, Regina Coeli.

EAST EMDC

Ekuthuleni, Hopolang, Impendulu, Umnqophiso, Homba, Nkazimlo, Lwandle, Vuzamanzi, Isiphiwo, Kuyasa, Eluxolweni.

NORTH EMDC

St Joseph's Home, JS Klopper, Mfuleni, EA Janari, Parow Vallei.

SOUTH

Perivale, Mandalay, Duneside, Floreat, Stephen Road, Muhammadayah, Caravelle, Linge, Harmony, Beacon View, Blouvlei LSEN, Dennegeur, Lantana, Parkhurst, Mitchell Heights.

2007

WEST COAST WINELANDS EMDC

Ebenhaeser Primary, Jakkerland, Kleinbegin Bewaarskool, Klein Rivier, Kweekkraal, Qhayisa Pre-school, Naasdrift, Sederberg, Sonskyn Speelkring, Spruitdrift, Steilhoogte, Vredenburg Noord, Wupperthal, Moravian .

OVERBERG EMDC

Hawston, Hermanus, Kleinmond, Kleinmond, Lukhanyo, Mount Pleasant, Die Bron, Gansbaai, Gansbaai, Okkie Smits, St Pauls.

SOUTH CAPE / KAROO EMDC

Rheenedal, Chris Nissen, Redlands, Plettenberg Bay, Little Elephants, Laerskool Knysna, Hornlee, Stepping Stones, Kranshoek Primary, Phakamisani, Fraasig, Sunridge, Ruigtevlei, Sedgfield, Formosa.

CENTRAL EMDC

Alicedale, Athwood, Bambi ECD, Blossom Street.

Factreton Primary, Garlandale, Golden Grove, Hazendal, Heatherdale, Kenmere, Newfields, Oakhurst Girls, Parkfields, Peter Pan, Pikkieland, Prestwich Str, Primrose Park, St Johns, Wingfield Primary.

EAST EMDC

Bottelary, Eluxolweni, Enlotsheni, Homba, Ikhusi, Injongo, Lwandle, Sakumlandela, Soyisile, Sosebenza, Umtha.

NORTH EMDC

Avondale, Holy Cross Educare, The Hague Primary, The Valley Primary.

SOUTH EMDC

Floreat, Three Bears Educare, Mandalay, Harmony, Mitchell Heights, Zeekoevlei, Hyacinth, Christ Divine, Mzamomhle, Agape, Imperial, Kwazonde Educare.

Appendix 7: Permission letter to observe children

Date

Dear Parents /Guardians,

Carol Smith, the coordinator of Persona Doll Training, is undertaking a research study on how the Persona Dolls are used.

We have been approached by Carol as she wishes to observe, video or audio tape a group of our children during a class activity on The activity will be conducted by (Teacher's name), using a Persona Doll to engage children in a discussion on life skills issues. There will be a specific focus on behaviours towards children affected by HIV and AIDS and anti-bias. We hope to engage the children in sharing their ideas on how best to deal with these situations and how to problem solve. Strict confidentiality will be observed and your child will be given a pseudonym if names are used.

This will form part of the research project on how the Persona Dolls as a tool to address issues of unfairness, bias and prejudice that children experience.

Should you require more information about the research or the Persona Dolls, please contact Carol on Tel:

If you have any objections to your child being filmed or audio taped in a class discussion please sign the form below or inform

Thank you for your co-operation.

Principal

I(parent/guardian) would not like my child to be filmed/ taped as part of a class activity.

Date: Signature:

Appendix 8: Permission letter to observe teachers

Date:

Dear (teachers name)

I am conducting research as part of the Persona Doll Training. I am writing to ask your permission to observe and video or audiotape your class during your life skills lesson, and to interview you after the lesson.

This will form part of a research project on how the Persona Dolls are used to address issues of unfairness, bias and prejudice.

Should you require more information about the research or the Persona Dolls, please contact me on Tel:.....

Thank you for your assistance with this project

Carol Smith
Project manager/ researcher

I,, consent to participate in this study. I understand a pseudonym will be used.

Date

Signature:.....